



Home Front

SPRING 2018

A PUBLICATION OF RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE CHARITIES DETROIT

A NOTE FROM OUR DIRECTOR

There's nothing like spring at Ronald McDonald House Charities Detroit! Staff and volunteers work together to bring our garden and Home alive with beautiful flowers. The warm sun lights our House, bringing much-needed relief from cloudy winter skies. Spring reminds us that we're constantly growing, and boy, are we ever!

In the fall of last year we brought a new staff member on board and this summer we'll debut our Ronald McDonald Family Room in Children's Hospital of Michigan. We're working with Children's Hospital of Michigan to renovate a waiting room space to better serve the families we both care about so deeply. This new space will be available for any family spending time at the hospital and will feature a children's play area, a quiet, restful space, and a fully renovated bathroom with a shower and laundry. Look for before and after photos in our Fall Newsletter!

Our growth is only possible thanks to our amazing staff, volunteers, donors, board of directors, and friends. Your hard working hands, generous gifts, and words of encouragement make this House truly feel like a home away from home for the families who stay here. We can't wait to see what else 2018 has in store for us with you by our side!

Wishing you a happy spring full of growth!

Jennifer J. Litomisky

Jennifer J. Litomisky
Executive Director



MEET THE SCHULTZ FAMILY

Christie Schultz has a bright smile and happy demeanor. When she talks about her family and her time spent at the Ronald McDonald House in Detroit, her eyes light up. She's been staying at the Ronald McDonald House with her family for the last 20 years, sometimes for a few nights, and sometimes for a few weeks.

Christie's daughter, Kyla, has been in and out of Children's Hospital of Michigan for doctors appointments and surgeries for most of her life. The Schultz family, including Christie's husband, Mike, and their son, Mike Jr., drive from an hour



"The first time we came here I slept on folding chairs next to Kyla's bed for seven nights.

I hadn't eaten a real meal that whole time. I was so busy taking care of her, I was exhausting myself. We learned about the House and my husband and I checked-in just in time for dinner. I ate dinner, took a shower, and slept for twelve hours straight, I was so tired.

"When you're the parent of a sick kid, you're so discombobulated. You're always in this mindset of "go, go, go". You're so busy worrying about your kid, you forget to eat and sleep yourself. But the minute you walk into the House and smell the food the volunteers have made, and you're greeted by staff who remind you to take care of yourself too, well, it just feels like home."

Christie gets emotional talking about the benefits the House has given her and her family, especially the opportunity to be right at Kyla's side while she receives treatment.

"The travel and medical costs alone are a burden on our family's budget," said Christie. "Even now that we live closer than Lansing, having a place to stay for only ten dollars a night is a gift. We have enough to worry about with Kyla's health, to have to worry about where we were going to stay and how we're going to pay for it would be unthinkable. And we're so close. The

continued on page 4

Everyone here cares, and we know it, and we can feel it.

away so Kyla can see the cardiologists at Children's Hospital of Michigan, who are among the best in the world.

When they came to Detroit for Kyla's first emergency visit to the hospital nearly 20 years ago, they didn't know about the Ronald McDonald House.

continued from page 1

parking and the shuttle relieve another financial burden. I know if Kyla calls me, even in the middle of the night, I can be by her side in less than 10 minutes."

But the Ronald McDonald House of Detroit is so much more than just convenient. Christie says the real magic of the House comes from the people in it.

"The volunteers here will remind you to take care of yourself. They're the voice of reason that makes you take a break, telling you it's okay to relax and take a breather and that you can't be at the hospital 24/7. They'll ask me if I've eaten today and if they can get something for me, they'll ask if I slept last night. As a parent of a sick kid, you need that reminder or you burn yourself out. The first time we stayed here we had left our house so quickly we didn't grab any toiletries. We told the front desk staff that and they said 'don't worry, we've got you'. They had everything we needed to take care of ourselves.

