



Ronald McDonald
House Charities®
of Connecticut &
Western Massachusetts

Fall 2025

From the Heart

Stories of how you help keep families together when it matters most



Why Your Support Matters

As we head into the fall season, I want to take a moment to thank you for being part of our Ronald McDonald House Charities community. Your support continues to make a real difference for families facing some of the most difficult moments of their lives.

In this issue of *From the Heart*, you'll read about the Staton family, who traveled from Japan to Connecticut for high-risk pregnancy care. Thanks to your generosity, they found a safe and supportive place to stay while their newborn daughter received care in the NICU.

You'll also meet some of the incredible volunteers who give their time and energy to help our families feel at home—from Atul and his daughter Anouska, to students from the Lexington Student Corps, and longtime supporters like Chris and Claire. Their stories are a reminder that every act of kindness matters.

We're also excited to share updates on our expansion projects. Construction is underway at our House in New Haven, where we are adding 11 new guest rooms to meet growing demand. And in Springfield, a full roof replacement—donated entirely by our partners—will help us continue to provide a safe, welcoming space for years to come.

Everything we do is possible because of people like you. Thank you for standing with us and helping families stay close during times of medical crisis.

With gratitude,

Michelle D'Amore
Chief Executive Officer



Allan and Michelle refilling snacks for the families at RMH of Springfield

Thank you for supporting families through our 6th Annual Unitex Challenge!

We raised a grand total of \$26,028 to provide families with the support, resources, and compassion they deserve while supporting their ill or injured children.



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Unitex.

HEALTHCARE LAUNDRY SERVICES



The Staton Family



Robert holding Lyra. Luna enjoying playtime at Ronald McDonald House. Heather holding Lyra .

"My husband Rob, our daughter Luna, and I were enjoying our overseas military tour in Okinawa, Japan and had wanted to grow our family. On Luna's second birthday in July 2024, we learned I was expecting our second child. We were ecstatic to welcome our new addition.

On October 31, at 20 weeks pregnant, Rob and I got the news that my pregnancy was very high risk. I had a complete placenta previa and a suspected placenta accreta. Placenta previa is a complication that occurs in 0.2- 2% of pregnancies when the placenta partially or completely covers the opening of the cervix and remains abnormally low in the uterus. Sometimes, this resolves as the pregnancy continues but it never did in my case. Placenta accreta is another complication where the placenta abnormally attaches to the uterus and can begin to grow through the uterus and even invade other organs.

Due to the high risk this pregnancy carried and need for specialist management, it was recommended we medically evacuate as soon as possible. Two closer military hospitals denied us placement and ultimately our entire family was med-evacuated to Connecticut within 10 days of diagnosis. This would allow us to be closer to family in the United States and treated at Yale New Haven Hospital as it is considered an Accreta Center of Excellence. Our family was placed in a hotel room 15 minutes away from the hospital and remained there from November 2024 until February 2025.

On February 17th, two days before my scheduled C-section, I began bleeding heavily and was immediately admitted. Lyra was delivered via emergency C-section that night at 35 weeks and three days gestation. Unfortunately, that evening, Lyra experienced respiratory distress caused by retained fluid in her lungs. She was rapidly admitted to the NICU for closer monitoring.

Volunteering Together

Atul and Anouska

In October 2024, Atul reached out to the Ronald McDonald House of Connecticut, eager to volunteer his cooking skills. With a background in microbiology, he creates meals designed to support healing and gut health. "Feeding people gives me immense happiness," he says. "My energy amplifies when I'm helping others."

After cooking for families once, Atul felt so connected to the House that he began volunteering weekly. His passion inspired his daughter, Anouska, to join during her college break. She quickly became a vital part of our team—prepping snacks, assisting at the welcome desk, and helping with daily tasks.

Volunteering became a meaningful way for Atul and Anouska to bond. We're deeply grateful for their dedication to our RMH families.



Atul and Anouska

Lexington Student Corps

Carter

"Connecting with families at RMH and supporting them with my time feels special to me. My time with RMH feels unique and different from other forms of community service because of the joy of working with a group of kind and caring people and more importantly, interacting with children because seeing their smiles directly is like seeing a younger me smile. I am thankful for the opportunity to support the families and allowing me to not take my own fortune for granted."

Helen

"I volunteer at Ronald McDonald House because I enjoy seeing families happily eating our home-cooked meals. RMH's welcoming atmosphere always makes volunteering fun. It is also very rewarding seeing how the families in the House enjoy our food."

Arthur

"Volunteering at the Ronald McDonald House is important to me because it taught me the value of hard work and how my actions can support families. I also love cooking fresh home-cooked meals for the community at the House."

Owen

"To me, volunteering at RMH means connecting with families from around the world, supporting the safe spaces RMH provides, making a difference with small actions, and upholding values of compassion and altruism."



Lexington Student Corps

Making An Impact Through Service



Chris making Grab-and-Go snacks for our families.

Chris

"After retiring recently, I knew I wanted to spend my time doing something meaningful. Volunteering at the Ronald McDonald House quickly became a top priority. As a former McDonald's franchise owner, I've long appreciated the incredible support these Houses provide to families with seriously ill children.

As a volunteer, it's incredibly fulfilling to know I'm offering support to families during one of the most challenging times in their lives. When a child is seriously ill, parents need to focus entirely on their care—and the Ronald McDonald House makes that possible by providing a safe, comfortable home away from home near the hospital.

I strive to support both the House staff and families in any way I can—whether that means stocking the kitchen with pantry essentials, preparing welcome baskets, keeping common areas tidy, or lending a hand with fundraising efforts. Yet I've found that often it's the simplest gestures that

mean the most. Sometimes, offering a warm smile or a kind word when families return after a long day at the hospital can make all the difference.

