In 2018, Bridget and her mother, Kathy, traveled from Franklin, Massachusetts to Wisconsin so Bridget could attend the residential program for Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) at Rogers Behavioral Health. In November of that year, when Bridget turned 18, she transitioned to the Partial Hospitalization Care Program (PHP) in Brown Deer, which meant a long term stay in Wisconsin. This was when the two were first connected with the Ronald McDonald House®.

“During their stay, the two found solace in the Great Room, a large communal space where guest families often gather in between appointments. Kathy was grateful for a place to connect with other families.

“When your child is struggling, it’s a difficult time for everybody. For me, I was away from home, we were across the country. I was scared, overwhelmed, and incredibly lonely. The Ronald McDonald House, the Great Room in particular, provided a place for me to connect with other families, other parents who were going through their own challenges, but were of tremendous support. We laughed, we cried. We ate a lot of snacks. We made connections that were just invaluable.”

The therapeutic programming at RMHC brought Bridget comfort and opportunities to meet other guests of all ages. She enjoyed painting during Art Therapy and learned how to play the ukulele in Music Therapy. Bridget recalls that Pet Therapy was everyone’s favorite and shared, “that’s where I met Alfie, who is admittedly my favorite. All of [the programming] kept me from feeling so homesick and kept me connected with people, some of whom I might not have ever connected with.”

People with OCD experience persistent distressing thoughts that cause extreme anxiety. When Bridget’s OCD latched onto money, she struggled with the idea of spending any of her earnings. Bridget’s decision to purchase a paddle board for herself signified a major victory.

Even though the pair is now back home in Massachusetts, they are still in contact with many of the families they connected with during their stay. “They’ve become lifelong friends,” says Kathy.

Knowing what RMHC® Eastern Wisconsin has meant to their family, Bridget and Kathy were thrilled with the announcement of the new Ronald McDonald Family Room® in the new Ladish Co. Foundation Center on the Oconomowoc campus of Rogers Behavioral Health.

“Knowing other families are going to have the opportunity to experience the community of support at RMHC is just really heartwarming,” remarks Kathy. Bridget and Kathy agree that the Family Room is going to change a lot of lives and have a positive impact on people who are really struggling. Bridget added “It’s exciting, we didn’t expect it. It’s amazing and one of the best things ever!”

Thinking about their RMHC experience and the families Kathy met on their journey, she shared, “Anytime you can lighten their load a little bit, it’s just invaluable. We’re so grateful to have been a part of RMHC and we’re so supportive of [the Family Room] endeavor. The Ronald McDonald House will forever hold a place in our hearts.”