



Ronald McDonald
House Charities®
Ann Arbor



Years

Celebrating

1985-2020

of Keeping Families Close

Anniversary Issue Fall 2020

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Our Mission

The mission of the Ronald McDonald House Charities Ann Arbor is to provide a "home away from home" for families of children experiencing a serious illness or injury requiring hospitalization.

"Every House
has a Story"

-Ed Rensi, President and CEO
McDonald's USA 1991-97

This is Our Story

Often called "the House that Love Built," the Ronald McDonald House in Ann Arbor is just that. Fueled by the passion and vision of a small group of people, it was then embraced and supported by the community and beyond.

The drive to build the House was begun in 1982 by the Junior Service League (JSL) of Ann Arbor, an organization of women volunteers committed to serving the community. Member Gretchen Wieting Sherwood had read an article on how some JSLs were helping to start Ronald McDonald Houses around the country. Sherwood and JSL members Beth Lee, Presley McKeown, and Carlotta Tippett began researching the idea of opening a Ronald McDonald House in Ann Arbor.

The women connected with Dean Lidgard, a hospital administrator at the University of Michigan's C.S. Mott and Holden's Women's Hospitals. Lidgard told them that the hospital was actively searching for a non-profit organization to spearhead the effort to build a Ronald McDonald House, and he was instrumental in connecting them to the appropriate people within the hospital. One of those people was Dr. Robert Kelch, chairman of the Department of Pediatrics at the UM Medical Center.

Al and Rosie Felhauer, owner-operators of local McDonald's restaurants, became involved when a neighbor asked them to meet with Sherwood about



Countless community organizations and businesses helped to raise funds to support the construction of the House.

how to start a Ronald McDonald House. The Felhauers continued to serve as liaisons with the McDonald's Corporation throughout the process and were instrumental in coordinating fundraising efforts with local McDonald's restaurants.

The group of volunteers who devoted their time, resources, and talents continued to grow. With the help of a local attorney, the husband of a JSL member, a non-profit organization, Arbor House Inc., was formed to build a Ronald McDonald House in Ann Arbor. The first board meeting of the organization was held on July 27, 1983, in Sherwood's living room. Eighteen members were in attendance and two committees were formed: fundraising and site selection.



The next big challenge was where to put the House. The group did not want to build, so they began looking at houses and buildings in the area. Properties were considered on Maiden Lane and Tappan, but were rejected for consideration as they were too far from the hospital. The group, with the leadership of Dr. Kelch, began discussions with the University for land near the hospital and presented their case to the Board of Regents. There was some resistance, but University President Harold Shapiro was influential in smoothing it over. The land on Washington Heights was leased to Arbor House Inc. for \$1 a year until 2029, to build a Ronald McDonald House. A personal loan from McDonald's owner/operator

Harry Granader, enabled the group to open a bank account for construction.

A groundbreaking ceremony was held on September 5, 1984. Children and parents paraded to the site from C.S. Mott Hospital along with Ronald McDonald, who helped the children in "flipping" the first dirt with an oversized McDonald's spatula. In addition to Arbor House board members and volunteers, dignitaries in attendance included Dr. Jephtha Dalston, Executive Director of University of Michigan Hospitals; Dr. Harold Shapiro, President of the University of Michigan; Jim Flaum, Director of Operations for McDonald's Restaurants; Louis Belcher, Mayor of Ann Arbor; and William Borton, Associate Director of UM Hospitals and Administrator of C.S. Mott Children's Hospital. Adding some star power to the occasion were members of the Tigers 1984 World Series Championship team Lance Parrish, Darrel Evans, and Larry Herndon.



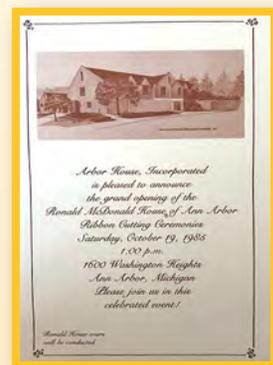
Groundbreaking ceremony September 5, 1984.

With their efforts led by Sherwood, Arbor House board members spent the next year garnering support in the community. Jeri Kelch, an Arbor House board member, had a phone in her basement designated for Ronald McDonald House calls and remembers it rang constantly with calls from people who wanted to help raise funds or volunteer to support the House. Jan Shatusky, a volunteer for 35 years, recalls submitting a handwriting sample as part of the volunteer application process. She and other volunteers hand-wrote thank you notes to anyone making a donation.

