



Home Front

FALL 2019

A PUBLICATION OF RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE CHARITIES DETROIT

A NOTE FROM OUR DIRECTOR

Happy Fall! This is my favorite time of year. The weather is still nice enough to enjoy our MJS Packaging Garden space, we have some wonderful events each fall, and our volunteers are back in full force after their summer vacations! It is always especially wonderful to see the school groups start visiting again. Everything seems to be back in action in the fall and I hope you'll come out to see what I mean. Even as we move into winter (which makes me chilly just to think about), there are so many ways you can support the House, which you'll see showcased in this edition of our newsletter. Also in this edition, you'll see our annual report. We like to show you how we use your donations and hope that you find the information useful. Sometimes it is hard to convey just how much a gift can make a difference in the day of our families. As you probably know, more than 5,000 moms, dads, brothers, sisters, grandmas, and grandpas visit our House and Family Room every year. They crave all the things that come with being "home" when they're with us, and with the help of donors and volunteers like you, we can provide those things! If you're interested in volunteering or hosting an event for us, please give us a call! And, if you have questions, concerns, or comments you'd like to share with me, I am always available at **313-745-5909** or jlitomisky@rmhc-detroit.org.

Best,

Jennifer J. Litomisky

Jennifer J. Litomisky
Executive Director



MEET THE MILLER FAMILY

Maggie and Justin Miller live in Davison, Michigan with their daughters Celia, age 10, and Mira, age 5. When their daughter, Mira, was born in 2014, she was rushed to Children's Hospital of Michigan.

There, she was diagnosed with a series of complex congenital heart defects that would mean several months of hospitalization and surgeries. The cardiac team at Children's was the high-quality care that Mira needed, but



able to check into the House shortly after arriving in Detroit. Maggie and Justin stayed at the Ronald McDonald House of Detroit for three months after Mira was born and could bring her sister Celia to

visit her. The House is less than a mile from Children's Hospital of Michigan, so they could go back to the House to rest and shower and be back by Mira's side in a matter of minutes. Here, they found a private bedroom and bathroom, meals, and support from staff

"The Ronald McDonald House is truly a home away from home for us."

the hospital is over an hour's drive from Maggie and Justin's home. With their newborn daughter in critical condition, driving back and forth from Davison to Detroit every day to shower and sleep was not an option. They considered their other options. Would they try to sleep in the hospital? Would they get a hotel in downtown Detroit? Neither of these options was viable for them. It's hard for a parent to get a good night's sleep in their child's hospital room and hotels in Detroit are too expensive to afford long term.

Before they had left the hospital in Flint where Mira was born, a nurse had given them information about Children's Hospital, including information about the Ronald McDonald House, so they were

and volunteers. "The Ronald McDonald House is truly a home away from home for us. Having a place to stay near the hospital was a huge gift, but even better was the support we had from the staff and volunteers who were always willing to listen and talk with us," said Maggie.

At age one, Mira needed another cardiac surgery and the Miller family stayed at the House for another 8 nights while she recovered. A few years later, she needed surgery again and was hospitalized for five months. With another long hospital stay ahead of them, the Millers knew that they could rely on the Ronald McDonald House to be their home once again.

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Over the course of three years, Maggie and Justin spent a total of 235 nights at the Ronald McDonald House of Detroit. The Millers were so grateful for the home they had found at the Ronald McDonald House of Detroit and thought often about the relief it brought them during a stressful time. They sat down and added up all of the money they saved by staying at the Ronald McDonald House. They calculated the costs of staying in a hotel, paying for parking, buying meals at restaurants, and the gas they would have spent to drive from their hotel to the hospital. They estimate that they saved over \$28,000 during the 235 nights they called RMHC Detroit their home.

Mira is now a happy, healthy 5-year-old, thanks to the hard work of the cardiac team at Children's Hospital of Michigan. The Miller family still



comes to the House to see the staff members and volunteers who have become like family but also to give back to the House and the families who stay here. They come back to make meals for other families because they understand what they're going through. Maggie has volunteered to speak about her experience at different events to help fundraise for the House and ensure RMHC Detroit is here for every family who needs it. In 2018, Maggie joined the Board of Directors of Ronald McDonald House Charities Detroit to help lead the House in fundraising efforts and helping make improvements so that the House is the very best it can be. "I want to help families like us," says Maggie, "any family with a sick child has enough to worry about, and providing them with a home makes life so much easier."