"Everyone here cares, and we know it, and we can feel it. The volunteers and staff are always here and always willing to talk, asking how we are, and it just takes the pressure off. Here we can meet other parents, even if they aren't going through the exact same thing, they get it. We can talk to and mentally associate with someone who's going through the same thing."

Christie is grateful for everyone at Ronald McDonald House Charities Detroit. From the volunteers who support residents and make home cooked meals, to the staff running things behind the scenes, and the donors who make it all possible, the people are what make the Ronald McDonald House a welcoming, comfortable place for parents during a tough time.

EVENT RECAPS

Our **JAZZY HOLIDAY TEA** was a lovely afternoon, raising nearly \$23,000. The fashion show and feature performer, jazz musician, Kimmie Horne, were a huge hit. Special thanks to event chair, Charlene Mitchell, and all the fabulous sponsors and volunteers.

Our second annual spring fun run, **RACE INTO SPRING**, sponsored by Kohl's was a great success! A warm up for this summer's Escape to Belle Isle, the Fun Run had a great turnout and was a great fundraiser. Thanks to the support of Kohl's, \$10,000 has been raised so far, with more to come!

The annual **SPRING TEA** at the Royal Park Hotel, held just a few weeks ago, gave us a great boost into summer. The prizes, auctions, and entertainment were the perfect complement to the beautiful day. This year's Derby theme was a huge hit and many people showed up in their best derby day outfits. This great event couldn't have happened without event chair, Tami Damiani. Thank you, Tami!



TEN MAN JAM, a one-of-a-kind acoustic concert held at the Fillmore Detroit, was an amazing fundraiser for us for the second year in a row! Staff, volunteers, donors, and friends all enjoyed the great music and even better company. We raised \$22,000, thanks to Thad Szott, Jeff Schneider, and their partnership with 99.5 WYCD. We also had a great partner in board member, Evan Perelekos, who works for the Fillmore and got us insider information! We'd like to give a special shoutout to MGM Grand Detroit and UAW Local #228 for sponsoring this great event.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Stay up-to-date on events by liking us on Facebook (Ronald McDonald House Charities Detroit) and checking out our website www.rmhc-detroit.org/calendar-of-events.



VINNI'S CHILDREN'S CHARITY GOLF OUTING

JUNE 1

The 18th annual Vinni's Children's Charity Golf Outing is coming up June 1 at the Fieldstone Golf Club in Auburn Hills. A goal of \$350,000 has been set, so please come out and help us get there! Even if you are not a golfer you can enjoy the dinner, raffles, and auctions. Registration fees are \$135 per golfer and only \$35 if you just want to join us for dinner.

ESCAPE TO BELLE ISLE JULY 14

Our annual Escape to Belle Isle and GOah! NOAH! Race will be bigger than ever this year. We offer options for runners of all experience levels with a Kids Fun Run, 2 mile, 5k, and 10k. Keep your fingers crossed for great weather and come out to join us for a gorgeous day on the island. Registration is just \$35 for adults and \$25 for kids.



LINGENFELTER DREAM CRUISE, DREAM CARS, DREAM HOUSE (D3)

AUGUST 1

We're hosting the D3 event at the Lingenfelter Collection in Brighton and you won't want to miss it - it gets better every year! The Lingenfelter's have some great new cars to showcase this year and we are looking to add some new features to the program.



JERRY GUIREY GOLF OUTING

AUGUST 26

This day of relaxing golf at Springfield Oaks Golf Course in Davisburg, MI is a great day of fun and raising money to support Ronald McDonald House Charities Detroit!



GREECE IN THE GARDEN

JUNE 14

We are so excited for this year's Garden Party! Our beautiful outdoor garden space will be turned into a Grecian palace and we'll have food and drinks to match. Tours of the House will be offered. Tickets are \$65 each.

PANTRY PARTNERS

Pantry Partners are crucial to making our House feel like a home. They adopt a month to provide RMHC Detroit with a portion of our House needs list for that month.

