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Jacob and Daniel Jolivard
As we reflect on the accomplishments of our Ronald McDonald House this year, we think about everyone who has made an impact on our organization’s mission. Denny Buchan, one of our founding Directors, recently shared his story with the current Board of Directors. After losing a daughter to cancer, he and his wife Jean made it their goal to help fundraise and build a Ronald McDonald House in Milwaukee. Thirty-two years later, the Buchan’s goal has been accomplished with a 70 guest room House that has kept over 38,000 families together while their seriously ill or injured child was treated at a local hospital.

We recently read that we should be known for our footprints and not our fingerprints. The Buchans have left a beautiful and lasting footprint on our organization’s legacy. We have been blessed with so many wonderful donors and volunteers. As we anticipate serving approximately 2,000 families this year, thank you for sharing your gifts of time and financial support. We also encourage you to think about the legacy you wish to leave behind and the people and organizations your footprint will impact.

If you are interested in learning how you can become a Legacy Friend of the House please contact Bridget Kesner, Development Director bkesner@rmhcmilwaukee.org

Carl and Karen Kitzinger are leaving a legacy gift to Ronald McDonald House Charities® Eastern Wisconsin (RMHC) because they believe in the mission and want to ensure that the House continues to provide a home away from home for families in the future. “We are so pleased to be able to help support people and are proud to leave a gift that will keep giving for many years to come.”

The Kitzingers have been personally touched by the mission. Several years ago their niece stayed at the House. Though they never thought a family member would be a guest family, Carl was grateful there was a place for them to stay close to the hospital.

Experiencing the House’s mission along with their continued involvement and support over the years inspired the Kitzingers to leave a legacy gift. “It’s a special place, and we know we are making a difference now and in the future. That’s a really good feeling.”

The Ronald McDonald House is thankful for donors like Carl and Karen who understand the importance of keeping families close and have committed to being a Legacy Friend.
Jolivard Family Story

Last Christmas, Junior Jolivard opened the door to his guest room at the Ronald McDonald House, preparing to face another day since his son, Daniel, had been admitted to the hospital two months prior. Instead, he was greeted with an unexpected sight – gifts for his family, and more at the door of each family staying in the House. Being far from home, these gifts went beyond brightly wrapped toys and treats; the generosity showed the Jolivards they were not alone.

Born in Port au Prince, Haiti, Daniel Jolivard was hospitalized shortly after birth because something was destroying his red blood cells. Limited resources prevented a firm diagnosis, so Daniel was kept alive with blood transfusions. Junior would personally walk through the city to the Red Cross, hoping they would have the right amount and type of blood he needed. A cooler was packed, and he traveled back to the hospital so his son could receive his treatment.

After two months of uncertainty, Junior reached out to friends in the U.S. seeking help. There was hope when Daniel and dad could travel to seek a medical consultation with a doctor in Michigan. At 3 months old, Daniel was finally diagnosed with Hemophagocytic Lymphohistiocytosis (HLH) which is a life-threatening immunodeficiency; cells of the immune system don’t work properly to destroy infected or damaged cells. But there was another set-back – Daniel had a heart attack and was in a coma, forcing the family to consider hospice as he was not expected to live more than 48 hours to a week.

The Jolivards began to make preparations for what they were told was the inevitable. Yet Daniel continued to fight, day after day, and month after month. He did not receive another blood transfusion but was still holding strong. Each month the Jolivards celebrated a “birthday” just in case Daniel did not make it to 1 year old. And after some time, he not only turned 1, but eventually turned 3, and became a candidate for a bone marrow transplant.

It’s difficult to imagine the mixture of joy and fear that the Jolivards felt as Daniel’s little brother, Jacob, was born in January 2015, just a few weeks before Daniel received his bone marrow transplant. Then their little family was rocked again in March when mom, Rachel, was diagnosed with ovarian cancer and received immediate surgery and treatment. Daniel also struggles with severe graft-versus-host-disease (GVHD) as a result of his transplant.

With all the family has faced, it is understandable that they live their lives day-to-day. But to know the Jolivards is to know a family full of grace and gratitude. Their daily struggles are always overshadowed by the love and joy they share with one another and everyone they meet. As Junior shared, “RMHC has been the greatest and most unexpected thing to us. I just hope to one day return the favor for other families struggling.”

Daniel is now four years old and receiving treatment for GVHD every three weeks. It’s been over a year that Rachel’s been in remission, and Jacob is a happy, healthy toddler. As the Jolivards are nearing another Christmas, they know they have the Ronald McDonald House ready to help them keep their family close.
We are Keeping Families Close

We help keep families close by providing rides to Children's Hospital multiple times every day. It's easy for families to come to the lobby, hop into the warm van and head to the hospital to see their children or go to appointments in a few short minutes. Our volunteer van drivers also make grocery store runs so families can stock up on their favorite foods.

Caiden and Kaylee hang out with our House Therapy Dog, McNugget

Our Mission:
Ronald McDonald House Charities® of Eastern Wisconsin, Inc. keeps families together while their children are receiving medical treatment at local hospitals. We help keep families close by providing rides to Children's Hospital multiple times every day. It's easy for families to come to the lobby, hop into the warm van and head to the hospital to see their children or go to appointments in a few short minutes. Our volunteer van drivers also make grocery store runs so families can stock up on their favorite foods.

We often hear: “I miss my pets!” Our families are excited to learn we have a solution for that! McNugget, more often known as Mac to his friends and admirers, is the RMHC’s professional cheer-giving House Dog. Once Mac puts on his therapy vest, he knows he is going to work and slows himself down to be touched, hugged and played with by a House full of families.
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Art therapy involves more than simply having a child or family color a picture or complete a craft project. Though all art making is considered to be therapeutic on some level, a skilled and experienced art therapist uses the creative process to guide families towards a place of healing, reconciliation, and hope.

