



Ronald
McDonald
House®
Rochester, MN

news from the heart

JUNE 2022

www.rmhm.org



Photography by Fagan Studios

When doctors in Belize—a Central American country with less than 500,000 people—discovered a tumor on Javohn's brain, they said, "Take him to the United States...if you want him to live."

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

This message will be my final note as Executive Director of the Ronald McDonald House of Rochester. It has been a tremendous joy and privilege to work alongside each of you, providing a home away from home and support to thousands of families seeking medical care for their children. Much has been accomplished by our Ronald McDonald House community of supporters, staff, and volunteers over the past 11 years, and it has been my good fortune to have been connected to the mission during this period of growth and advancement. My time at the Ronald McDonald House has been an unexpected gift that I will treasure. Thank you for the trust you placed in me to lead this organization and for your gifts of counsel, support, collaboration, and friendship that you have bestowed on me. My heart is full of cherished mission memories that I will carry with me always.



Beginning July 1, 2022, I will step into a leadership position with a private family foundation with roots in Rochester, focused entirely on philanthropy. Following my departure at the end of June, Paula Haraldson – Family Services Director and Jammie McGuire – Operations Director will serve as Co-Interim Executive Directors until a permanent organizational leader has been named. The Ronald McDonald House of Rochester has engaged Ballinger|Leafblad to assist with the search for this next leader.

The future is bright for the Ronald McDonald House of Rochester with exciting opportunities to expand how we support children and families in the coming years, and I am looking forward to watching the mission continue to grow and flourish. My very best wishes to all who will continue to nurture and support the mission and the children and families who will find love, comfort, and hope in the embrace of the Ronald McDonald House of Rochester.

With deepest appreciation,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'P. Elliott'.

Peggy Elliott, Executive Director

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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.



Ronald
McDonald
House®
Rochester, MN



Javohn and his dad, Thomas, did not expect such a long and difficult journey. But after two tumors and one year of radiation and chemotherapy...it is almost time for Javohn to rejoin his five siblings in Belize.

"He is a fighter; he is strong," said Thomas. "And he has so much joy."

When doctors in Belize—a Central American country with less than 500,000 people—discovered a tumor on Javohn's brain, they said, "Take him to the United States...if you want him to live." His first surgery was in Denver and it was successful, but he would need a second surgery at Mayo Clinic in Rochester. After the surgery, doctors recommended radiation treatment for three months. All was well.

One year later, during a routine checkup at Mayo Clinic, doctors discovered the brain tumor was gone...but he developed a tumor on his skull. Javohn needed eight months of chemotherapy. The treatment plan was hard on his body, particularly his kidneys. But it is almost time to go home.

"It is rough," Thomas said. "This is the first time our family has been apart. But it is something we need to do."

When they first arrived in Rochester, they stayed at a hotel because their

situation was short-term; when they learned about the additional treatment, they were referred to the Ronald McDonald House of Rochester.

“I was shocked,” said Thomas. “I did not expect this hospitality. It is truly a home away from home. It is amazing.”



Thomas mentioned the volunteers who made them feel welcome, despite it being a different country and culture. And how he can only say thanks to the donors who have provided so much for him and his family.

“The House has everything we need,” Thomas said. “It is perfect.”

“It keeps my mind off of the hard things that I am going through,” said Javohn.

Javohn’s mom, Doret, and Thomas have taken turns staying at the House and caring for their other children in Belize. One of his brothers, Thomas Jr., has visited as well. But Javohn has not seen his other four siblings, including his twin sister, in nearly one year.

“I talk to her every day,” Javohn said. “I miss them all so much.”

“It is always noisy at our house,” said Thomas.

Javohn and Thomas experienced many firsts during their time in Minnesota, including snow and sub-zero temperatures. It is rare for the temperature to drop below 60 degrees any day in Belize; Rochester was negative-15 degrees on a February day.

“They said it would be cold,” Thomas said. “It is different in Minnesota than it is in Belize. But the House provided winter clothing and Mayo Clinic is connected by walkways.”



"We were very thankful."

Even though it is summer in Minnesota, Javohn is excited for summer at home.

"I cannot wait to fish, farm, and work," said Javohn.

The family also its own ground food—plantains, carrots, potatoes, sweet potatoes, watermelon, pumpkins, papayas, bananas, mangoes—which Javohn enjoys harvesting. Mangoes are currently in season and particularly delicious.

