

RONALD MCDONALD FAMILY ROOM

The Ronald McDonald Family Room was created in partnership with the Children's Hospital of Michigan at the Detroit Medical Center and MJS Packaging. This relaxing, tranquil space provides a "home away from home" for the families of Children's Hospital of Michigan patients and their families, regardless of whether they're staying in the House.

The Ronald McDonald Family Room gives parents the opportunity to rest while staying close to their child. Here, they can relax in a home-like atmosphere for a few hours and take care of themselves with a quick shower, a load of laundry, some snacks, and other necessities that might have fallen to the wayside as they care for their sick or injured child.

AMENITIES

- Laundry services (detergent and supplies provided, two units, one is ADA accessible)
- Shower (soap and toiletries provided)
- Four sectioned off private areas in a quiet room with comfortable recliners
- Vending machines
- Work station with outlets for charging laptops and phones
- Large, open-concept living room with a fireplace and TV
- Children's play area

This healing space is so crucial for families going through the toughest time they'll face together and it's made possible through the generosity of people like you.

If you would like to explore opportunities for sponsorship and donations, please contact Chrissy Cooper, Director of Marketing and Development at ccooper@rmhc-detroit.com or **(313) 745-9487**.



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

SALLY GRABOWSKI

At Ronald McDonald House Charities Detroit, we rely on volunteers for many tasks like cooking meals, cleaning common spaces, answering phones, and more! The love and kindness of our volunteers makes our House feel like a real home.

Sally is no exception. Once a week for the last four years, Sally has volunteered at our front desk. She is the first smiling face that our tired and stressed families see when they walk in the door. She also answers phones, checks in new families and gives them a tour of the house, and writes beautiful thank you notes to our donors. She's also an expert editor for newsletters and other projects. We're so grateful for Sally!

After she retired, Sally started collecting blankets and toys and sending them to a nonprofit group for children in California. She realized that there were probably organizations in Michigan that would also give blankets and toys to kids. At the time, her daughter had volunteered to make a meal at the Ronald McDonald House with a group and suggested that Sally ask if we could use the blankets and toys (we said yes!)

Sally has six children and twelve grandchildren who all experienced healthy childhoods. She wants to do her part to make life easier for people who are struggling with their child's health problems. She says she's happy to do her part and does not mind doing whatever is needed around the House. She loves the people that she works with and she loves being at RMHC Detroit. The feeling is mutual, Sally!

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**.



Keeping families close®

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Home Front

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A NOTE FROM OUR DIRECTOR

How glad are you that it is finally fall? We love the long, sunny days of summer, but we are definitely ready for some cooler temperatures. Thank you so much to everyone who braved the heat to join us at our events this summer. It was so wonderful to see you all while we raised record amounts for our families!

Each year, Ronald McDonald House Charities Detroit serves thousands of families going through a life changing medical diagnosis. Since the original House opened in 1979, we have served nearly 60,000 families from all over the country and world. In just the last three years, at our new House, we've served as a "home away from home" for more than 5,000 families. Our brand new Family Room in the Children's Hospital of Michigan, opened in June 2018, will serve thousands more each year, providing a space for families to rest, relax, and regroup just steps from their child's hospital bed. If you haven't seen it yet, I invite you to give us a call and schedule a tour. It's a beautiful space.

Every family that stays with us has their own story of how they came to be a RMHC Detroit family, but they all have one very basic thing in common. From the moment they walk through the door, they are part of our family. And everything we do for them is thanks to our donors and supporters.

Thank you for helping us provide our "home away from home".

Jennifer J. Litomisky

Jennifer J. Litomisky
Executive Director



MEET GABBY WALKER

Gabriella Walker, now a healthy, vibrant 4-year-old girl, got a rough start in life when her lungs did not function properly after birth. During the time she was hospitalized, her mom and 2-year-old twin siblings, Johnathan and Sophia, stayed at the Ronald McDonald House in Detroit so they could be by her side every step of the way.



Gabby, just a few hours old, was struggling to breathe. Doctors tried to assist her with a nasal cannula and C-PAP machine, but it quickly became clear that wasn't

enough. Gabby spent her first three weeks of life intubated and in a medically induced coma. Her doctors tried everything they could to help her and Catherine says there were days she was worried she was going to lose her tiny newborn.