As a Pantry Partner, you'll agree to purchase up to \$500 worth of wishlist items for a month. You can hold 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. Visit our website for more information or contact Nicky at nbates@rmhc-detroit.org.



DONOR SPOTLIGHT

At Ronald McDonald House Charities Detroit, we rely on donors of all levels to make a home away from home for the families of critically ill and injured children. Sometimes, families who have stayed here become

donors after their stay so they can help families who are in the same position they were in just a few years before.



Symmone is one of those donors. Her story is below, in her own words.

"I'm from the Bahamas, I came to Detroit to attend Wayne State University in the fall of 2011. In 2013, shortly before Thanksgiving, I noticed that I constantly felt fatigued and was experiencing heart palpitations and shortness of breath. I didn't think much of it and just figured it was because of school-related stress and I just needed rest.

"After visiting the doctor, I was diagnosed with Evan's Syndrome. Basically, it causes my antibodies to attack my red blood cells and platelets and my hemoglobin and platelet counts were dangerously low.

"I called my parents and my father flew to Detroit and checked into the Ronald McDonald House. The staff was so

gracious and helpful and he was able to stay there free of charge for the entire week that I was in the hospital. Having him there every day really made such a huge difference because all of my family lives in the Bahamas and I didn't know that many people in Detroit. Without the Ronald McDonald House, my father wouldn't have had a place to stay and I would have been all alone in the hospital.

"My father was able to stay with me throughout the entire day until the end of visiting hours. He stayed with me through my three blood transfusions and assisted me throughout the day. That would have never been possible had he not been able to stay so close at the Ronald McDonald House. When we reminisce on that time in my life, we always talk about how much we would like to give back to your organization for the priceless gift you all gave us during such a difficult time.

"Please, never underestimate the positive and life changing impact that your organization has on the community and families like mine. You all took such a heavy burden off of me and my family and made my situation so much better than what it could have been. I'm still in school and put money aside every week to give in church and last week I felt led to donate to Ronald McDonald House Charities Detroit. I plan on donating more in the future as I am able, because anything I can contribute to a charity that helps families in similar situations as mine is worth it."

PLANNED GIVING

When you choose to leave a legacy gift to Ronald McDonald House Charities Detroit, you're ensuring that the families of critically ill and injured children have a supportive and comfortable place to stay, just minutes from their child for years to come.

There are many ways to leave a legacy gift to Ronald McDonald House Charities Detroit, including:

- **Making a bequest in your will**
- **Creating a charitable gift annuity**
- **Making a gift of life insurance**
- **Donating your retirement assets**
- **IRA Planned Giving**
- **Giving a gift of stocks or bonds**

Your support will help us bolster our endowment, creating a lasting impact on the families of critically ill and injured children for decades to come. For more information or assistance in setting up a planned gift, contact Marketing and Development Director, Chrissy Cooper at **313-745-9487** or cocooper@rmhc-detroit.org.

Have you already chosen to leave a legacy gift to Ronald McDonald House Charities Detroit? Please contact Chrissy and let us know!



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT:

HELEN ADAMS AND JANE JONES

We always say that the Ronald McDonald House in Detroit is a "House upon entering and a home upon leaving." Part of what makes our House a home is our dedicated volunteers like Jane Jones and Helen Adams who give their time and talents to help us run our front desk.

Our front desk volunteers are the first smiling faces our families see when they come through the door. Whether they've been staying with us for months or they're walking in for the first time, tired and bleary eyed, these volunteers are rockstar hosts and make them feel welcome. They help the family to their room, give them a tour of the House, and offer them something to eat.

Helen, pictured on the left, says she spends her time here because she enjoys working with the patients. She used to work in Hutzel Women's Hospital, the very same building we're now in! She's been here since 2016 and was looking for somewhere to give back.

She says, "It really is a home away from home here - these people are like family to me."