GET INVOLVED IN THE HOUSE

MAKING A MEAL



Our largest volunteer need is for individuals to cook a meal for families. Many of our families do not have the time or energy to prepare a healthy meal for themselves, as they spend most of their time at the hospital with their child so we strive to provide breakfast and dinner seven days a week. After choosing a date and a meal, volunteers come to the house to prepare meals for our residents to relieve some stress of going out to eat or finding time to cook themselves. If your time is limited, help the residents by dropping off favorites such as sandwich trays or pizzas. If you are interested in making a meal, you can sign up at rmhc-detroit.org/meals or call Nicky at **313-966-9084**.

PANTRY PARTNERS



Our Pantry Partners are a crucial part of what makes our House feel like a home away from home. After providing a list of our most urgent needs, such as cleaning products, individually packaged snacks, and other household items, Pantry Partners agree to adopt the House for the month by purchasing around \$500 worth of goods for RMHC Detroit. These items can be provided through holding a drive at an office or place of worship, purchasing or asking for donations and sending them to our House on Amazon, or buying them at a store and dropping them off for an in-person thank you and a tour of the House! Becoming a Pantry Partner is a great way to have a specific and lasting impact on families.

COLLECTING CAN TABS



There are several people in the metro-Detroit Community who have found creative ways to help the house even at young ages. 7-year-old Alaina and 10-year-old Emily from Girl Scout Troop 71721 donated many pounds of can tabs, along with 10-year-old Scarlett of Brown City Elementary School who encouraged her entire school to collect these tabs. Can tabs are more beneficial than donating cans or bottles as they are made from uncolored aluminum.

Tabs are on pop cans, but also on many soup and pet food cans. By pulling tabs for the House That Love Built, these young girls are expanding public awareness, raising money, and helping the environment!

MOMENTS AROUND THE HOUSE



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3



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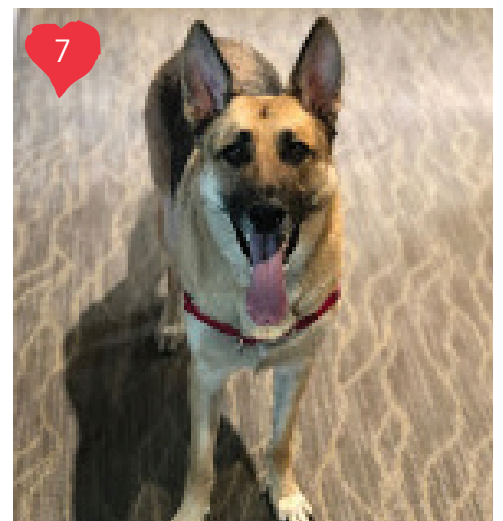
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(1) When you work at the Ronald McDonald House, you never know who's going to fly into your office to say hello!

(2) Most mornings you can find enthusiastic volunteers like Ellen, an AMROCK employee, pictured here, in the kitchen cooking breakfast for families of the Ronald McDonald House.

(3) Life doesn't stop for families when they need to stay at the Ronald McDonald House. Thanks to our MJS Packaging Garden, they have a great place to snuggle their babies while they take care of everything else they need to do.

(4) In our Ronald McDonald Family Room at Children's Hospital of Michigan, families can spend time together playing and coloring in a home-like environment.

(5) This special playhouse was built as part of an Eagle Scout project last summer and is seen here in a rare moment of quiet!

(6) In the kitchen at the Ronald McDonald House of Detroit, families can eat breakfast together and enjoy the little moments with their new baby.

(7) Jaxon, our unofficial House dog, lives with his mom, Marketing and Development Director Chrissy, but is a certified therapy dog who comes to the House every few weeks to comfort and play with families.

EVENT RECAPS

Our events help us raise money to provide a supportive, comforting "home away from home" for the families of critically ill and injured children. If you missed them this time, stay tuned for next year's and join in on the fun!



VINNI'S CHILDREN'S CHARITY GOLF OUTING

In honor of his father Vinni Adragna, Cary Adragna hosted another great golf outing. Over \$42,000 was raised for Ronald McDonald House Charities Detroit! Ronald McDonald himself made an appearance on this beautiful day to swing for golfers and help the cause. We are already looking forward to this fun event next June in 2020!



