



Ronald McDonald
House Charities.
of Connecticut &
Western Massachusetts

From the Heart

Winter 2025

Stories of how you keep families together when it matters most

This edition of "From the Heart" is dedicated in loving memory of Cindy O'Malley, a founding member of the Ronald McDonald House of Springfield.



Jaimie and Wes found a home at the Ronald McDonald House while their twin sons grew strong in the hospital.

United in Care

I am filled with immense gratitude for your unwavering support. Your generosity has enabled us to provide a sanctuary for families facing unimaginable challenges.

The Schipritt Family's story is a testament to our mission's impact. When Jaime and Wes Schipritt discovered they were expecting twins, they were overjoyed. Their joy turned to concern when their babies were diagnosed with twin-to-twin transfusion syndrome and fetal growth restriction at 23 weeks. Despite numerous hurdles, including critical surgery and the early arrival of their twins, Luke and Jaxson, at 28 weeks, the Ronald McDonald House became their home. Our staff and volunteers provided unwavering support, ensuring they had a place to stay close to their babies in the NICU.



Michelle and Kerry Blumberg at our Ronald McDonald Family Room in Baystate Children's Hospital.

In 2024, we provided care and support to over 400 families like the Schipritts, ensuring they could stay close to their hospitalized children. Our new Ronald McDonald Family Room at Baystate Children's Hospital has quickly become a sanctuary for hundreds of caregivers, offering moments of respite that help them better support their children.

You, our volunteers and donors, exemplify the spirit of giving. Your dedication to bringing joy to families and fundraising on our behalf have made a tangible difference in the lives of those we serve.

As we look ahead in 2025, we remain committed to providing a sanctuary of support for families in need. Your continued involvement is vital to our mission. Whether through volunteering, donating, or spreading the word about our mission, you play an integral role in helping us keep families together when they need us most.

Thank you for being a part of our Ronald McDonald House family. Together, we can ensure that compassion and hope lead the way forward, even in the most challenging times. We look forward to our continued success and growth together in 2025.

With heartfelt gratitude,

Michelle D'Amore
Chief Executive Officer



Did you know the average Round-Up donation is \$0.44?

It may seem like just pennies at the time, but your impact is PRICELESS!

A Sanctuary of Support

"When we found out we were having twins, we were ecstatic. Both of us are twins—my mother is a twin, and Wes's grandfather was also a twin. The thought of continuing this special bond meant the world to us. However, at 23 weeks of gestation, during a routine echocardiogram, we received devastating news: our babies were diagnosed with twin-to-twin transfusion syndrome and fetal growth restriction. Our only option was to undergo laser ablation surgery to disconnect the blood vessels in the placenta that were shared by the twins."

The surgery was successful, but Baby A still wasn't receiving the nutrients he needed. At the same time, I began experiencing symptoms of preeclampsia. At 27 weeks and five days, at an ultrasound, the doctors expressed concern about Baby A's lack of amniotic fluid, and his growth continued to be poor. I was admitted to the hospital, and Wes and I were told that the babies would need to be delivered in the coming days.

That day was unexpected and overwhelming. I had been dressed and ready for work, and Wes was already at work, thinking it would be a typical day. We were completely unprepared for the birth. The goal was to start a round of steroids to help the babies' lungs develop. Once in the hospital, their heart rates were closely monitored. Although there were a few dips and scares, we made it to 28 weeks and were able to complete the steroid treatment.

At 28 weeks and one day, Luke and Jaxson were born. Luke weighed two pounds and seven ounces, and Jaxson weighed one pound and ten ounces. Neither of us could hold them before they were rushed to the NICU.



Jaxson and Luke in the NICU.



Jaimie and Wes with sons, Luke and Jaxson.

Since we lived an hour away, Wes began looking at nearby hotels, knowing we would need to stay close. The next day, we booked a week at a hotel, preparing for an indefinite stay. That's when we were approached by a hospital social worker who told us about the Ronald McDonald House. We were interested but knew it could be a long shot to get a room, and we joined the wait list.

The day after we were discharged, we went home to gather our things for what we thought would be a long hotel stay. To our surprise, the very next day, the Ronald McDonald House called us with an available room. That evening, we arrived at the House and were warmly welcomed and immediately reassured that they were there to help us every step of the way—and they truly kept that promise."

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2024 Facts & Figures

2 RONALD MCDONALD HOUSES

Located in **New Haven, CT** and **Springfield, MA** serving up to 38 families a night.



1 RONALD MCDONALD FAMILY ROOM

Located in Baystate Children's Hospital in **Springfield, MA**.

397 Families from 11 countries and 19 states called us home.



8,643

nights of lodging and care were provided.



124

moments of respite were received in our Family Room.

68% of our families were from CT and MA.

55%

of families had children that were **0-12 months old**



1 out of 5

families stayed for over 30 nights



Families saved **\$2,592,900**



in lodging, meals, and daily necessities by relying on our programs.

3 x week



Meals from the Heart were prepared by our kind-hearted volunteers, corporate groups, and community members.



3 x week

Activities that lifted families' spirits and brought smiles and joy were held in our Houses.



Providing Care in our Family Room



Our new Ronald McDonald Family Room in Baystate Children's Hospital gives caregivers a place to rest and recharge.