The grand opening of the House was held on October 19, 1985, with an open house event attended by more than 400 people. The Ann Arbor facility was the 87th Ronald McDonald House world-wide. However, the grand opening proved to be just the "official" opening. Delays in inspections resulted in the House welcoming the first families on November 26, 1985. In just the first month, 82 families were served.

For the first three years, the House had only one paid staff member, Terry Ging, who lived in the House and served as House Manager. Families were charged \$6 a night if they could afford to pay. Shatusky recalls the cash was kept in a cigar box in the office desk drawer. Volunteers were coordinated by Sally White, herself a volunteer, and worked three-hour shifts, from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., seven days of the week. 35 years later, that practice continues today.

Jeri Kelch served as Executive Director in a volunteer capacity for the first three years the House was open. Although she was a volunteer, she worked full-time hours and recalls how there was no real guaranteed income for the House's operations.



Invitation to the House's Grand Opening.

In 1988, Dean Lidgard now retired from the hospital, was hired as the House's first paid Executive Director. With the construction loan paid off and policies and procedures in place thanks to Kelch's leadership, the focus was now on maintaining adequate funding for operations and making plans to enable the organization to further support the hospital. A Strategic Planning Committee was formed. Lidgard was instrumental in planning and preparing for a new addition. The Friends Addition was completed in 1992 and added 3,300 square feet with six new bedrooms, a family lounge, a game room, a new board room, and a weekend manager's apartment.

When Lidgard retired from his position in 1991, Katie Paquette, who was the House Manager after Terry Ging left, served as both House Manager and Interim Executive Director for a couple of months. When House Managers needed some time off, volunteers would stay at the House in their place. As it was before the time of cell phones, Katie recalls carrying a pager, although she doesn't remember being paged often.

Dorothy Wardell was hired as the next Executive Director. She came on board just as construction on the new addition was finishing up. In her ED's comments for the newsletter, she mentions the challenges of working amidst construction and recalls having "...only three light bulbs suspended from ceiling-less rafters..." in the office. Her tenure included the dedication of the Friends Addition, raising funds to complete payment on the addition, and the celebration of the House's 5th anniversary.

Upon leaving, Wardell was replaced as Executive Director by Dave McDowell, who had coincidentally referred her to the job. A former administrator at Greenhills School, McDowell was no stranger to the House as his wife Cathy had been a volunteer for years. After welcoming Dave, the House welcomed its 5,000th family, Donnie Bartlett and his mom, Jill, from Lansing. McDowell's years as ED were filled with lots of fundraising events, countless meetings with donors, hundreds of volunteers, numerous visits from Ronald, and the celebration of the House's 20th anniversary. McDowell stayed for 16 years, making him the longest serving Executive Director to-date.

When McDowell retired in 2009, Kathleen Kittle was hired as the next Executive Director. Her tenure was short and Kim Kelly began as Interim Director in 2010. Her first challenge was to raise funds to furnish the new House Within the Hospital (Mott House) on the 10th floor of the new C.S. Mott Children's Hospital that was under construction. Funds to construct the House were provided by a \$1 million donation from the Mott Golf Classic. Kelly led the "Hope Away from Home" \$1.6 million capital campaign to furnish and prepare the opening of the House as well as provide a few years of operating expenses. The newly built hospital and the Mott House officially opened in 2011.



In 2013, Kelly working with board members initiated the Red Shoe Affair fundraising event that is held at the Jack Roth Stadium Club in Michigan Stadium. The event was started to help raise awareness in the community of the organization's mission and to help raise funds to support an increased budget with two Houses to support. In its eight years, the event has raised almost

\$2 million to support RMHCAA and has helped to raise awareness in the community of the mission of the organization.

In 2015, Kelly conducted a second phase of the "Hope Away from Home" campaign to fund the remodeling of the Main House. A new HVAC system was installed for all bedrooms, the common areas were updated, and most notably, private bathrooms were put in each bedroom. Families no longer shared bathrooms. In 2018, in an effort to address the waiting list problem, a seldom-used sitting room was converted into two bedrooms, bringing the Main House's total to 31 rooms. The addition was funded through a donation from AbbVie, a pharmaceutical company in Chicago, to the Ronald McDonald House global



Katie Paquette, Dean Lidgard, and Board Chair Herb Black, leading a holiday sing-a-long with families.