Supporting the House's mission, and witnessing the difference it makes for families, has been incredibly rewarding—and it inspires me to continue finding new ways to give back. Each day I'm reminded that even the smallest act of kindness can bring comfort and hope during difficult times."



Claire preparing a Meal from the Heart.

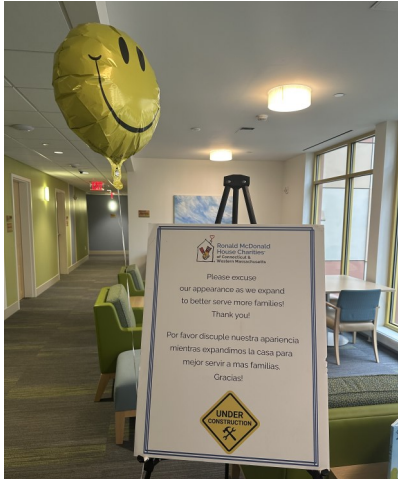
Claire Murphy

"My connection to Ronald McDonald House Charities began when I was six years old, not as a volunteer, but as a guest. While my younger sister received life-saving medical care, my family stayed at the Ronald McDonald House in Jacksonville, Florida. The sense of safety and comfort we felt during such a stressful time left a deep and lasting impression on me. When I was twelve years old, my family began volunteering at the Ronald McDonald House of Springfield. We organized game nights, craft activities, slime-making, and other activities that I knew firsthand could bring small but meaningful moments of joy.

In high school, I joined the Teen Board to take a more active role, and throughout college, I continued to return to the House during school breaks to cook Meals from the Heart and lead activities with my sister.

Now, as I prepare to attend medical school this fall, I continue to volunteer because the Ronald McDonald House reminds me of the values that have shaped me: empathy, community, and compassion. This place has been part of my story since childhood, and returning to it always feels like coming full circle."

Mission Expansion In Action



Construction is officially underway at our Ronald McDonald House of Connecticut, and we are thrilled to share the journey with you!

Earlier this year, we announced plans to add 11 new guest rooms to our House in New Haven, responding to the growing need for family accommodations near our partner hospitals. With more families seeking support while their children receive critical medical care, this expansion will allow us to open our doors to even more people during some of the most challenging times in their lives.

As construction moves forward, we've already made meaningful improvements to enhance the experience for our families. All staff offices have been relocated to the main floor, creating more opportunities for our team to connect with and support families throughout their stay.



Construction sign and room under construction.

Thanks to thoughtful planning, the construction is confined to one wing of the building—an area we always envisioned expanding. This ensures construction can continue without disrupting the comfort of our current guests.

We expect construction to be completed by the end of the year. Once finished, our House will feature 30 rooms, each one a safe and welcoming space for families to rest, recharge, and stay close to their children receiving care.

We're incredibly grateful for the support that makes this expansion possible!



Roofers from Melanson Roofing and Adam Quenneville Roofing and Siding that installed the new roof at Ronald McDonald House of Springfield.

This summer, the Ronald McDonald House of Springfield received an incredible gift—a full roof replacement at no cost. After 34 years, our original roof had reached the end of its life, and replacing it was vital to maintaining a safe space for families in need.

Thanks to our long-standing relationship with Melanson Roofing of Keene, NH, and their connection to the Roofing Alliance—an RMHC Global philanthropy partner—we were able to move forward. Melanson, in partnership with Adam Quenneville Roofing and Siding, coordinated the donation of all materials, labor, and installation.

This generous collaboration reflects the power of community and shared mission. We are deeply grateful to Melanson Roofing, Adam Quenneville Roofing and Siding, and the Roofing Alliance for their compassion and support.

The Staton Family, continued

As many of my family members live in Groton, CT, my sister Emily, dad, and stepmother cared for Luna there while I was in the hospital with Rob by my side. My mom later flew up from Florida to also help with Luna.

I was discharged on Friday, February 21st and our family was offered a room at the Ronald McDonald House so we could easily walk to be with Lyra daily while I continued to recover. This helped us dramatically as we didn't have to worry about parking or long drives to get to the hospital. Our first night at RMH, we could not get over how comfortable the beds were and we began to relax knowing both our girls were being well taken care of.

Luna continued to sleep with family in Groton but my sister and mom started to bring Luna up to the hospital to visit us frequently. RMH was the perfect spot for Luna to play with toys, cuddle the giant bear, and run around on the outside playground. Luna especially loved the surplus of candy and cookies in the kitchen. For Rob and I, it was the perfect spot to crash and recover after long days in the NICU. There were always snacks and yogurt parfaits for breakfast.

On March 1st after 12 days in the NICU and eight nights at RMH, Lyra was released and our family of four was finally reunited. As of April 2025, our family was safely transferred back to Okinawa, Japan.

Our two overseas moves, while pregnant and newly postpartum, were so hard on our family but necessary for everyone's safety. We are so thankful that we had the opportunity to stay at RMH while Lyra was in the NICU. It greatly eased our stress levels while navigating an extremely difficult situation for our family. To this day, Luna still asks to go back and play at Ronald McDonald House. Thank you again for supporting us when we needed it." - Heather

Round-Up for RMHC!



*The most it will cost
is \$0.99
but the impact is*

PRICELESS



**Ronald McDonald
House Charities®**
of Connecticut &
Western Massachusetts

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Did you know ?

You can support RMHC families
right from your smartphone!



36th Annual Trees of Hope

December 6th-14th, 2025
10AM - 5PM Daily

Long Wharf Maritime Center
555 Long Wharf Dr, New Haven

Join us in person or online!