Ronald McDonald House®
Connecticut & Western Massachusetts

From the Heart

October 2026



860 Howard Avenue, New Haven, CT 06519
T: 203.777.5683 www.ronaldmcdonaldhousectma.org

Together, We Make a Difference

Every family who walks through our doors arrives with a different story, but many leave with something in common: a sense of belonging.



Michelle D'Amore with Board member, Sarah Matney of Connecticut Children's, at our 26th annual golf tournament.

In this issue, you will be introduced to people from different backgrounds, different communities, and even different countries. Some stayed with us for weeks, some return year after year for treatment, and others now give back as volunteers. Yet their stories all point to the same truth: no one gets through life's hardest moments alone.

You will read about a mother's gratitude for the friendships and support her family found during a long stay far from home. Volunteers share personal experiences that inspire them to serve others, and donors and community partners highlight how they strengthen the network of care that surrounds every family who stays with us.

Together, these stories remind us that the House is more than a place to sleep. It's a place where strangers become friends, small acts of kindness become lasting memories, and families find comfort when they need it most.

Thank you for helping make that possible every day.

With heartfelt gratitude,

Michelle D'Amore, Chief Executive Officer

2026 UNITEX MATCHING CHALLENGE

Your donation will support twice as many families thanks to Unitex!

Unitex is matching appeal gifts made to Ronald McDonald House CTMA before December 31st, dollar for dollar.

DOUBLE YOUR IMPACT



Ronald McDonald House Connecticut & Western Massachusetts

Unitex HEALTHCARE LAUNDRY SERVICES

Words of Gratitude



Felipe and Pilar going home.

Dear Ronald McDonald House Family,

Today, we want to say thank you, although thank you is too small a gesture to express everything we have in our hearts.

During the 49 days we stayed in this beautiful home far away from our home in Ecuador, every day we felt a little more accompanied and filled with love. We came from Ecuador with a lot of emotions and fear. All of you opened the doors to us and received us with the biggest hearts. We will never forget it.

Not only did we find a place to stay, we found good company, compassion, and family. Each of the families that were in the House supported us, told us their stories, their experiences, and listened while we shared difficult moments together. At the same time, we found the House full of happiness, conversations, laughter, and delicious food. We learned different cultures of the families and also shared a little of ours. It made me very happy to be able to prepare a meal that everyone enjoyed.

There were simple moments that turned into memories that we will always save in our hearts. One of the memories was the opportunity to have Felipe celebrate his primary school graduation virtually. You gave him space in the House to be present and live in that moment. Thank you for allowing him to have that special time and experience the milestone. Thank you for joining him in a moment that was so special in his life. As a mother, that is something I will carry in my heart forever.

We are also thankful for allowing him space to play ping-pong, his favorite sport to play, and enjoy watching the FIFA World Cup as soccer is his favorite sport to watch — and don't forget bingo, arts and crafts, and all the desserts with the consistent volunteers that were there for us week by week. They always tried to keep our minds distracted.



Celebrating Felipe's graduation!

After 49 days of living at Ronald McDonald House, we are leaving with a lot of emotions. The people in the House, staff, and other families, have become family to us. We are taking home memories that will be with us for the rest of our lives. There are places you visit, but Ronald McDonald House is a place that stays with you always.

With all our love and gratitude from Ecuador,
Pilar and Felipe

Caring for Famiies

Dave S .
I worked for a civil engineering firm, a land surveying firm, for 36 years. I recently retired at the end of 2025. I needed to stay busy, and in February of 2026, I started volunteering. It's just a great feeling. At the end of the day, I go home, and I'm feeling good.

I think here you really are making a difference. It's so nice for families to have a place across the street from the hospital... the parents really appreciate it.



Dave



Bernadette

Bernadette K.
From the ages of 3 to 10, I stayed multiple times at Ronald McDonald House. My brother was very sick growing up. During our stays, I remember the way staff would treat us, always with kindness and respect. I knew while growing up, I wanted to give back to the place that once helped my own family. Now, as I am in the process of becoming a medical social worker, I thought there was no better time.

I know how meaningful the work at Ronald McDonald House can be. I value giving back and helping out where I can because even a small act of kindness can make a difference in someone's life.

Addyson I.
I learned about the Ronald McDonald House mission, and what they do for family members and their children, and was instantly inspired...Having a passion for helping others pushes me to be a part of something bigger and to give back to those in my community.

Volunteering at the House is important to me because I understand what it is like to have a young loved one be in the hospital for months on end. Giving the families an extra shoulder to lean on means everything to me. Being a part of the Ronald McDonald House family gives me that opportunity to provide support to families going through unimaginable circumstances.



Addyson

Supporting Families

Deb K. and Jesse

I have found that I get as much as I give from the Ronald McDonald House. During my time visiting the past two years with my dog, Jesse, we have met many guests during their stay.

I am glad that Jesse can help make their stay a bit more pleasant as they support their child or sibling in the hospital. The staff at the House is great — always welcoming and gracious to all.



Deb and her dog, Jesse



Bill, Erin, and Pattie Egress

The Egress Family

When our daughter, Erin, was six years old, we arrived at the hospital with the clothes on our back. We slept on a 3-inch mattress every night in the hospital playroom. Donna, a nurse from our town, would bring us clothes and drop off our dirty clothes at home since the hospital didn't have laundry facilities.

Years later, we decided to donate to the capital campaign and underwrite the laundry room in Erin's name. We felt this was one small way we could make life a little easier for the families staying at Ronald McDonald House.

Our three children, Bill and I, volunteered for many years and spent several Christmases there helping families by making meals, interacting, empathizing, and assisting them any way we could. I also chaired the Lights of Love fundraiser where schools would raise money for the House.

Standard Petroleum

An annual community partner, Standard Petroleum has been supporting families of Ronald McDonald House CTMA with their Giving Pump Program for six years! Proceeds of every gallon sold at the special purple pumps will help provide resources to families in our programs.

Now through October 31st, look for the purple pump at these Shell gas stations around Connecticut!

227 Saltonstall Parkway, New Haven
179 Shippan Avenue, Stamford
490 Boston Post Road, Guilford

23 Main Street, Centerbrook
2424 Black Rock Turnpike, Fairfield



A Giving Pump that supports our families.

The Impact You Have on Families





The Stang Family during their first stay at Ronald McDonald House.

I can't express enough how much of a burden was lifted by having this resource available to our family. Since our son's first hospitalization, we've been fortunate to return for each of his heart surgeries, and every stay has reminded us just how special the House is.

The Ronald McDonald House is so much more than a place to sleep. It provides a true home away from home. In the middle of long hospital days, uncertainty, and exhaustion, it offers a warm, welcoming environment where families can cook a meal, do laundry, rest in a comfortable bed, and simply catch their breath. It's a place where we could take care of ourselves during the moments when there was nothing more we could do for our son except trust the incredible medical team caring for him.

It has been a place where we've connected with other families walking similar roads. No one asks to be part of this kind of "club," for lack of a better word. But knowing that someone thought of families like ours—that someone recognized that while the rest of the world keeps moving, there are parents sitting beside hospital beds, carrying unimaginable burdens—and then chose to do something about it... that is extraordinary.

Thank you, Ronald McDonald House, for not only thinking of families like ours, but for creating a place that truly makes a difference. You have given us more than a roof over our heads—you've given us comfort, community, and a place that feels like home during some of the hardest days of our lives. Your kindness has become a part of our son's journey, and our family will always be grateful.

—The Stang Family

Upcoming Events





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