Ribbon cutting ceremony for new rooms November 20, 2018.

organization to support the building of family-centered spaces and 600 guest rooms in at least 26 states and 32 Ronald McDonald Houses. RMHCAA was fortunate to be one of the beneficiaries of the donation.

In 2019, RMHCAA reinstated a Strategic Planning Committee to evaluate long-term needs and potential expansion to meet the growing demand from area hospitals. Even with 43 rooms (RMHCAA is the largest Chapter in Michigan) RMHCAA is not able to serve all of the families that need assistance. There is always a waiting list, an issue that has persisted over the 35 years since the House opened.

In 2020, the organization has been dealing with the unprecedented challenges presented by the COVID-19 global pandemic. To protect the health and safety of the families we serve, heightened cleaning protocols and social distancing measures were enacted, and to reduce traffic in the House, all volunteer programs including Dinner Groups, were temporarily suspended. At one point, the Mott House was turned over to the hospital to be a place of rest for the hard-working nurses and physicians working countless hours on the frontlines fighting the virus. The House never closed, but restrictive policies did reduce the number of families. Currently, we are resuming regular operations with COVID restrictions implemented.

Over the 35 years, the organization has faced a number of challenges. However, thanks to the continued support of the community, the dedication and service of countless volunteers, and the hard work of

Sign of the times, social distancing reminders in the House.

amazing staff members, RMHCAA has met those challenges and has continued to thrive and grow. The current board, volunteers, and staff are looking forward to the future and are fully dedicated and passionately committed to continuing the organization's mission of serving the families of hospitalized children.



We're Lovin' It!

In 1974, McDonald's restaurants worked with the Philadelphia Eagles football team to raise money to establish a place to stay for families who needed to be close to their seriously ill children being treated at the Children's Hospital in Philadelphia. Since that day, Ronald McDonald House has been McDonald's charity of choice.

From the early planning stages of a Ronald McDonald House in Ann Arbor, local area McDonald's Owner/Operators have been tremendously supportive. In 1984, McDonald's restaurants statewide sold over 750,000 Tiger hats to raise funds to help in the construction of the House. The sale raised \$374,000, and the check was presented in a ceremony by Detroit Tigers' team member Darrell Evans and a representative of the Michigan McDonald's Operators Association.

A small group of Southeastern Michigan Owner/Operators started an annual fundraiser in 2004 to support both the Ann Arbor and Detroit Houses. The event began as the "Aviator's Ball" held at an airplane hanger and continued for eight years as the "Ronald McDonald House Gala." The annual event raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for both Houses over the years.

Today, our McDonald's relationship continues to help by providing the Presenting Sponsorship of our Red Shoe Affair event held annually, and a McDonald's owner/operator sits on our board of directors. In addition, local McDonald's restaurants support the House through canister collections, and various promotions, and many of their vendors support us throughout the year with generous in-kind donations of food and supplies.



Check presentation for the McDonald's sale of Tigers hats 1984.

A Letter from the Chair and Executive Director

Dear Friends of RMHCAA,

It is amazing what you can do with an idea. Inspired by an article titled "The House That Love Built" a movement was born. A group of people came together, brought together by a common goal, a Ronald McDonald House in the Ann Arbor community.

It was a diverse group consisting of volunteers, hospital administrators, McDonald's owner/operators, professionals, physicians, accountants, architects, parents of seriously-ill children, contractors, and athletes. All involved started with undaunted enthusiasm, and maybe a touch of naivete, at the momentous task ahead.

The effort was an example of true teamwork. Every single person played a vital role. What is most amazing is that no one ever doubted that the effort would be successful. The idea that establishing a Ronald McDonald House would not become a reality, never entered anyone's thoughts.

Over the last 35 years, throughout the evolution from Arbor House to Ronald McDonald House Charities Ann Arbor, that passion and dedication continued. Fueled by the support of the community, and driven by the commitment of the volunteers and staff, the organization has grown and changed to continue to meet the needs of the families of hospitalized children during their most difficult time.

From a vacant lot and a loan of \$5,000 came a 24-bedroom House serving more than 400 families in the first six months. Today, there are 43 rooms (31 in the Main House and 12 in the Mott House) and more than 30,000 families have been provided with a "home away from home" since 1985.