JERRY GUIREY GOLF INVITATIONAL

Now in its 25th and final year, we can't thank dedicated supporter Jerry Guirey enough for all of his hard work at this great event. Over the last 25 years, it's raised more than \$125,000 for RMHC Detroit!

ESCAPE TO BELLE ISLE

Thank you to everyone who participated in the 5k, 10k, and 2 mile race at Escape to Belle Isle! Even the little ones were able to partake in a kid's run with Ronald McDonald. The event raised \$46,000 for Ronald McDonald House Charities Detroit. We are grateful to Board of Directors president Jenna Greenman for once again hosting this amazing event.



ANNIVERSARY IN THE GARDEN

We had our annual garden party at the House in June this year. Even a little rain didn't stop the dance party! Thank you to our dedicated volunteers who made this event possible and to our founding board members who had the vision and drive to build a place for families to stay together when they had to travel for their child's medical treatments.



UPCOMING RMHCD EVENTS AT-A-GLANCE

Join us for an event this year! You can find more information and purchase tickets online at rmhc-detroit.org.

NOVEMBER 7

HOUSE CHEF CHALLENGE

The Ronald McDonald House of Detroit Watch in awe as two teams of chefs cook-off against each other for the House Chef title!



DECEMBER 8

HOLIDAY BRUNCH & BOUTIQUE

The Townsend Hotel, Birmingham, MI Our Holiday Brunch and Boutique features local vendors selling items for everyone on your holiday gift list.



IN THE SPOTLIGHT!



HAYDEN

9-year-old Hayden Rosenau saw an RMHC pop tab collection bin and asked her mom, Clark Hill Law employee Courtney Rosenau, what it was for. The Clark Hill Law Detroit office is a big supporter of RMHC Detroit, so her mom explained our mission of helping families stay near their hospitalized child. After her mom explained the mission, Hayden sprung into action.

For two months, she's been raising awareness and funds for the House! She's raised over \$2,000 for the House and is still going. She says she's passionate about the House because she thinks it's important for families to stay together. Thank you, Hayden, for your passion and hard work!

JUNIOR BOARD

Our Junior Board is a hardworking group of local young professionals who believe in the mission of RMHC Detroit. They volunteer at events, put on fundraisers, and hold book drives for our free libraries. We appreciate this fun-loving and energetic group!



HOME FRONT FALL 2019

MAGGIE SUMMER 2019 INTERN

Maggie spent the summer of 2019 working with the volunteers and marketing team at RMHC Detroit! We're so grateful for you and all of the hard work you did this summer, Maggie. Below, she shares her experience:



"This summer, I was looking for internship opportunities in the

Detroit area. After finishing

my first year of college at Marquette University, I knew I wanted something with nonprofit work that also focused on marketing and public relations. When I came into the Ronald McDonald House the first time for an interview, I was immediately overwhelmed by how welcomed I was not only by each staff member, but also just from the environment of the house itself.

Even working here for a short time, it is clear how much everyone truly cares for the mission of the RMHC and prioritizes the families they serve. I was able to experience what it takes to plan and advertise events (my photography skills definitely improved as well), be a part of a team to quickly solve problems, and learn about the history of the house and how important its message is. My time here gave me the chance to hear family's stories and physically see the impact the house has on people day to day. As I go back to school for the fall semester, I know I will miss my time here but also feel more educated and prepared to continue pursuing a major in marketing. Thank you to Nicky, Chrissy, Jen, Linda, Jackie, Mike, and Irma for making me feel so welcomed each day I was here for the past three months. The entire staff at RMHC Detroit embodies what it means to be a team player and put the needs of others before yourself, and I am so grateful I had the chance to experience that with you."

CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE!

www.rmhc-detroit.org

RED SHOE SOCIETY

Do you want to contribute to **Ronald McDonald House Charities Detroit**, but don't think your gift can make a difference? It can! Join our Red Shoe Society to make a nominal monthly gift to make a difference in the lives of families who are going through a tough time. Over time, your gift of \$10 to \$50 a month adds up to support families while their child receives care at a local hospital. Visit our website at **rmhc-detroit.org** or contact Marketing and Development Associate Nicky Bates at **nbates@rmhc-detroit.org** or **(313) 966-9084**.



**Ronald McDonald
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Keeping families close®

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