



Ronald McDonald  
House Charities®  
Midwest | MN, WI, IA

# news from the heart

## MARCH 2024

[www.RMHCMidwestMWI.org](http://www.RMHCMidwestMWI.org)



Moms Brittany and Katie, and kids Evie and Andrés, were together for one week in Rochester, playing games and eating meals.

**"They are our family at the House."**

# A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

Dear friends and families of the House,

I'm writing to you today with a mixture of emotions – gratitude, determination, and inspiration.

As many of you know, 2023 was a record year for families seeking support at the Ronald McDonald House in Rochester. We rolled into January, and the need for our work shows no signs of slowing down. In fact, we served nearly twice as many families in February of this year compared to February 2023. Beyond the room, meals, and transportation support, our families were treated to a Winter Camp experience and countless activities for all members of the family staying with us.

The first two months of the year also brought us inspiring moments. Just last month, we celebrated the success of our annual Hearts & Diamonds event, presented by Knutson Construction. It was a wonderful evening, filled with joy, generosity, and a shared commitment to the children and families turning to us. A special thank you to all our sponsors and attendees – your contributions will make a lasting difference in the lives of countless families.

Unfortunately, this past month we also said our goodbyes to a longtime friend, partner, and key supporter of the House, Barb Henoch. Barb lived an extraordinary life, filled with purpose, and marked by impact with all she did. Not only did she share the House's mission with everyone she met – she embodied our mission. The story of her life cannot be appropriately conveyed in this brief note, so please take time to read more about the inspiring life she lived in our Annual Report in April.

Looking ahead, we face both opportunities and challenges. We are excited about the continued impact we can make, but we also need your continued support. Your generosity, volunteer hours, and hosting of House dinners go a long way in ensuring that we can continue to provide a home away from home for families when they need it most.

Together, we can create a brighter future for families facing medical challenges. Thank you for your unwavering support.

Nick Mueller, Chief Executive Officer, RMHC Midwest MN, WI, IA



## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

### OFFICERS

- Corey Heimer, President
- Ashton Boon, President Elect
- Hilary R. Stonelake-Curtis, Past President
- Chris Ryan, Treasurer
- Lindsay Young, Secretary
- Jeff Brown, Jr., Officer
- Michelle Fagan, Officer

### TRUSTEES

- Wade Beavers
- Bruce Bonnicksen
- Chris Colby, MD
- Craig Daniels, MD
- Brian Ellsworth
- Mike Gyarmaty
- Al Kubly

- Nadia N.I. Laack, MD MS
- Brian Leary
- Kathy Lombardo, MD
- Wendy Lommen
- Jacob W. Malwitz
- Elton Mosman
- Chao Mwatela
- Katie Post
- Jill Rock
- Ed Stanley
- Becky Wendland
- Mike Zinser

### EMERITUS TRUSTEES

- Robert Cline
- Charlene Hawk
- Cynthia R. Nelson
- George S. Wilson

### IN MEMORIAM EMERITUS TRUSTEES

- Robert H. Feldt, MD
- Phil Henoch
- Kak Johnson
- Thomas A. Winkels

### EX-OFFICIO

- Jane K. Champion



RMHC  
Midwest | MN, WI, IA



## **The most difficult road to walk is the one we walk alone. Thankfully...moms Brittany and Katie had each other.**

---

Katie runs a preschool in the Twin Cities and Brittany's nephew was a student at the preschool. He became good friends with Katie's older son, participating in the same activities and events.



"We would see each other in passing, but not much more," Katie said.

The two were acquaintances until 10 years later, when their paths crossed due to their children's medical needs.

"I follow Evie's story on social media, and when we learned Andrés, my younger son, needed care at Mayo Clinic, I asked Brittany about the Ronald McDonald House," said Katie.

"We became people who could confide in one another," Brittany said. "We connected. And our appointments and experiences converged."

"It's been a blessing to go through this with a friend," said Katie. "It's really special." Brittany and Katie, and Evie and Andrés, were together for one week in Rochester, playing games and eating meals at the House.

"Who would have thought that an acquaintance from 10 years ago would have such a huge impact on our medical journey?" Brittany said. "They are our family at the House."

---

**[Click here to read Andrés' story!](#)**  
**[Click here to read Evie's story!](#)**

The Family Activity Program provides interaction, support, and healthy distractions for the children and families staying at the Ronald McDonald House in Rochester!



**Minnesota Vikings offensive lineman Christian Darrisaw donated his game-worn My Cause My Cleats to the House!**



**Paw Pals is the House's pet therapy program that connects guests with certified pet therapy dogs!**



**Guest and volunteers enjoy games like Minute To Win It!**



**Music Therapy provides a creative outlet for children to play instruments and sing!**



**“The House activities filled me up,” said Heather, a guest mom.  
“It improved my mental and physical health.”**



**The Indoor Activity Room provides a safe and warm space for games, movies, and more!**



**Go Karts Gaming Stations make electronic fun accessible for all guests!**



**The front patio provides space for outdoor activities like campfires with s'mores!**



**Families celebrate holidays - like Valentine's Day - at the House as well!**



# 21st Hearts & Diamonds Spectacular presented by Knutson Construction

The 2024 Hearts & Diamonds event was a grand success, raising more than \$250,000 to support the children and families staying at the Ronald McDonald House in Rochester!

The *Fill the House with Love* donation raised enough money to provide nearly 1,000 nights at the House!



[Image Conscious Photography](#)

# Thank you to all of our sponsors who made this year's event possible!

**Presenting Sponsor:** Knutson Construction

**Exclusive Diamond Sponsor:** Hight & Randall, Personal Jeweler

**Matching Gift Sponsor:** Mayo Clinic

**Major Sponsors:** Somerby Golf Club, Rochester Motor Cars, Weller Brothers Landscaping

**Heartfelt Sponsors:** Fagan Studios, Le Jardin European Style Floral



[CLICK HERE TO VIEW FULL PHOTO ALBUM](#)



# Christensen named Development Director

Angela Christensen was named Development Director of Ronald McDonald House Charities Midwest MN, WI, IA on Dec. 18, 2023.



A 12-year employee with the organization, Angela spent the past eight years working closely with our donors while serving on our team as Development Officer. During her time in the development position, Angela developed deep, meaningful, and authentic relationships with many of the House's key donors and supporters. Angela's work directly with donors and indirectly through her leadership for our fundraising events has accounted for nearly \$6 million of support raised for our mission over the past eight years.

---

## Support the children and families staying at the House by donating items from our Amazon List!



[RMHC Midwest MN, WI, IA  
Amazon List](#)





**RMHC**<sup>®</sup>

Midwest | MN, WI, IA

850 2nd St. SW  
Rochester, MN 55902

(507) 282-3955

[www.RMHCMidwestMWI.org](http://www.RMHCMidwestMWI.org)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Cans for Kids

at RMHC Midwest MN, WI, IA

Saturday, March 16, 2024  
8 a.m. - 12 p.m.

### Swing Your Birdie Golf Classic

at Somerby Golf Club

Monday, June 10, 2024

## SHARE YOUR STORY!

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

Your story is the reason people support RMHC Midwest MN, WI, IA!

Contact Jacob Dreyer, Communications Director, for more information.

## CONNECT!

SIGN UP TO RECEIVE ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTERS



[Facebook](#)

[Twitter](#)



[Instagram](#)

[YouTube](#)



[LinkedIn](#)