After three weeks, Gabby finally became strong enough to come out of the coma and breathe without assistance. But she had one more hurdle to overcome. During her time in the coma, her tiny body had become addicted to the sedation medications that had saved her life and without them, she was suffering from withdrawal. She had to be slowly taken

On the night of the 24th, Gabby was born at 37 weeks weighing 8 lbs and 4oz, a seemingly healthy baby girl. She was able to breathe on her own. While her mom, Catherine, recovered, Gabby was taken to the nursery to be checked out and cleaned up. When she didn't come back after two hours, Catherine's mom went to check on Gabby.

continued on page 2

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off the drugs over the course of two weeks. At five weeks old, it was finally time for Gabby to join her mom and siblings at home.

Those five weeks of hospitalization were incredibly difficult for Catherine. She was away from home

in an unfamiliar city, with two toddlers and a critically ill, hospitalized child. She found respite and comfort at the Ronald McDonald House and calls the House a “real lifesaver”.

Here at the house, she found a place for her and her twins to eat, sleep, and play. Most importantly, it allowed her to be at Gabby’s bedside at all times, or at a moment’s notice in the middle of the night.

Gabby is now a four year old, happy-go-lucky girl, but she still has some health issues that make some days harder than others. She’s on the autism spectrum, has a sensory processing disorder, central sleep apnea, and receives physical and occupational therapy for fine motor delay and low muscle tone in her legs. But Gabby is strong, and she’s fought her way to being a healthy little girl!

Gabby, according to her mom, is “a ball of sunshine and has been such a blessing in our lives”. She’s enrolled to go to preschool in the fall and Catherine says she’s so thankful for everything that Ronald McDonald House Charities Detroit provided her to make their stay feel like home.

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!

MCBIKER RIDE AND RALLY

For 20 years, Pete and Nancy Donaghue have gathered bikers together for a great cause - Ronald McDonald House Charities Detroit! This ride benefits both us and Ronald McDonald House Charities Ann Arbor. Even though Pete and Nancy are retiring, McBiker is far from over! Thank you to the Donaghues for their commitment to RMHC throughout the years.



GREECE IN THE GARDEN

Our annual garden party had some Greek flair this year! We had delicious spanakopita (spinach pie), lemon sauce, and other delicious Greek specialties. Thank you to our dedicated volunteers Bob Angelinas, Cindy Randolph, and Steve Rasmussen for cooking all of the food and to all of the volunteers who made this event possible. We netted a garden party record of \$25,000!

WHEELIN’ FOR RONALD

Wheelin’ for Ronald is a great day of 4x4 fun! People from all over Michigan bring their off-road vehicles to experience over 200 acres of hills, mud, trails, and rough terrain. We’re so grateful to Brian Velkey, Szott Chrysler Jeep, and Rocks and Valleys Off-Road Park for continuing to make this fun day a huge success for Ronald McDonald House Charities Detroit.



10TH ANNUAL ESCAPE TO BELLE ISLE

We’re so grateful to Milt and Jenna Greenman for hosting their annual 5k, 10k, and 2 mile race – Escape to Belle Isle! It was a blissfully partly cloudy day in July this year – a runner’s dream. The event raised nearly \$35,000 for Ronald McDonald House Charities. Thank you also to Katie Schumann, a former resident of RMHC Detroit, for attending the event as our Grand Marshall.

VILLAGE GREEN SPLASH DAY

Every year, Village Green, a property management company, gives their employees and residents a chance to give back to their community by jumping in a pool in May to fundraise for Ronald McDonald House Charities Detroit! We’re thrilled to be the recipient of their giving (though we’ll leave the swimming to them) and this year they raised nearly \$36,000 to support RMHC Detroit!



THE DEBORAH VIRGILES FAMILY FUND

In honor and memory of Deborah Virgiles, long time board member, volunteer, and friend, Ronald McDonald House Charities Detroit has started the Deborah Virgiles Family Fund. Families who stay at Ronald McDonald House Charities Detroit are asked to donate \$10 per night, but the true cost of maintaining their room is \$250 per night. Deborah’s tribute

fund will be used to help families stay at the house; offsetting the cost of a night’s stay and helping ensure that no family is ever turned away for their inability to pay. For more information or to contribute to this fund, contact Chrissy Cooper, Director of Marketing and Development, at (313) 745-9487 or ccooper@rmhc-detroit.org.