Javohn and Thomas are excited to be on the water back home, but they were able to experience fly fishing and ice fishing with a friend in Minnesota. They described the latter as "crazy, but fun!"

"This is the most time he has ever spent inside; he is always outside," said Thomas.

Javohn will need medical evaluations every three months for the next two years. Each visit should be short in duration. Doctors are currently working on a plan for Javohn to be seen closer to home, but as Thomas said, "The Ronald McDonald House is our home."

"The House kept Javohn alive," Thomas said.



The House Dinner program is back!

House Dinners have been a way for groups to directly connect with our mission by purchasing, preparing, and serving a meal to our families. We serve between 20-30 families per meal, and with summer approaching, the need for this program and the number of families served each night will continue to grow!

Three ways to become a House Dinner Hero:

1) Volunteer your group to serve a dinner

Organize a group of no more than six, fully vaccinated volunteers (over the age of 16) to purchase, prepare, and serve a House Dinner to our families.

2) **Sponsor a meal**

Contact Katie Arnott (karnott@rmhmn.org) to purchase and deliver a meal to families at the House.

3) Make a donation towards the nutritional support for families at the House.



VOLUNTEERS TRULY ARE THE HEART OF THE HOUSE!

The Ronald McDonald House of Rochester offers numerous opportunities for individuals or groups to donate their time and talents.

[CLICK HERE](#) to learn about the many different opportunities to volunteer!

PAW PALS

When families arrive at the Ronald McDonald House of Rochester, they have often had to leave their beloved pets back home with family or friends. Paw Pals, the House's pet therapy program, offers children and their families the opportunity to connect with pet therapy dogs and their dedicated owners on a regular basis, offering smiles, a sense of home, and a buddy who will always listen.

Beamish



Bailey



Bert



Finnegan



Jack

NEW PALS

Aspen and Dempsey joined the House in 2022 and are excited to meet children and families staying at the Ronald McDonald House of Rochester!

Aspen



Dempsey

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE



Whether it be small or large, you can make a difference in the lives of families in need.

◀ MAKE A PLANNED GIFT

Many supporters of the Ronald McDonald House choose to create planned gifts to secure their legacy for future generations of children and families in need of support. Planned giving often has personal and financial benefits as well. For more information, or to share your intentions and join Hearts of Gold, please contact the development department at 507-282-3955 or visit [rmhmh.giftlegacy.com](https://www.rmhmh.org/giftlegacy.com) for more information.

BECOME A RECURRING GIVER ▶

Did you know you can set up a reoccurring gift—monthly, quarterly, or yearly—to the House? These small gifts throughout the year have the power to add up and be quite significant by year's end. This is one way you can help families in need while also maintaining your personal budget. Go to [rmhmh.org/donate](https://www.rmhmh.org/donate) and click the option *make this a recurring gift*.

◀ HOST A COMMUNITY FUNDRAISER

Start a fundraiser on Facebook, host a bake sale, or a community 5k to benefit the Ronald McDonald House! Each year, more than \$100,000 is raised by generous people like you. Activate your network to join you in fundraising to support hundreds of families supported by the Ronald McDonald House each year. Visit [rmhmh.org/communityfundraisers](https://www.rmhmh.org/communityfundraisers) to get started!

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT THE
DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT AT 507-282-3955.**



44TH ANNUAL

SWING YOUR BIRDIE GOLF CLASSIC

think
BANK

PRESENTED BY

NEW DATE!

Monday, August 29, 2022
at SOMERBY GOLF CLUB

SILENT AUCTION IS OPEN

Bid on one-of-a-kind items donated by local businesses and individuals (closes at 6 p.m. on Aug. 29)

JOIN THE WAITING LIST

Interested golfers can sign up for the rescheduled date

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Putting Green Sponsor





**Ronald
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Rochester, MN

850 2nd St. SW
Rochester, MN 55902

(507) 282-3955

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

UPCOMING EVENTS

**SWING YOUR BIRDIE
GOLF CLASSIC**
presented by Think Bank

Rescheduled
Monday, Aug. 29, 2022, 10 a.m.
JOIN WAITING LIST

Ronald McDonald House Staff Announcements



Brooke
Olson

Started as
Volunteer Associate
in June

CONNECT!

SIGN UP TO RECEIVE
ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTERS

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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