

Heart Strings

Keeping Families Close®

News

40
years
1985 - 2025



Fall/Winter 2025

THE HOLLENBECK FAMILY

Finding Strength Through Connections



When Cassie and Nate Hollenbeck learned their unborn daughter Raya had Trisomy 18, a rare genetic condition, doctors offered little hope. But Cassie wasn't ready to give up. She found a care team at University of Michigan Health C.S. Mott Children's Hospital willing to fight for Raya's life.

Raya was born on October 4, 2024, and spent 143 days in the hospital. She underwent heart surgery and received a G-tube, while also battling severe bronchomalacia (a condition that made it difficult for Raya to breathe). Through it all, Raya's resilience amazed everyone, and today she continues to grow stronger with ongoing therapy and expert care.



Haven & Kennedy

During those long months, the Ronald McDonald House in Ann Arbor became home for the Hollenbeck family. Cassie, Nate, and big sister Haven spent 139 nights just steps away from Raya's hospital room. More than a place to stay, the House was a village that offered meals, play spaces, and support, allowing the family to be together during such a difficult time.

Haven especially thrived in the community. She made herself at home in the playroom and joined in special programs like music therapy, therapy dog visits, and bingo nights. Most importantly, she met Kennedy, another big sister whose sibling also has Trisomy 18. The two became inseparable, sharing playtime and crafts while their parents found comfort in a bond of shared understanding.

Cassie reflects on the impact: "The House gave us more than a place to sleep—it gave us people who understood us, friendships that lifted us up, and a community that carried us through."

Today, Raya continues to defy expectations. For the Hollenbecks, RMHC Ann Arbor will always be where they found stability, strength, and connection during their hardest days.



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Scan to donate to
RMHCAA today!



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A LETTER FROM OUR CEO



Kim Kelly, CEO

Celebrating Our Past, Looking Forward to the Next 40 Years

This year, we celebrate 40 years of bringing comfort and care to families in need. Since 1985, Ronald McDonald House Charities Ann Arbor has been a home away from home, making room for love, healing, and family during some of life's most challenging moments. Together, with our volunteers, donors, and partners, we have touched thousands of lives and created a community that supports families every step of the way.

As we celebrate our past, we are also inspired by the families we serve today. Their courage, resilience, and hope remind us why our work matters. From cozy rooms just steps from the hospital to programs that bring joy and connection, every service we provide is a way to help families stay together when it matters most.

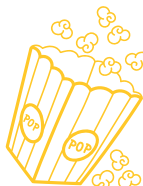
Looking to the future, we are excited to expand our impact and serve even more families in the years to come. With your support, we can continue to grow our programs, enhance our spaces, and ensure that every family who needs us has a place to call home. This 40th anniversary is not only a time to celebrate our journey but also a time to embrace what's ahead; building a future where more families can find comfort, hope, and community.

Kim Kelly, RMHCAA CEO



AUDREY'S CHILDREN

True Story Now Streaming



"Audrey's Children" tells the inspiring true story of Dr. Audrey Evans, the pioneering physician and co-founder of the first Ronald McDonald House in Philadelphia. Starring Natalie Dormer, the film highlights Dr. Evans' tenacity, brilliance, and compassion, while shedding light on the challenges RMHC families face every day. "Audrey's Children" is a moving tribute to a "woman who cared" and the lasting impact of her work. Now streaming on Peacock, Prime, Apple TV.



RMHCAA 40 & FABULOUS!



1984

A groundbreaking ceremony was held for the new Ronald McDonald House in Ann Arbor. Families helped put the first shovels in the ground along with U-M President Dr. Harold Shapiro, U-M Vice President of Medical Affairs Dr. Robert Kelch, Ann Arbor Mayor Lou Belcher, and Detroit Tiger baseball players Darrell Evans, Lance Parrish, and Larry Herndon.

1985

With the leadership from the Junior Service League of Ann Arbor, Ronald McDonald House Ann Arbor opens its doors to become a "home away from home" for families caring for a hospitalized child.

1992

New "Friends Wing" opens to accommodate six more families for a total of up to 29 a night. The new wing was funded by a \$500,000 gift from the Friends of the University of Michigan Hospitals and a match gift by individual donors and organizations.

2011

In 2011, "The House Within the Hospital," known as the Mott House, opened on the 10th floor of the new C.S. Mott Children's Hospital next to the ICU. With 12 rooms, the House serves families of the most critically ill children.

2018

Two more rooms are added to the Main House for a total of 31 rooms.

