



Ronald
McDonald
House®
Rochester, MN

news from the heart

DECEMBER 2022

www.rmhm.org



Tasha's Creative Photography

It's a Minnesota family's dream: a Hawaiian vacation to escape the winter cold. But for Jill and Greg...it quickly turned into a scary and stressful reality. "I couldn't believe it; I was seven weeks early," said Jill. "But Anna was coming."

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

Dear friends and families of the House,

As 2022 comes to a close, we have much to be thankful for at the Ronald McDonald House of Rochester. The past two years have presented many shifts and challenges at the House, but the ability to serve our families and children, due to the support of our donors and volunteers, has remained constant. I am grateful for all who give of their time, talent, and treasures, to allow us to deliver on our mission and provide for our families in need.

I'm excited to share some news of a recent milestone the House achieved. In 2019, the House expanded to 70 rooms in order to meet the current and future demands of families coming to seek care in Rochester. The pandemic disrupted many elements of our operation, but we knew the demand and need were still there. I am thrilled to share that we are now serving more families than ever before and we are able to get the majority of families into the House as soon as they arrive in Rochester. When we close the book on 2022, we will have provided more than 9,000 nights of lodging for families in need.

I wanted to share an excerpt from a journal entry from one of our families that stayed with us in 2022, that embodies what our mission means to families:

"My daughter and I arrived in Rochester, MN with \$50 to our name. Literally, \$50. Every credit card maxed and no money in the bank. My daughter's prolonged and complicated illness had drained every account I had. I drove 14 hours to get here; praying I didn't get a flat or have any unforeseen expenses because I couldn't afford it. I prayed the Ronald McDonald House would have a room for us as I had no money for a hotel. They did. My daughter and I were provided with meals, shelter, and love. Mayo was treatment for her body. Ronald McDonald House was treatment for her soul."

As we head into 2023, I wish you all moments of peace, joy, and happiness.

Yours in service to our families and children,



Nick Mueller, Chief Executive Officer



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MISSION STATEMENT

The Ronald McDonald House of Rochester, Minnesota, provides a home away from home and gives support to families seeking medical care for their children.



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It's a Minnesota family's dream: a Hawaiian vacation to escape the winter cold. But for Jill and Greg...it quickly turned into a scary and stressful reality.

Greg's parents were celebrating their 45th wedding anniversary and paid for all their kids and grandkids to join them on the tropical trip. Despite being 32 weeks pregnant, Jill was assured it was safe for her to travel and enjoy time with family. Everything was good.

Until she went into labor.

"I couldn't believe it; I was seven weeks early," said Jill. "But Anna was coming."



Anna was born in a small hospital on the island of Kauai—the fourth largest Hawaiian Island with a population of 73,298. She was in the hospital for two days, but her condition was deteriorating. The hospital did not have the resources to support her level of need, so she was life-flighted to Honolulu.

"She was losing weight and wasn't breathing well," said Greg.

"When you hear that your newborn child needs to be life-flighted and is in critical condition...it's serious," Jill said.

Anna was admitted to the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU). She was four pounds when she was born, and her lungs were not fully developed. She simply needed more time.

But Jill and Greg were 4,000 miles from home. What would they do? Where would they stay? How much would it cost? All their questions were answered by the Ronald McDonald House on Oahu Avenue in Manoa Valley.

Before Jill, Greg, and Anna arrived in Honolulu, a social worker told them about Ronald



McDonald House Charities Hawaii. Jill and Greg knew about Ronald McDonald Houses in Minnesota, but assumed they were financial based and that they would not meet the criteria.

“Thankfully...we were wrong,” said Jill.

“We were not prepared for a one-month stay in Hawaii,” Greg said. “The House allowed us to focus on getting Anna healthy and getting Anna home.”

“We were so far from home, and we needed a place to stay while Anna grew stronger,” said Jill. “The staff and other guests quickly became our family.”



“Our stay was eight years ago, and we have maintained those friendships,” Greg said.

While Jill and Greg were in Honolulu with Anna, their two older daughters—Emma and Sara—continued the family vacation with their grandparents, aunts and uncles, and cousins. Both remember their mom leaving for the hospital, saying, “I’m not having the baby,” followed by a month without their parents in Hawaii and Minnesota.

“It’s an experience I will never forget,” said Emma.



“Our extended family watched over us; everything was OK,” said Sara.

“We finished the nursery and prepared for our baby sister to come home,” Emma said.

While doctors in Hawaii were not particularly excited for Anna to travel—let alone fly—during cold and flu season, Jill and Greg advocated for her return to Minnesota

to be with her sisters, family, and medical team at Mayo Clinic.