In just a few short months, our Ronald McDonald Family Room at Baystate Children's Hospital has become a sanctuary for hundreds of caregivers, offering them a much-needed break from the bedside.

Whether it's a 15-minute nap in a massage chair, a quiet space to read or reflect, or a nourishing snack with a hot cup of coffee, caregivers can find a moment for self-care. Stepping away from the bedside of a sick child is never easy, but the Family Room makes it possible with just a short walk down the hallway. This proximity ensures that hospital staff can quickly connect with parents if needed.

Our Family Room is equipped with amenities that provide comfort, relaxation, and compassionate interactions with our volunteers and staff. Many caregivers spend up to 30 minutes in the room, and they often share that these moments of rest help them feel refreshed and better able to focus on their child.

What our Family Room guests are saying!

"Best 'hot' cup of coffee I have had. The other cups have been cold because I am up and down with my son."

"You made my day!"

"It's so relaxing in here. I think I fell asleep for a few minutes in the chair."

"I appreciate your kindness."

Become a Family Room Volunteer!

Please call Celine at 413.271.5683 for more information and to get started.

Stories from the Heart

(Continued from page 2)

"Over time, the Ronald McDonald House began to feel like home. The staff became like a second family to us. From the welcome gift when we checked in, to their constant care for Luke and Jaxson, to providing meals, and even gifts for holidays and birthdays—we couldn't have been more thankful. The House helped ease the stress of our NICU journey in ways we couldn't have imagined.

After 111 days in the NICU, it was time to go home—a moment which was both joyful and bittersweet. We had made lifelong friends and gained a second family. We knew this wasn't the end of our connection with everyone at the Ronald McDonald House.

We are forever grateful to this incredible organization and the kind hearts of everyone who works there. The Ronald McDonald House will always hold a special place in our hearts." - Jaimie and Wes



Jaxson and Luke growing stronger each day.

Supporting Families



John D.

"I feel that it is essential to support the Ronald McDonald House. Families with children who are receiving treatment need a place to stay. The House is like walking into your own home. You have your own private space and shared spaces, like the kitchen, where you can always find something to eat or make your meals. Looking at the outside of the House, you have no idea how fantastic it is."

John enjoying our golf tournament.



Kiana G.

"I became a volunteer through my college's "Winter Break Community Outreach Program" because I wanted to volunteer in a local organization in my community. I really love working with children and families as I can use my skills and learn new ones. There are so many people passing through each day that are so generous and kind with their time and their donations. It is just such a great and welcoming place to be and I felt that from the first day I started."

Kiana at RMH of Springfield.

Why We Help

Bella B.

"My family and I are forever thankful to RMHC for keeping our family together when we needed each other the most. I wanted to do anything I could to give back to the organization that gave so much us. I joined the Alpha Delta Pi sorority and when I learned their chosen charity was the Ronald McDonald House, I knew immediately I was at my 'home away from home.'

My RMHC experience started back in 2003, when my cousin Julianna was born with a hernia in her diaphragm that forced her organs to develop on top of her heart. She had a 50% chance of survival. My aunt and uncle, with my parents by their side, were housed in the Ronald McDonald House for four months!

More recently, my cousin, Elle, was diagnosed with Leukemia. Her immune system was diminished when she developed a severe infection. My family knew there was only one place to go to get the support needed to focus our family's efforts on Elle healing. Thanks to the Ronald McDonald House, my family was able to stay close together and fight for another cousin when she struggled to fight for herself.

I can proudly say that during my term as Vice President of Philanthropy, the Theta Rho chapter of Alpha Delta Pi has raised over \$25,000 for the Ronald McDonald House of Connecticut. Theta Rho has successfully completed 11 house visits and donated and made 11 meals for families. We have put time into making baskets from the House's wish list, and door decorations for the rooms in the House, just to allow the families to know that someone out there is looking out for them. These actions, whether big or small, are what make the difference.

I believe that through unwavering dedication and warmth, my sorority sisters and the Ronald McDonald House ensure that families can focus on what truly matters—being together and supporting their children—without the added burden of financial or logistical stress. In every meal shared, every room provided, and every act of kindness extended, the Ronald McDonald House reaffirms the belief that even in the darkest times, love and family can light the way forward."



Bella visiting RMHCT.



Michelle C.

"I wanted to give back and I strongly believe in RMH's mission. Knowing families stay so close to their children while they are at the hospital is beautiful. It is one less thing for the families to worry about and they can concentrate on their children getting better.

Each year, I bring Mother's Day, Father's Day, and Christmas gifts for the families. I hosted a backyard barbecue at the House last summer as well. I have been doing this for several years and it brings me joy to know the families and siblings are thought of during holidays."

Michelle and her daughters hosting a backyard BBQ!



Ronald McDonald
House Charities®
of Connecticut &
Western Massachusetts

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Did you know ?

You can support RMHC families
right from your smartphone!



Dancing Under the Stars

MARCH 21, 2025

ANTHONY'S OCEAN VIEW



34th Annual Gala

Honorary Co-Chairs Samantha and David Edwards

April 5, 2025

The Starting Gate at GreatHorse



39th Annual Golf Tournament

May 19, 2025

Race Brook Country Club

25TH ANNUAL SPRINGFIELD GOLF TOURNAMENT

AUGUST 4, 2025

TWIN HILLS COUNTRY CLUB, LONGMEADOW, MA