We launched our Hospitality Cart program to provide comfort care items to families at the hospital.

2025

As we reflect on our 40th year, we are grateful to have fulfilled our goal of keeping families close and look to the future of serving even more families!

To learn more about our history and how YOU can impact our future, visit www.rmhcannarbor.org/40years



Keeping Families Close Since 1985

40
years
1985 - 2025



MEALS MATTER PROGRAM

Cook a meal, share some comfort



To support families when they need it most, RMHC Ann Arbor is committed to serving a home-cooked meal every night of the year to the families staying with us.

We can't do it alone. Our community's support makes this possible. Gather your family, friends, coworkers, or club, and sign up to cook dinner at the House. Your time and care bring warmth, comfort, and a taste of home to families during some of their most challenging days.

Scan to learn more about Meals Matter



BOARD SPOTLIGHT 2025 New Members



Board members and leadership team making dinner for families on our 40th anniversary.



TIM OTTO
Treasurer, RMHCAA
Senior Vice President
Bank of Ann Arbor



**SABRINA SMITH-
CAMPBELL, PH.D**
People Experience
Officer, JMC Inc.
McDonald's



ROB SUNDY
President, La-Z-Boy
Brand & Chief
Commercial Officer



JUSTIN WILLIAMSON
Senior Partner and
Co-Owner of Center
for Wealth
Management

We are thrilled to welcome our newest members to the RMHC Ann Arbor Board of Directors. Each brings unique experience, insight, and passion for our mission, and we look forward to working together to support and strengthen the care we provide to families. With their leadership and dedication, we are excited for the impact we can make together in the months and years ahead.

Every time you visit **your local McDonald's restaurant**, you can help support families with a hospitalized child by asking to **Round-Up** for RMHC when you place your order on the kiosk or with a crew member at the counter or drive-thru. Thank you!



HOME RUN FOR THE HOUSE

A Grand Slam for Families

Our 2025 Home Run for the House was filled with fun, family-friendly activities. Guests met the University of Michigan Baseball team and Head Coach Tracy Smith, enjoyed crafts, bounce houses, wiffleball, kickball, and more, and snapped photos with beloved mascots, including Ronald McDonald, Birdie, Detroit Tigers' Paws, and even Batman! Thanks to generous in-kind sponsors Bearclaw Coffee, Kona Ice, Sam's Club, and Zee Zees, everyone stayed fueled with tasty treats throughout the day.

Because of the incredible generosity of our supporters, the event raised over \$80,000 to ensure families staying with us continue to receive care and comfort, completely free of charge. A heartfelt thank you goes to our sponsors, volunteers, honorary co-chairs, and staff, with special recognition to Presenting Sponsors Alro Steel and The Jones Family Foundation, as well as Honorary Co-Chairs U-M Head Coach Tracy Smith and his wife, Jaime, and Detroit Tiger Spencer Torkelson and his fiancée, Makenna Mattei, for making this event such a success!

See you at the Ballpark next year!



Become a Corporate Partner

Discover ways to support RMHC Ann Arbor through a corporate gift while your employees engage in fulfilling activities with mission-driven purposes.

As part of our Corporate Champion Program, we will meet with you to discuss your company's community engagement goals. Together, we can craft a personalized corporate plan that specifically targets your goals while making a substantial impact on the lives of the families we serve.

WAYS TO ENGAGE:

- Cook a meal
- Sponsor/attend an event
- Host a wish list drive
- Lead a family activity
- Collect pop tabs



For questions and more details, scan the QR code:



RMHCAA STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Remembering Kathleen Schorin



We are honored to remember our colleague and friend, Kathleen Schorin, with a memorial tribute in our new Healing Garden. Kathleen was a long-time volunteer at RMHCAA before serving as Family Services Manager at our Mott House within C.S. Mott Children's Hospital, where she cared deeply for both families and staff. She was thoughtful, dedicated, and always willing to look for better ways to support those we serve.

Kathleen's insight, kindness, and commitment touched thousands of families and helped strengthen our mission in lasting ways. We are grateful for Kathleen's contributions to our House and the families we serve, and her legacy will continue to inspire us.



Join a dynamic group of young professionals - check out the RED SHOE CREW at RMHC Ann Arbor! We are currently looking to add new members!





RMHCAA HAPPENINGS

Bringing comfort, connection, and care to families



Father's Day Cookout

This past June, we fired up the grill and the love at our Father's Day Cookout! Celebrating the incredible dads staying at RMHC Ann Arbor with good food, great company, and lots of gratitude. Thank you to all the fathers of our families for all you do!



