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A PUBLICATION OF RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE CHARITIES DETROIT

A NOTE FROM OUR DIRECTOR

40 years! Ronald McDonald House Charities Detroit has been serving the families from Michigan, the United States, and beyond for 40 years! Thank you so much to everyone who has joined us on this journey. We could not do what we do for the families of medically fragile children without your help and support.

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 four years, our new House has 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 has seen 2,500 visitors since June, providing a space for families to rest, relax, and regroup just steps from their child's hospital bed. If you haven't been down to see us in a while, I invite you to give us a call and schedule a tour. We have some beautiful spaces to share.

I hope you'll join us for an event or come by to volunteer this year, as we celebrate the families who have called our House their home.

Jennifer J. Litomisky

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Executive Director



THE MALEY FAMILY

This is a story shared with us by a mom and former RMHC Detroit resident about her time spent at the Ronald McDonald House of Detroit.

"It's hard to tell Summer all about who her Dad was. I try every day – but there aren't words sometimes. I made a big quilt, patched together with Ryan's t-shirts and gave it to Summer. In its way, it helps me tell his story – our story – and the love that he shared with us."

It's a tough story. Life came undone for our family about two years ago now. And honestly, we wouldn't be where we are now, without the Ronald McDonald House.

That day started out like a typical Saturday. We were going to Cincinnati to visit some of our closest friends. When we got into the car to go home, I knew Summer was exhausted, and I bet Ryan that she would fall asleep in her car seat before we were even to the first stop light. We were sitting at that first light and when it turned from red to green, I turned back to see if Summer was asleep. Then I really didn't remember anything for three days.

I woke up. I knew there was an accident – a violent one. I learned that Ryan was gone and that our Summer was very hurt – that she was at the children's hospital,



suffering and paralyzed from a broken neck. Life as I knew it was unraveling; I was reeling from physical and emotional pain that was taking over my body.

It didn't seem like anything that anyone said to me was going to make things better. But the Ronald McDonald House, steps from Summer's bedside, opened the door for me and my mom. They said, "Hey, we have a bed and food." Simple words. A simple offer. But exactly what I needed.

Being able to stay next to Summer, and having my Mom there to do a load of laundry, to heat up dinner for me, to hold my head up, and to give me strength to help Summer fight was huge for me.

Right now, Summer and I are doing surprisingly well. My little girl already turned three and she is nearly 100% recovered. Although she will never know her dad, my Ryan, like I do, I will continue telling her how much he loved her – how much she meant to him – how proud he would be of the smart, healthy, beautiful little girl that she has become."



THE HUDSON FAMILY

Melvin, age 3, was the victim of an accidental self-inflicted gunshot wound that left him under doctor's care at Children's Hospital of Michigan from May until August of 2018. During that time, his mom, Kayla, stayed at RMHC Detroit and is grateful she was able to be near her son and have support from staff and volunteers at the Ronald McDonald House.

She says, "From the moment I got here, there were people who cared about me and made sure I was able to leave the hospital and take care of my hygiene and get something to eat." She describes the people at the Ronald McDonald House as her extended family.

"Your family can only be there to support you so much, but for us, my son was in the hospital for a long time and



eventually they had to get back to their lives. Here at the House, I had people who showed compassion around

the clock no matter if I was coming or going. There was a pastor at the Hospital who came and spoke to me regularly and even the bus driver would say 'hey they are having this person cook dinner today, make sure you get something to eat', so it felt good." When asked of her overall experience of "the House", Kayla says, "it was like home for me."

THE HUDACEK FAMILY

My daughter Jessi was diagnosed with brain cancer. We were referred to Children's Hospital of Michigan for her treatment. Jessi and I live in Saginaw, which is a two-hour drive from Detroit, in the best of conditions. When we found out she was going to have to be at the hospital every day, Monday through Friday, all day long, for more than six weeks, I wasn't sure how we were going to make that work.

There's no way we could drive that far everyday, especially with Jessi sick from the radiation. We couldn't afford to stay in a hotel all week, not on our budget.

That's when we found out about the Ronald McDonald House. Talk about a life saver.

For only \$10 a night, Jessi and I could

get a good night's sleep and a healthy, homecooked meal; two things we definitely both needed after long days of radiation treatments and doctor's appointments. So there we were, every Monday morning through Friday night, comforted and encouraged by the amazing staff of the Ronald McDonald House and only a short walk or van ride away from the medical care Jessi needed.