So, after three weeks...Anna came home.

And she experienced no complications.

When Jill and Greg returned home, they told their older daughters about their time in the hospital, particularly the pet therapy dogs. Emma had previously trained their golden retriever, Bailey, for 4-H. 4-H is a network of youth organizations, whose original motto referenced head, heart, hands, and health. Their story gave Emma an idea...

“Bailey is the definition of a therapy dog,” said Emma. “And once we completed her certification, we wanted to volunteer at the nearby Ronald McDonald House.”

Emma and Bailey started volunteering when Emma was 14 years old. They started in hospice care and nursing homes, but their hearts were with kids. When the Ronald McDonald House of Rochester called for Emma and Bailey to start...they signed up immediately.



That was seven years ago.

“Seeing kids smile and parents relax as they spend time with Bailey...” Emma said. “It makes it all worth it.”

When Emma graduated and left for college, Sara was excited for her opportunity to volunteer with Bailey at the House. After watching Emma train Bailey, she trained the neighbor’s dog. And after watching Emma and Bailey volunteer for years, she was ready to step in as the primary handler.

“I learned so much from Emma,” said Sara. “And I simply enjoy making people happy; bringing joy.”

Jill, Greg, and Anna occasionally accompanied Emma, Sara, and Bailey on the visits to the Ronald McDonald House of Rochester. They recently added Nelli, a second golden retriever, to the family, and Anna hopes she can train her and volunteer at the House one day.

“The Ronald McDonald House on Oahu Avenue was an incredible gift for our family,” said Greg. “We love returning and giving back, and we love volunteering at the Ronald McDonald House of Rochester.”



Santa Claus visited children and families at the Ronald McDonald House of Rochester!



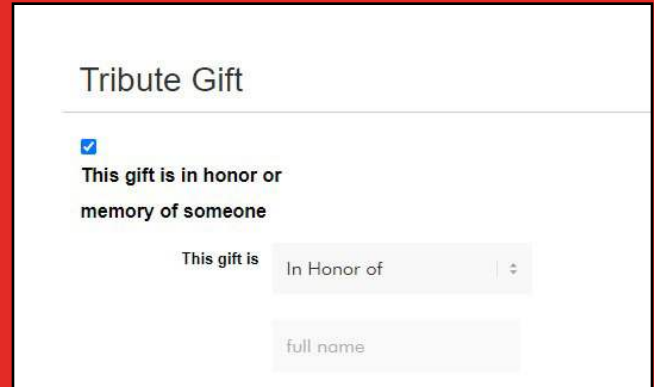


Dedicate your gift to someone special!

[Click to support children and families before year-end with a tribute gift!](#)

A tribute gift is a way to honor someone special by dedicating your gift to the Ronald McDonald House of Rochester, MN, in their name. To make sure they get recognition for your dedicated gift, check "tribute" in our online donation form, and check "notify" to ensure that a card is sent to them on your behalf.

A recent guest, Clara (15), said, *"Thank you—you help a lot of people in need. Staying here makes our lives easier, which makes it feel more like home."*



WELCOME TO THE 20TH ANNUAL
HEARTS & DIAMONDS SPECTACULAR

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The **20th Annual Hearts & Diamonds Spectacular**
is Saturday, Feb. 4, 2023!

[**CLICK TO BUY TICKETS**](#)

The Ronald McDonald House of Rochester is serving more children and families than ever before!

Join the staff and provide a home for people from all over the world!

Volunteer Associate – Evening

Monday – Friday, 1:30 – 10 p.m.

The Volunteer Associate position supports the work of the

Volunteer Director to ensure the organization has ample qualified and trained volunteers to support the mission of the Ronald McDonald House. The Volunteer Associate works under the direction of the Volunteer Director to identify, recruit, train, and onboard new volunteers, including preparing and managing training materials and other communication vehicles.

CLICK TO APPLY ONLINE

Click if you are interested in learning about volunteer opportunities.





**Ronald
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<https://www.rmhmh.org/>

UPCOMING EVENTS

<p>20TH ANNUAL HEARTS & DIAMONDS SPECTACULAR presented by Sterling State Bank</p>	<p>Saturday, Feb. 4, 2023 CLICK TO BUY TICKETS</p>
<p>SHAMROCK SHAKE FUNDRAISER at McDonald's restaurants in Minnesota</p>	<p>March 6-16, 2023</p>
<p>CANS FOR KIDS</p>	<p>Saturday, March 18, 2023</p>

SHARE YOUR STORY!

Each family who has stayed at the House has a unique and beautiful story!

Your story is the reason people support the House!

Contact [Jacob Dreyer, Communications Director](#), for more information.

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