PandaPrograms

Thanks to PandaPrograms for leading some great activities for the families at the House this summer. Kids enjoyed crawling through a tunnel, playing a hot lava game, a balloon game, a glow-in-the-dark dance party, story time, and building activities.

Red, White, & Cool 4th of July

We had a blast celebrating the 4th with face paint, balloon critters, and all the Kona Ice we could handle! Nothing better than smiles, sunshine, and sweet memories! Thanks to our generous supporters Tammy and Erick who provided such joy to our families!



A Visit from Our Favorite Furry Friend - Fawn

Huge thanks to our furry friend Fawn, from Paws4Patients, for continuing to spread smiles, snuggles, and so much love.



Luau

Families soaked up the summer fun with sweet treats, tropical games, and crafts at our Family Luau! A huge shoutout to our amazing Red Shoe Crew members who helped serve smiles (and snacks).



Battle for the Houses Kick-Off

Game day spirit, sweet treats, and plenty of bubbles! Our RMHCAA families had a blast at the Battle for the Houses Family Tailgate with yummy snacks, fun games, and so many smiles. Thank you to everyone who helped make this day full of joy and laughter!



If you would like to contribute your time and/or talent to serve the families at RMHCAA, please contact Mary Moffett at mmoffett@rmhcannarbor.org



GIVE THE GIFT OF TOGETHERNESS

This Holiday Season



Shop our
Wish List



STOCK THE PANTRY

When families stay with us, their focus is entirely on their child's care, not grocery shopping or making a coffee run. That's why our pantry and coffee bar are so important; they offer comfort, convenience, and one less thing for parents to worry about. You can make a difference by donating pantry items to help keep our shelves full and our families supported.



FEED OUR FAMILIES

After long, exhausting days at the hospital, families tell us that coming "home" to a hot meal brings them comfort, relief, and a sense of normalcy. Preparing dinner for our guests is a simple act of kindness that makes a BIG difference in their stay, reminding families that they're not alone on this journey.



SHOP FOR TOYS

Our Toy Closet is always a favorite for siblings staying at the House, and during the holidays, it grows into something even more special. We're now collecting new, unwrapped, child-safe toys for both our Toy Closet and our Holiday Shop. These donations allow families to "shop" for gifts at no cost, helping them celebrate the season even while far from home. Drop off Holiday Shop donations at the Main House by December 12.

DONATE TODAY, SO FAMILIES CAN STAY CLOSE WHEN IT MATTERS MOST

7 WAYS TO DONATE

1. Donate on our Website
2. Become a Monthly Donor
3. Give from a Donor Advised Fund
4. Give from your IRA
5. Create a Giving Legacy
6. Donate a Used Car
7. Employee Matching Programs



Scan to give a
year-end gift today



**Ronald McDonald
House Charities®**
Ann Arbor

CONTACT US

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Ann Arbor, MI 48104
734-994-4442 | rmhcann Arbor.org



RMHC ANN ARBOR MISSION

We provide essential services that remove barriers, strengthen families, and promote healing when children need healthcare.



**DID YOU
KNOW?**

StockthePantry

Giving Tuesday December 2nd

This Giving Tuesday, December 2nd, we are asking for donations to help STOCK OUR PANTRY.

Most in-demand pantry items are:

- K-cups coffee pods &
- Flavored individual coffee creamer cups
- Individually packaged snacks: chips, pretzels, Goldfish, nuts, cookies, granola bars, trail mix, Pop Tarts, mini-muffins, fruit snacks, cereal cups
- Individually packaged soups and pastas
- Toilet Paper
- All Free & Clear detergent pods

[Amazon
Wish List](#)



"It was a small but important part of our stay to be able to grab a few snacks to sustain us while at our son's bedside all day."

Items can be shipped or dropped off at our Main House. Thank you!

RMHC Ann Arbor is celebrating its 40th anniversary.
Keeping Families Close since 1985!

UPCOMING EVENTS



LEARN MORE

**FORKS
&
CORKS**
taste. sip. support.

11.14.25 - Forks & Corks

This special evening, at Barton Hills Country Club in Ann Arbor, features a four-course food and wine pairing woven together with mission-rich moments impacting the funding and expansion of our Meals Matter program.



04.25.26 - 14th Annual Red Shoe Affair

Step into something extraordinary at our Signature Event. Join us for an unforgettable evening that is reimagined for 2026 at our new venue - Saint John's Resort in Plymouth. Get inspired by our mission-focused program and dance the night away at the Afterglow Party.