Jessi is officially cancer free now and looking forward to all the typical activities of a 16 year old. But every time there is a follow up appointment, Jessi reminds me that we have to stop by the house to say hello and get her hugs from Jackie and Irma. Thank you to the staff, donors and volunteers of the Ronald McDonald House of Detroit. You are all my heroes.

THE PETERSON FAMILY

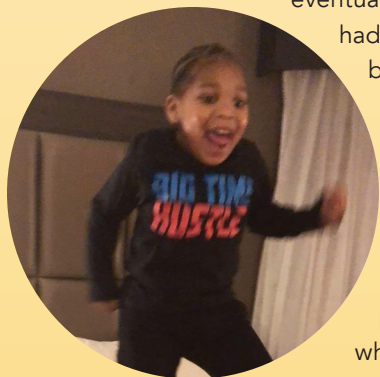
Three-year-old Sherrell was born with a congenital heart defect – hypoplastic left heart syndrome. She had her first open heart surgery when she was 10 days old. Her family has stayed at the Ronald McDonald House four times since Sherrell was born.

Staying at the Ronald McDonald House means a great deal to mom, Lakeisha Peterson. She can relax, shower and have a meal

in a comfortable setting and not worry about driving back and forth every day.

"The House provides everything you need and the volunteers and staff are very nice," said Lakeisha. "You can bring food and store it in the refrigerator for the rare days when a meal is not available."

Lakeisha said that staying at the House is a big cost savings all around. "It would have been 100 times harder if I didn't have a room at the Ronald McDonald House."



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!



HOUSE CHEF CHALLENGE

2018 was the debut year for this fun event as two groups of chefs cooked off against each other for the House Chef title! Thank you to Sheri Mark, Renee Chodkowski, Stacy Vieder, Sammy Vieder, and Max Hardy and his team for making this inaugural event a success. If you love cooking shows, come be a part of one at next year’s event. Save the date for Thursday, November 7th, 2019 and check out the website for more details as we get closer to the event!

10 MAN JAM

Thanks to Szott Automotive Group and 99.5 WYCD, Ronald McDonald House Charities Detroit was able to fundraise at this one-of-a-kind country concert for the third year in a row! Thank you to Thad Szott, Jeff Schneider, and 99.5 WYCD for making this event happen and to our Junior Board for volunteering and talking to concert guests about the mission of the Ronald McDonald House.



WOODWARD DREAM CRUISE

Every year the Woodward Dream Cruise rolls down Woodward and our friends and local McDonald’s Owner/Operators use it as an opportunity to fundraise for Ronald McDonald House Charities Detroit. Thank you to Bob Sivori, Dave and Ryan Perry, and Glen Johnson for working so hard to raise money for RMHC Detroit!



HOLIDAY BRUNCH AND BOUTIQUE

Our holiday tea with a twist! This year’s event featured delicious food, a fashion show, and local makers and storeowners selling beautiful jewelry, shoes, clothes, and more to help guests get a head start on their holiday shopping while supporting Ronald McDonald House Charities Detroit. Thank you to Charlene Mitchell Rodgers and the Nina McLemore Birmingham store for planning such a fun event. Save the date for next year’s event on Sunday, December 8th at the Townsend Hotel.



DERBY SPRING SOCIAL

This year’s Derby Spring Social brought RMHC Detroit supporters out into the sunshine in their beautiful hats to sip cocktails, play casino games, and talk about our mission of keeping families close. Thank you to event chairwoman Tami Damiani and her committee for making this event a success!

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

Local company MJS Packaging has supported RMHC Detroit through volunteer efforts and philanthropic contributions over the last 5 years. They began volunteering every few months to make meals for the families who call RMHC Detroit home. After a long day at the hospital, families are incredibly grateful to have a home-cooked meal to eat and friendly faces to talk to. The commitment of MJS Packaging is so strong that their employees have become champions for the House and come to volunteer in their free time and contribute financially to RMHC Detroit as individuals.

Philanthropically, MJS Packaging has been the cornerstone of RMHC Detroit's pivotal construction and expansion projects. In 2015, RMHC Detroit was asked to close our original location and relocate to another area of the Detroit Medical Center to make room for the expansion of the intensive care units at Children's Hospital of Michigan. The prospect of a move was exciting, but many staff, volunteers, and former families struggled with the idea of leaving behind the beautiful garden at the original House. One couple who had stayed at RMHC Detroit had even been married there!