Families enjoy playing ping pong in the Game Room

Nathan makes some awesome art during an Art Therapy session

Kids just want to have fun! Spaces in the House such as the Playroom and Game Room give children and their families an opportunity to play video games, watch movies, read books and even dress up.
Miles 4 Madyson

When Madyson LeTourneau was just 17 months old, she was diagnosed with a rare form of soft tissue cancer called Rhabdomyosarcoma. The LeTourneaus soon learned that Madyson would have to undergo a major surgery, 42 weeks of chemotherapy and 5 weeks of radiation. Madyson and her family were able to stay at RMHC for more than 4 weeks during the radiation treatment. Paul and Betsy LeTourneau, Madyson’s parents, are avid runners and decided to host a 5k/10k with proceeds benefitting the MACC Fund and RMHC. We are so grateful to the over 500 people that supported Miles 4 Madyson, raising $12,500 for the House!

2 Million Pop Tabs

Tab Toss Day 2016 was a huge success and the kids from New London Intermediate Middle School played a big role! The students and the community collected pop tabs for a few years to bring down to the House for Tab Toss Day. Students from the Pop Top Committee and their advisor Erica Wilson loaded up a van and made the trip down to Milwaukee, stopping first at United Milwaukee Scrap (UMS) to drop off the pop tabs then over to the House for a tour of the Secret Garden. In total, the school collected close to 2 million pop tabs which translates to 1407 pounds and approximately $1000 with the help of UMS rounding up the price paid per pound! With the help of these kids and the entire New London community, we raised over $18,000 at Tab Toss Day this year.

Golfing with Spancrete

Providing approximately 2,000 families each year with a comfortable stay at our Ronald McDonald House requires significant community support. We are grateful to Spancrete and their employees for their commitment and support to the families that we serve. For over 70 years, Spancrete has been a leading provider in precast building solutions and a global provider of precast production equipment. In 2012, when Spancrete lost one of its employees, Joe Bidler, the company wanted to do something to honor Joe. Spancrete decided to host an annual golf outing and dinner celebration, and the Bidler family selected the Ronald McDonald House to benefit from the proceeds. This year marked their 4th memorial golf outing and in addition to presenting an $8,000 check to the Ronald McDonald House, they also donated wishlist items and gift cards.

To date, Spancrete has provided almost $20,000 in financial support to our House. We are fortunate and grateful for all that Spancrete does for the families we serve and thank Spancrete employees and their families for their commitment to the Ronald McDonald House Charities Eastern Wisconsin.

Be creative and share the message of hope and healing for RMHC. Anyone can host a fundraiser! Whether you are an individual, group of friends, school, company, or community group, your support can make a powerful impact on RMHC.

Every dollar raised helps us provide our guest families with a comfortable bed, warm meal, and a place to call home for as long as needed.

Contact Bridget Kesner for more information: bkesner@rmhc milwaukee.org
Daylea's Story

The phrase “good things come in small packages” certainly pertains to Daylea who proudly wears her cowboy boots and a big smile 24/7. You would never guess that this spunky little girl was considered medically fragile when she was adopted by her mom Amber 3 years ago.

Daylea was born with Biliary Atresia, a liver disease and was not expected to live much beyond her 4 month birthday. Like many moms of children with life threatening diseases, Amber became an expert on Daylea’s condition and learned that a liver transplant was a treatment option for children with her condition. The waiting began at just 8 months old, when Daylea was put on the transplant list in Iowa. At age 4, she was added to the Wisconsin transplant list. On October 29th, 2015, their wait ended with a call that changed their lives, and with hopeful hearts they made the 4 hour drive to Milwaukee. We are happy to share that Daylea is thriving as a result of her transplant.

Amber shared that the Ronald McDonald House really is their home away from home. “I didn’t know what to expect and was amazed at all the things that are here for families. I never felt homesick while staying at the House.” Daylea and Amber stayed at the House for 5 weeks and continue to come back for regular checkups. Daylea knows trips to Wisconsin mean seeing McNugget and spending time playing in the House that love built.

Did you know?

Ronald McDonald House Benefits and Impact

27% of parents experienced post-traumatic stress symptoms several months after their child’s discharge from a hospital stay, but Ronald McDonald Houses help their guests strengthen coping abilities by keeping families together.

In a survey of 250 families, researchers found that children and their parents, who stayed at a Ronald McDonald House, had a better perceived quality of life than expected for children with chronic diseases.

Ronald McDonald Houses provide spaces to play. Playing with other children experiencing similar situations can help these children cope with trauma.

References

1. Sanchez et al. Archivos Argentinos de Pediatría (2014)
3 Ways to Donate

♥ Go online - www.RMHC HOME.org
♥ Call Bridget - she'd love to talk to you! (414) 935-6511
♥ Clip it - send the form below to Ronald McDonald House
8948 Watertown Plank Road, Milwaukee, WI 53226

Enclosed is my gift of □ $500 □ $250 □ $100 □ Other: _____

Name: ___________________________ Address: ___________________________
Telephone: ______________________ Email: _____________________________

By giving your email address you will receive occasional e-newsletters. We do not sell or share information.

Credit Card: □ Visa □ AmEx □ MC □ Discover Security Code: _____
CC Number: ______________________ Name on Card: ______________________ Exp. Date: _______
Signature: _______________________

Please make checks payable to Ronald McDonald House Charities Eastern Wisconsin. Contributions are tax deductible.

It costs $90 per night for a family to stay at RMHC, yet we suggest our families make a donation of just $20 a night. No family is ever turned away for their inability to pay. Your ongoing support is a major reason why.

Thank you for your generosity!

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