The ability of the organization to rise to new challenges was again evident this year during the unprecedented COVID-19 health crisis. Like most organizations, we have struggled with the issues the pandemic has created. However, through all of the changes, we have kept our focus on our number one priority – the families we serve. Throughout the years, our mission remains unchanged, and our dedication and commitment unwavering.

Cheers to 35 Years!

Gretchen Wieting Sherwood
Arbor House Board President
1983 – 1987



Gretchen Wieting Sherwood with Ronald at 1984 New Year's Day fundraiser for Arbor House.



Kim Kelly
RMHCAA, Executive Director
2010 – current

Arbor House and Ronald McDonald House Charities Ann Arbor Leadership

CHAIRS, BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Gretchen Weiting Sherwood 1983 – 1987
Sheila Schwartz 1987 – 1988
Herb Black 1988 – 1990
Bonnie Hagerty 1990 – 1993
Phillip Bowen 1993 – 1994
Marc Halman 1994 – 1996
Leo Carey 1996 – 1998
Caprice Warren 1998 – 2000

Stephanie Smith 2000 – 2002
Anne Preston 2002 – 2004
Randolph Perry 2005 – 2007
Thomas Ericson 2007 – 2008
Joan Keiser 2008 – 2010
Robert Ferguson 2010 – 2011
Alan Harris 2011 – 2014
Loree Collett 2014 – 2019
JZ Zdanowski 2019 – current

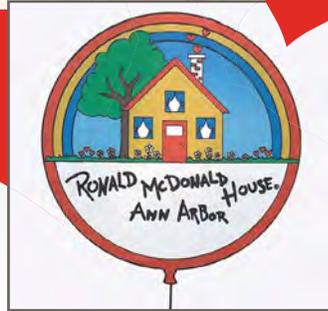
EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

Jeri Kelch 1985 – 1988
Dean Lidgard 1988 – 1991
Katie Paquette Andrea 1991
Dorothy Wardell 1991 – 1993
Dave McDowell 1993 – 2009
Kathleen Kittle 2009 – 2010
Kim Kelly 2010 – current

Celebrating **35** Years Keeping Families Close

1984

Ground-breaking ceremony held on Sept. 5, for the new Ronald McDonald House in Ann Arbor. Several parents and children participated by "flipping" the first dirt with a McDonald's spatula. In attendance were UM President Dr. Harold Shapiro, UM Vice President of Medical Affairs Dr. Robert Ketch, Ann Arbor Mayor Lou Belcher, and Detroit Tiger baseball players Darrell Evans, Lance Parrish and Larry Herndon.



1985

The Junior Service League of Ann Arbor led by Gretchen Wieting Sherwood begins work to establish a House in Ann Arbor to provide overnight residence for parents of children who are hospitalized for long periods of time. Ronald McDonald House Ann Arbor opens its doors to become a "home away from home" for families who previously stayed at local motels, or slept in hospital lobbies or on cots in the room with their seriously ill children.

1986

In the first year, the House serves 80-90 families a month. With an annual budget of \$120,000, fundraisers organized by the community help support the House. A cookbook called "Ann Arbor's Cookin'!" created by a committee led by Ann Betz sells 3,000 copies and raises \$35,000. The book has over 600 recipes, including some from Ann Arbor's most popular restaurants.



1988

For the first three years, the only paid employee is House Manager Terry Ging, who lives in the House. Volunteer Jeri Kelch serves as Executive Director. A dedicated group of 75 volunteers, staff the office from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., 7 days a week.

1991

Katie Paquette Andrea who had been living at the House as the Manager also serves as Executive Director. She recalls volunteers staying overnight and filling in for her if she needed to take a rare day, or weekend off.



1992

Dedication ceremony for the new "Friends Wing" at Ronald McDonald House Ann Arbor to accommodate up to 30 families at the same time, six more than previously possible.

The Friends of the University of Michigan Hospitals donated \$500,000 to fund the addition, which was matched by Ronald McDonald House Ann Arbor gifts made by generous individuals or organizations.

1993

The House welcomes a new family and Dave M... becomes the Executive Director. He stays for 16 years, making him the longest-serving Executive Director. His wife, Cathy, was a dedicated volunteer for those years and m...



2000

The kitchen of the new addition is completely r...

ng Families Close®

3

comes its 5,000th
McDowell
Executive Director.
ars; making
erving ED.
was a
er during
nore.