ANNUAL GOLF OUTINGS

Every year, supporters of Ronald McDonald House Charities Detroit put on three annual golf outings to help provide a home away from home for the families of critically ill and injured children. We appreciate all of the hard work and dedication!

BRIAN GREENLEE MEMORIAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

Hosted by Teresa Saputo and Bob Sivori, this golf outing raised \$22,000 in 2018 in memory of Brian Greenlee, Teresa’s brother. The funds will be directed to our new Ronald McDonald Family Room in the Children’s Hospital of Michigan at the DMC! Join us next year in May!

VINNI’S CHILDREN’S CHARITY GOLF OUTING

Hosted by Cary Adragna in honor of his father, Vinni Adragna. This outing raised \$42,000 in 2018. It was a beautiful day and Ronald McDonald himself was there taking swings for the golfers (did you know Ronald McDonald is a great golfer?). Join us at this great event in June 2019!

JERRY GUIREY INVITATIONAL

Hosted by Jerry Guirey as a way to raise funds for Ronald McDonald House Charities Detroit. This golf outing has raised nearly \$125,000 in it’s 24 year history with RMHC Detroit. Join us next year in August!

PANTRY PARTNERS

Pantry Partners are crucial to making our house feel like a home. They adopt a month to provide RMHC with items from our house needs wishlist for that month.

Pantry Partners agree to purchase or donate in-kind up to \$500 worth of wishlist items for a month. There are many ways to be a Pantry Partner, like holding a drive for cleaning products or snacks at your office or do a jeans day fundraiser and purchase all of the items through our Amazon Wishlist. Contact Marketing and Development Associate Nicky Bates at nbates@rmhc-detroit.org or (313) 966-9084 for more information.



DONOR SPOTLIGHT

Jacob Serafimovski is 17 years old and attends Hartland High School. He’s a Boy Scout at Troop 385 and was working on his Eagle Scout project. He wanted his project to have a positive impact on kids who were facing medical challenges. He reached out to Ronald McDonald House Charities Detroit to see what our families and kids wanted or needed in the House.

“There were people in my neighborhood and boys in my troop who have had to stay at a Ronald McDonald House before when a family member was sick. Everyone loves what Ronald McDonald House Charities Detroit does and I hope to do more in the future for the House!” —Jacob

Our director, Jennifer, told him that she had a vision for two playhouses, one in our outdoor garden and one in our playroom. This idea really stood out to Jacob. As a Boy Scout, he was used to building playgrounds, bike racks, and even an outdoor worship area as volunteer projects in his community. He knew that these playhouses would help kids who were going through a difficult time.

Over the course of several months, Jacob planned and held fundraisers to raise enough

money to purchase the playhouses. He did bottle and can drives and was able to purchase both playhouses! He built the outdoor playhouse in his garage at home and built the indoor one right here at the House!

Not only did Jacob build us two amazing playhouses, he did a drive for 400 toiletry items and bagged them into bathroom kits. These kits help our families when they rush to the hospital in the middle of the night without basic supplies like toothbrushes, shampoo, and soap.

Jacob would like to thank Jennifer Litomisky, everyone who contributed to the toiletry drive, and the Boy Scout parents and leaders who helped make this project possible. We would like to thank Jacob for his enormous contribution to our House! The playhouses are well loved and the toiletries are appreciated by everyone who uses them.



UPCOMING RMHCD EVENTS AT A GLANCE

OCTOBER 25

HOUSE CHEF CHALLENGE

Join Ronald McDonald House Charities Detroit on October 25th for a night of delicious food with Master Chef Junior competitor Sammy Vieder and other metro Detroit area chefs.

DECEMBER 1

HOLIDAY TEA

Get in the holiday spirit by spending an afternoon supporting Ronald McDonald House Charities Detroit! Come for an afternoon of tea, family stories, and shopping with small vendors at the Townsend Hotel in Birmingham.

For more information on events, visit us at rmhc-detroit.org/events!