Jane, pictured right, worked for the city of Detroit for 34 years and is retired. She has also volunteered her time helping seniors with their income taxes. One day, she saw an advertisement from Gardner White saying that RMHC Detroit needed help at their House. In 2012, she came down to the House and spoke with Irma who gave her a tour and she was touched. Jane is a computer whiz and helps us with clerical work. She says, "I just love it here, I like what it stands for and what we do. It does my heart all the good in the world to see people caring about other people. It hurts my heart just as bad when kids can't go home. I tell people, there is nothing we won't do for you."

Thank you to Helen, Jane, and all of our wonderful volunteers! This House becomes a home because of you!



HOME FRONT SPRING 2018

UPCOMING RMHCD EVENTS AT A GLANCE

MAY 19, 2018

**BRIAN GREENLEE
MEMORIAL GOLF OUTING**
Warren Ave Golf Club
Hosted by Bob Sivori and
Theresa Saputo

JUNE 1, 2018

**VINNI'S CHILDREN'S
CHARITY GOLF OUTING**
Fieldstone Golf Club

JUNE 14, 2018

GREECE IN THE GARDEN
Ronald McDonald House

JULY 14, 2018

ESCAPE TO BELLE ISLE
Belle Isle Park

JULY 2018

MCBIKERS RIDE & RALLY
Waterford, MI

AUGUST 1, 2018

LINGENFELTER D-3 EVENT
Lingenfelter Collection
Brighton, MI

SEPTEMBER 2018

WHEELIN' FOR RONALD
Rocks & Valleys Park

CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE!

www.rmhc-detroit.org



Ronald McDonald
House Charities®
Detroit

Keeping families close®

4707 St. Antoine, Suite 200

Detroit, MI 48201

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

2017 & 2018 BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND STAFF

BOARD OFFICERS

Jenna Wright-Greenman, *President*

Evan Perlekos, *Vice President*

Eric Lynn, *Treasurer*

BOARD MEMBERS

Shane A. Barry	Charlene
Paul Blanchard	Mitchell-Rodgers
Dora A. Brantley	Lori Mouton
Yvette Campbell	Paxton Pressprich
Tami Damiani	Robert Reaves
Mark Freedman	Brenda
Sheri Mark	Robinson-Wright
Joel McCormick	Teresa Saputo
	Jeff Schneider

CONSULTANTS

Liz Cezat, *Public Relations*

Gary Dembs, *Expansion Campaign Adviser*

Tim Cowley, *CPA*

EMERITUS

Alan Frank

Gary Granader

John G. Levy

Frank Martin

Paul Pellerito

HONORARY LIFE MEMBERS

Harry Granader, *in memoriam*

Jack Hertzler

Dr. Jimmie Leleszi

Dan Levitsky

Mary Pat McDougall

Mary Renkiewicz

Barbara Wachler

JUNIOR BOARD

Robert T. Reaves, *President*

John Li, *Vice President*

James Ciennik

Austin Darket

Chris Haboian

Jay Llaniguez

Matthew Morgan

Andrea Nelson

Hanan Rakine

Drew Rhodes

Carl Rivera

Olta Sota

RMHC DETROIT STAFF

Jennifer Litomisky

Executive Director

Linda Porter

Executive Assistant

Chrissy Cooper

Marketing & Development Director

Nicky Bates

Marketing & Development Associate

Irma Hudson

Resident House Manager

Jackie Kennedy

House Manager

Mike McCoy

Special Events & House Maintenance Director

WEEKEND STAFF

Helen Adams

Jane Dumas

Jacqueline Griffie

Rose Nix

Tom Sherrill-Nix

Judy Poplawski

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA FOR REGULAR UPDATES AND HEARTFELT STORIES!



www.facebook.com/RMHCDetroit



[@rmhc_Detroit](https://twitter.com/rmhc_Detroit)



[@rmhcdetroit](https://www.instagram.com/rmhcdetroit)

CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE!

www.rmhc-detroit.org