2010

Kim Kelly becomes Executive Director (ED). Her previous experience working with the McDonald's Owner/Operator Co-Op and coordinating a fundraising gala for the Ann Arbor and Detroit Ronald McDonald Houses makes her ideal for the position. She continues to serve as ED today and is in her 11th year with the House.



09

the Main House
remodeled.

2011

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

2013

The first Red Shoe Affair event is held at the Jack Roth Stadium Club in UM's Big House. The event is attended by 150 people and raises \$119,271 for RMHCAA.

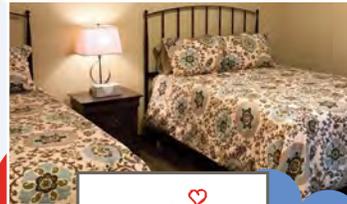


2016

Remodeling is completed in the Main House to create private baths for each room, update hallways and the boardroom, and enhance the community areas. A Michigan football-themed game room and Detroit sports-themed television room, are a hit with the families and visitors. Office space is expanded to accommodate the growing organization.

2018

Committed to serving more families, RMHCAA makes two additions. The first is the construction of two new family bedrooms in the Main House, to help alleviate the wait for families. The second is the addition of the Hospitality a la Carte program which debuted as a way for RMHCAA to support even more families whose children are in the hospital. The Carte provides comfort care items and served nearly 2,000 families in its first year.



2020

Ronald McDonald House Charities Ann Arbor celebrates its 35th anniversary. Although it has been a challenging year as the organization has navigated the COVID-19 situation, the health and safety of the families we serve continues to be our focus and top priority. Even in these challenging times, our commitment and ability to deliver our mission is made possible by the support of the community.

Help Us Continue Our Story. Here's What You Can Do Today

 **Provide Dinner for our Families** – Due to the COVID health crisis, RMHCAA had to discontinue all volunteer activities including the Dinner Group Program. We need your help more than ever to continue to be able to provide this source of comfort to the families who call our House their “home away from home”. For information on making a donation to the Meals Matter program or on providing a meal, visit www.rmhcannarbor.org and click on “Meals Matter” under the “Get Involved” tab.

 **Make a Donation** – Did you know the CARES Act created several opportunities for you to reduce your tax liability, while also helping support families at RMHCAA? The legislation expanded charitable giving incentives for taxpayers by **1)** you can make up to \$300 in charitable contributions and deduct that amount on your taxes in addition to the standard deduction **2)** if you itemize, the CARES Act removed the income limitation, meaning there is no longer a limit on how much you can give **3)** the new law temporarily suspended required minimum distributions from your IRA for 2020.

 **Wishlist Donations** – We are once again able to accept donations from our Wishlist. Donations can be dropped off from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. at the House in

the donation bin located under the overhang in front of the building. To see our updated Wishlist, visit www.rmhcannarbor.org and click on “Wishlist” under the “Get Involved” tab.

 **Donate Pop Tabs** – Now that the UM vs. OSU game is happening, so is the Pop Tab Battle. Save your tabs to help us beat the Columbus House! Pop tabs dropped off between Nov. 1, and game day on Dec. 12, will count towards the battle. There will be a shed in the parking lot to collect pop tabs. Tabs can be dropped off between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m. weekdays and weekends.

 **Facebook Birthday Fundraiser** – Have a birthday coming up? You can help raise money for RMHCAA with a Facebook birthday fundraiser. It takes just a few minutes to set up and you don't handle any money. Share the Facebook birthday fundraiser with your family and friends and RMHCAA receives their donations.

For questions or more information on how you can help support RMHCAA, contact development and communications manager, Mary Moffett, at mmoffett@rmhcannarbor.org.

Thank you to the following 2020 Red Shoe Affair sponsors for continuing their support as the event moved from in-person to virtual. Your commitment to our families and the mission of RMHCAA is greatly appreciated!

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McDonald's Michigan Owner
Operators Marketing Association

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Liberty Title
Stacey and Mike Marsh
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Kate and Mark Van Sumeren

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Matt Dejanovich — Real Estate One
Dominos
Katie and Dugan Fife
Hantz Financial
Mans Lumber and Millwork
Old National Bank
Oscar Larson
Taylor Freezer of Michigan

**Cheers
to All!**

Ronald McDonald House Charities Ann Arbor has been extremely fortunate over the last 35 years to receive the support of countless organizations, businesses, individuals, and volunteers. Unfortunately, we are unable to mention everyone in this newsletter. Please know that RMHCAA is eternally grateful for the role you played in our House's story and for the gifts of time, talent, and treasure you so generously donated throughout the years. Thank you and cheers to you!