MSJ Packaging contributed the necessary funds to build a brand new, tranquil patio and garden space at our new location. The 1,500 families who stay at RMHC Detroit every year are going through an incredibly stressful time. Many of them have children who are dealing with multiple surgeries, chemotherapy, or long-term inpatient hospital stays. The MJS Packaging Patio

and Garden is a place where families relax, grill food, spend time with each other, and bond with other families. It is a place where families can stop for a moment and be together in the midst of long and hectic hospital stays and doctor's appointments.



In 2018, RMHC Detroit was given the opportunity to expand our space and programs by opening the Ronald McDonald Family Room inside of Children's Hospital of Michigan. This is a place where any family at Children's can go to spend time as a family, take a shower, do laundry, or take a short nap. The Ronald McDonald Family Room has provided over 2,500 families with the chance to take care of themselves and enjoy precious moments as a family since it opened in June of 2018.

UPCOMING RMHCD EVENTS

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

MAY 11

RIDE FOR RMHC

CYCLEBAR, Bloomfield Hills

Have a great workout for a better cause!

JUNE 7

VINNI'S CHILDREN'S CHARITY GOLF OUTING

Fieldstone Golf Club, Auburn Hills

Enjoy a beautiful Friday round of golf to benefit RMHC Detroit!

JUNE 13

ANNIVERSARY IN THE GARDEN

The Ronald McDonald House of Detroit

Join us for our annual garden party celebrating 40 years of keeping families close!

JULY 20

ESCAPE TO BELLE ISLE

Belle Isle, Detroit

Choose your challenge with a 2 mile, 5k, and 10k option for this great race on beautiful Belle Isle.

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.



THE BERLIN FAMILY

Hailey was born in Bad Axe Hospital in 2009 with several, severe medical issues. She was immediately sent by FlightCare to Saginaw where, after a few scary days of touch and go health, it was determined that she would be best cared for at the Children's Hospital of Michigan. Hailey was admitted to the neonatal intensive care unit and received wonderful care from the doctors and nurses.

The Children's Hospital staff sent me across the street to the Ronald McDonald House, where I received wonderful care



as well! We have been in and out of the House for almost 9 years now, as Hailey requires lots of follow up visits. The House is our second home and the staff has become family.

We are truly blessed to have had such an amazing experience and we can't wait to watch as you all continue to grow and expand your programs. Thank you for all that you do and provide for the families!

THE MANNING FAMILY

On March 20, 2016, Camden Irene was born but quickly started to show signs of distress and was taken by ambulance to Children's Hospital of Michigan.

Camden was diagnosed with Total Colonic Hirschsprung Disease. Hirschsprung disease occurs when some of the nerve cells that are normally present in the wall of the intestine do not form properly during fetal development.

Camden had to have immediate surgery and her parents, Andrew and Vanessa, were living in the hospital. As Camden recovered in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at the Children's Hospital of Michigan, a very kind nurse pointed an exhausted and stressed Andrew and

Vanessa toward the Ronald McDonald House of Detroit.

Here, Andrew and Vanessa were able

to take a hot shower and get a good night's rest for the first time in days. That was the first thing that helped "slow down the runaway train" that they had been on since Camden's birth.

The next day they were welcomed into the RMH Family and treated to a home-cooked breakfast and a full House tour. They were no longer alone.

Andrew and Vanessa remained just a short shuttle ride from Camden as she spent two months in the NICU, gaining weight and getting stronger. Finally, on May 19, 2016, Camden was discharged and the Manning family reunited. Andrew and Vanessa continue to be great advocates for the House, making sure everyone knows that sometimes a single night's rest and a home cooked meal is all it takes to start to heal the broken soul of a parent discouraged by their child's health.



HAPPY WHEELS

We're looking for volunteers to push our Happy Wheels Cart around Children's Hospital of Michigan! These volunteers have the important job of bringing smiles to all of the inpatient families at the hospital. The Happy Wheels Cart is stocked with toys and snacks for children and their families and is another way for us to let the families of Children's Hospital of Michigan know that they can stay at the Ronald McDonald House.

We're looking for volunteers who can commit to a one-time full day of training on a Monday through Friday and then work volunteer shifts pushing the cart regularly for a few hours (every week, every other week, or monthly). Reach out to Chrissy Cooper, Director of Marketing and Development at (313) 745-9487 or ccooper@rmhc-detroit.org for more information.



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
House Charities®
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Keeping families close®

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