

Summer Newsletter

A Publication of Ronald McDonald House Charities of Central Illinois



When MaryBeth arrived at the hospital last summer due to complications with her pregnancy, she did not know the lengthy ordeal she was beginning. MaryBeth's daughter, MaryKate, and her son, Henry, were both born premature shortly after her arrival. MaryBeth learned that the twins would need to remain in the NICU for several months. Due to her children's medical needs, she and her family could stay at the Ronald McDonald House for as long as needed, at absolutely no cost.

MaryBeth stayed at the House for over four months. Sadly, MaryKate passed away but her brother Henry's care continued. She was relieved she had a safe and comfortable place to stay that was just across the street from the hospital. During a challenging time, MaryBeth was able to focus on what was most urgent- her son, having a warm bed, hot meals and a comforting environment to return to.

Mary Beth explains, "Ronald McDonald House is someplace that you do not think about until you or someone

you know has benefitted from it. The generous donations that enabled me to stay 116 days of Henry's 120 day NICU stay are phenomenal! Those donations allowed me to be with my son every day throughout his care; our family will never be able to aptly show our gratitude to the supporters of the Ronald McDonald House! **I truly believe that Henry is thriving today because of the generous supporters that allowed me to be with my son every day!**"

During her time here, MaryBeth was able to be close to Henry day and night. Her husband Robert, who worked full time, and their daughter Aurora would frequently visit on the weekends. During their visits they too could stay at the House free of charge and have a comfortable place to eat, rest and play. Their two-year-old daughter, Aurora, lovingly calls the facility the "clown house" and always looked forward to playing on the playground or visiting with the staff. Like many parents here, MaryBeth quickly built friendships with other parents who had children in the hospital, which she maintains even after her time at the House.

"The guest chefs are so wonderful! **Words can not express how wonderful it is to come home to a home-cooked meal.** Many times meals were the only break many of us would take away from our babies. As Aurora and Henry get older, we plan on being guest chefs and giving that comfort back to other families."

Henry was released from the hospital several months after he was born. Henry still requires regular check-ups from his doctor in Springfield, which can be difficult as MaryBeth and Robert live over two hours away. For several of these appointments, MaryBeth and Henry have been able to stay at the House, alleviating long travel times and stress on these days.

It is through the kindness of many businesses, families and individuals who support our work at Ronald McDonald House Charities of Central Illinois, that stories like Henry's and MaryBeth's are possible. Your gift has the ability to change someone's story for the better.



RMHC
of Central Illinois

Printed courtesy of HSHS
St. John's Hospital



Parkway Christian Church

The members of Parkway Christian Church have been consistent volunteers at the House over the last two years as Guest Chefs. "I feel I'm making a difference by preparing a home-cooked meal for the families who are going through a difficult time," one member said. "It warms the heart to be able to help, even in a small way (like cooking) to such a worthy cause," said Sharon Holmes, one of the Head Chefs for Parkway. "It is a privilege to cook for such deserving families." Since 2016, they have volunteered over 146 hours as Guest Chefs. The members enjoy the fellowship time with the team, staff and families staying at the House, and call it "a total benefit". They enjoy taking time to talk with the families in the House and hear their stories.

*Want to prepare a Meal from the Heart?
Learn more at rmhc-centralillinois.org or call (217) 528-3314.*



350

**FAMILIES ARE
KEPT CLOSE EACH
YEAR AT RONALD
McDONALD HOUSE
CHARITIES OF CENTRAL
ILLINOIS**



Chatham United Methodist Church

For over 5 years, members of Chatham United Methodist Church have taken the time to volunteer as Guest Chefs. They enjoy the chance to help support families in a stressful time in their lives, and feel it important to "give to others and pay it forward". One member mentioned one of her favorite memories as a Guest Chef was, "a letter we recieved from someone staying at the House saying that he had gotten in late from being at the hospital with his child and was so happy to have a meal to come back to." They have volunteered over 266 hours since 2013, providing over 60 meals. The church volunteers because, as Laura Welch says, "there are several people in our church who have utilized a [Ronald] McDonald House. They tell us how important it was and how great the feeling was to not have to worry about a place to stay."



Happy Wheels



This small cart brings big smiles to the children and families receiving medical treatment at HSHS St. John's Children Hospital. The Happy Wheels Hospitality Cart launched in 2015 as a program by Ronald McDonald House Charities of Central Illinois and the Samaritans of St. John's Hospital as a way to bring a little comfort to families and children one stroll of the hallways at a time. Volunteers roll the cart through the pediatric units twice a week with items such as coloring books, toys and stuffed animals. The cart offers these items free of charge to keep little ones and their families entertained. In addition to the immediate needs these small tokens can meet, they provide a warm reminder to families that they are not alone during a challenging time. This program is possible thanks to the generous support of donors and volunteers.

We are always seeking donations of new books, toys and activities for children for the Happy Wheels cart. You can view our current wish list for the cart at: rmhc-centralillinois.org/happy-wheels

We need volunteers to man the Happy Wheels Cart! If you would like to volunteer, please call us at (217) 528-3314 and ask for Brian.

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**MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 2017
KNIGHT'S ACTION PARK**

To purchase ducks, visit:
rmhc-centralillinois.org/ducky-derby

Ronald McDonald
House Charities®
of Central Illinois





**Ronald McDonald
House Charities®**
of Central Illinois

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Upcoming Events



94%*

**OF HOSPITAL
ADMINISTRATORS AGREE
THAT RONALD McDONALD
HOUSES REDUCE
PARENTAL STRESS**

*Lantz et al., Journal of Health Operation and Management (2015)

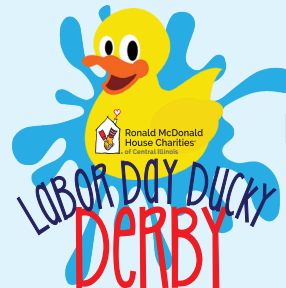
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RONALD McDONALD HOUSE NIGHT AT DOZER PARK

August 18, 2017

Dozer Park, Peoria, IL

Purchase online at peoriachiefs.com/tickets



LABOR DAY DUCKY DERBY

September 4, 2017

Knight's Action Park, Springfield, IL

Purchase online at rmhc-centralillinois.org

SWING FOR THE LOVE OF IT DAVE COPE MEMORIAL GOLF OUTING

September 12, 2017

Weaver Ridge Golf Club, Peoria, IL

Register online at rmhc-centralillinois.org

For more information
about these events,
visit:
rmhc-centralillinois.org