Putting the "Fun" in Fundraising

One of the first committees formed by the Arbor House board members was the fundraising committee. Members put together a presentation and met with representatives of local organizations to share their idea and vision for the House in an effort to rally community support.

Community response was enthusiastic! Soon clubs, businesses, civic organizations, schools, churches, Scout troops, families, and individuals in the Ann Arbor area and around the state were helping to raise funds to build the House.

Donations coming in ranged from children's allowance money to large checks from corporate sponsors. Galas, fashion shows, garage sales, bike rides, raffles, golf tournaments; all of these and more were held to raise funds. Some of the groups continued their events to support the House for many years. Here are just a few of them:

"Ann Arbor's Cookin'!" – A cookbook spearheaded by volunteer Ann Betz who worked countless hours, with the assistance of Susan Hurwitz, was produced and sold as a fundraiser for the House. The 375 page book, included more than 600 recipes, 70 of them were from Ann Arbor's most popular restaurants. In the first three years, the book sold almost 14,000 copies and raised more than \$170,000 for the House. A second edition was later produced titled "Ann Arbor's Cooking II".

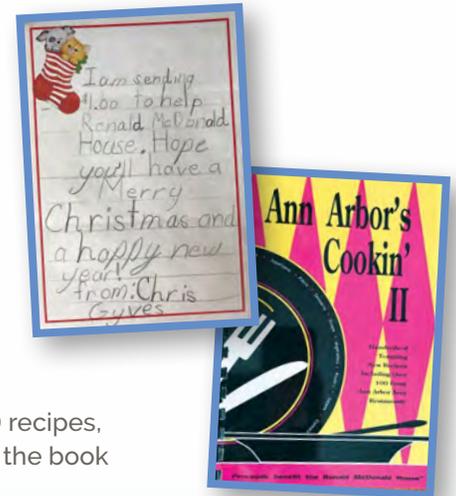
The Gold Wing Association – In the summer of 1986, volunteer executive director, Jeri Kelch, received a phone call from a group who inquired about a bike ride to support the House. It was quite a site, when 75 motorcycles carrying members of The Gold Wing Association, a group of people who own Gold Wing motorcycles, paraded down Washington Hts., when they came to present their check. The group had held a "Poker Run" road rally to benefit the newly opened Ronald McDonald House, and raised \$6,500.

M & M Golf Outing – In 1993, a tragic accident took the lives of cousins Megan and Melissa, and left Melissa's younger sister Jessica severely injured. Jessica spent months in C.S. Mott Hospital and her parents, far from their home in Pinconning, stayed at the House. In memory of Megan and Melissa, the community started the memorial golf outing in September of 1994. Friends and family came together to raise money to give back to RMHCAA. The outing continued for 25 years and raised more than \$300,000 to benefit other families who were also experiencing a difficult time.

Something for Everyone – This event was organized by Anne Schreiber and Grace Rolands as a way for local moms to sell clothing that their children had outgrown. When Rolands moved away, Agnes Reading and Marty McClatchey helped plan the event that morphed into the sale of items that people no longer needed. As the women were Junior League members, they decided to make it a benefit for two organizations supported by the League, RMHCAA and Safe House. Originally held in December, the event has been moved to October as over the years the date has coincided with quite a few blizzards.

Holiday Cards – For many years, the House sold holiday cards as a fundraiser. The cards featured artwork by various professional artists in the community and around the country. In addition, some cards featured the artwork of children. In 1987, 11,000 cards designed by Dennis Lee were sold raising \$3,500. Volunteers spearheaded the project, packaging the cards and selling them at local events like the Art Fairs. The House still has a supply of cards for sale during the holiday season featuring a drawing by local artist Bill Shurtliff.

McBiker Poker Run – For more than 20 years, McDonald's owner/operators, Peter and Nancy Donaghue, organized a motorcycle ride to benefit the Ann Arbor and Detroit Houses. The 100-mile ride began at their McDonald's restaurant and concluded with a dinner and silent auction. The event raised more than \$70,000 for RMHCAA over the years.



Participants of the 25th and final M&M Golf Outing in 2018.

Mott Golf Classic Helps Keep Families Close

Ronald McDonald House Charities Ann Arbor has been honored to be the beneficiary of a tremendous amount of support from the Mott Golf Classic. RMHCAA's single, largest donor, Mott Golf Classic has supported multiple areas of growth, operations, capital improvements, and has provided direct support to families.

In 2009, when plans were made for a second House to be located on the 10th floor of the new C.S. Mott Children's Hospital, Mott Golf Classic donated \$1 million dollars for the construction. In addition, they have funded new HVAC in the Main House, room renovations, and general operational support, providing direct impact to Mott families staying at the House.

Over the years, in-kind support through the Mott Family Network which is funded by Mott Golf Classic, has provided RMHCAA's Main House with WiFi, a connection to Michigan networks for IT systems and ongoing technical support, phone systems, security cameras, and intern services.

Our Houses and our ability to serve families would not be the same today without the Mott Golf Classic. RMHCAA is extremely grateful for the ongoing partnership and critical support this important group provides, and their commitment to our mission of keeping families close.



Resident Manager to House Manager

The original design of the House included an apartment for a staff member, the Resident Manager, to live on-site. The purpose of this position was to have a staff member available to families around the clock. Although the House's office was open from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., seven days of the week, staffed by the Resident Manager and volunteers, the Resident Manager was available and on-call after hours, with just a knock on the apartment door.

The first Resident Manager, and only paid staff member at the time, was Terry Ging. He admits the first years were not easy. The House's opening was delayed due to some inspection issues. (The first families did not move in until November 26, 1985.) There was also the looming prospect of paying off the debt for the construction of the House. In addition, there were many unanticipated challenges. As the only staff member, Ging says he relied heavily on the volunteers and was not disappointed. "That first group of volunteers always maintained the optimism and esprit de corps that comes from sharing a deeply held sense of mission," he says.

When Ging left in 1987, Katie Paquette, moved into the Resident Manager apartment. She had been a volunteer since the House opened. Paquette remembers the families and how grateful they were. Many families made multiple visits for their children to receive treatment. She says, "They became friends and we became a home away from home for them." Paquette recalls being in awe of the courage and grace the families had in the face of such difficult circumstances.

Kelly Lamb became the Resident Manager in 1989, and she had the distinction of being married and having two young children. In the 1990 newsletter, Kelly talks about dealing with floods, alarms, and power outages with a child in her arms and mentions many 2 a.m. phone calls as residents were locked out, just as she was in the middle of night feedings for her child. She happily took on the challenges of managing the House and volunteers with a child in tow!

In 1992, during the height of construction on the Friends Addition, Teri Baker became Resident Manager. Early challenges included various utility shut-offs due to construction, the closing of the kitchen for three weeks for remodeling, and a pesky bat that was not easily thwarted. Teri's tenure spanned three executive directors, countless volunteers, the 20th anniversary, the check-in of the 5,000th family to stay at the House, and memories of many special families.

In 1996, Karla Brauer was hired as Resident Manager and a Day Manager was hired to handle duties during the daytime. Brauer stayed until 2014 (with the exception of a few years when Jim Salisbury filled the role) and was the last manager to live in the apartment at the House. When she left in 2014, rotating Evening Managers were hired to stay at the House overnight in case of an emergency. In 2015, the apartment was repurposed into a boardroom, staff kitchen and offices.

Today, Marcia Monson, who was hired as a Day Manager in 1998, serves as Operations Director and oversees a staff of 10 part-time House Managers. In June of this year, in an effort to better serve our families and to increase safety, we began having awake staff stationed in the lobby overnight. Things have changed quite a bit in the last 35 years from when there was one staff person who lived at the House and was on-call 24/7!



The House's first Resident Manager, Terry Ging, chats with volunteers at his going away party.



Resident Manager Kelly Lamb is pictured with her two young children.

Meet a RMHCAA Family: Then and Now

It was 2006, and Jill and Todd Nyman of Midland were expecting their second child. At a 19-week ultrasound appointment, it was discovered that their baby had omphalocele, a condition where the infant's organs stick outside of the belly in the umbilical cord.

Due to the high-risk nature of the pregnancy, they were referred to C.S. Mott Children's Hospital. After many tests and cautions that their baby might not make it or live past birth, their son Jacob was born at 38 weeks on January 17, 2007. All of his organs below his diaphragm and above the reproductive organs were in the umbilical cord. At the time, the doctors told Jill it was the largest omphalocele they had ever seen.



Jacob Nyman in 2007

Jill recalls arriving at the Ronald McDonald House when it was dark on a cold January evening after being discharged from the hospital. She did not want to leave her baby in the hospital on his own, so was thrilled to find out that she, Todd, and their 18-month old daughter Jenna, could get a room at the Ronald McDonald House across the street from the hospital.

The family stayed at the House for six months while Jacob underwent surgeries and treatments. Jill's mother and her mother-in-law took turns staying with Jenna at the Ronald McDonald House while Jill and Todd spent their days at the hospital. "Jenna really enjoyed the play room, it was great for siblings," said Jill. "She also enjoyed watching TV on the big screen and drinking lemonade. She made lots of friends there."

Throughout his first year, Jacob was in and out of the hospital a number of times with lots of complications and an emergency surgery. Almost every time, they were able to stay at the Ronald McDonald House. Some of the time, Todd stayed in Midland to work and Jill's mother stayed with her at the House. Jill remembers the meals made by volunteer groups and served every evening. "It was so nice to have homemade meals. I could just focus on my child," she says.



Jenna and Jacob Nyman delivering donations to RMHCAA in 2020.

Today, Jacob is your typical 8th grade boy who loves playing ice hockey and baseball. He will be 14 years old in January. According to Jill, the doctors say he has no restrictions. His travel hockey team came to Ann Arbor earlier this year for a tournament and Jacob organized a collection among his teammates of items for the House. The Nyman family delivered a car full of donations to be used by the current families

staying at the House while their children are hospitalized. It was a way for the Nymans to show their appreciation for the support and care they received while at the Ronald McDonald House.

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Brian Barnes, *Building Services*
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Anna Beeman, *Development Coordinator*
Michelle Harris, *House Manager*
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Heidi Kozlowski, *House Manager*
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DeAnn Phillips, *Accounting Specialist*
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Robin Toussant, *House Manager*

A Message from our Hospital Partner

“ Throughout the past 35 years, C.S. Mott Children's Hospital has and continues to be a dedicated partner with Ronald McDonald House Charities Ann Arbor. While we provide the world-class medical and surgical care, we have consistently and confidently relied on RMHCAA to help our families bring a bit of normalcy into their lives. RMHCAA allows our families to simply rest, and provide respite, nourishment, and a sense of comfort. Together, as friends and partners, we wrap our arms around our families during the most difficult and traumatic times in their lives. I am extremely thankful for RMHCAA and the profound impact they make every single day. ”

Luanne Ewald, COO C.S. Mott Children's Hospital and Von Voigtlander Women's Hospital at Michigan Medicine



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Volunteers... the Heart of the House

When the House opened in 1985 with only one staff member, volunteers were crucial to the daily operations of the House. Volunteers handled tasks such as checking in new families, preparing rooms for guests, cleaning the kitchen and other common areas, answering the phones, and shoveling snow. Terry Ging, the House's first Resident Manager, says, "The House would not have achieved firm footing in its first years without the tireless efforts of the volunteers who performed roles ranging from accounting to quasi-social work."

For many volunteers it was a labor of love, fueled by their dedication to the mission. Volunteers listened with their hearts as family members poured out the details of their day, and comforted those who needed it. They helped to celebrate milestones big and small, birthdays, and holidays, spent at the House.

Some volunteers came as friends to volunteer together, some forged friendships with other volunteers with whom they worked. The "Thursday Ladies", a group of women who worked the Thursday shifts for many years, still get together for an occasional lunch outing to socialize and to catch up with each other.



"Thursday Ladies"

Volunteers continue to be an integral part of the House's operations. Our volunteers are diverse and include UM students, young adults, professionals, and retirees. Whether they have been with us for many years, like Jan Shatusky (35+ years) and Lucinda Fleckenstein (34 years), or for a few months; RMHCAA appreciates the support and service provided by all volunteers.



This year, restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic have underscored the importance of the support provided by volunteers. Since we have had to temporarily suspend volunteer activities, the Hospitality a la Carte program has been halted, and Dinner Group volunteers have not been able to provide dinners for our families.

RMHCAA looks forward to being able to welcome back our volunteers in the future as we miss their smiling faces and the wonderful support they provide for our families and staff.