When people hear stories about families staying at the Ronald McDonald House of Rochester, Minnesota, they often say they can’t imagine what it would be like to go through something like that with their child.

Well, what if you had to go through it twice?

Bryce and Bobbi Jo Freking were thrilled and excited. It was 2013 and they were about to become parents for the first time. And it was a girl—a bonus in Bobbi Jo’s eyes. But those feelings were soon replaced by fear, worry, and uncertainty, as the new parents welcomed their beautiful daughter Aliyah into the world...seven weeks early.

“My water broke when I was only 33 weeks pregnant,” said Bobbi Jo. “The doctor gave me a steroid injection to help her lungs develop for delivery at 34 weeks, but once we arrived at the Mayo Clinic, she started to decelerate. Doctors said if she did it again, they would be forced to deliver her via C-section. And that’s exactly what happened.”

Faced with an unexpected stay in Rochester, Bobbi Jo and her husband were approached by a Mayo Clinic Social Worker who told them about the Ronald McDonald House.

“We didn’t expect her to come early, so it was a shock,” Bobbi Jo said. “They said we could stay at the Ronald McDonald House, but truthfully, we didn’t know much about it. What we found was a home-away-from-home, a support system, and a blessing; a true blessing.”

Their first stay at the House lasted only 17 days, but it was a good memory during a frightening time. As Bobbi Jo describes it, Aliyah deals (continued on page 5)
EXECUTIVE MESSAGE

We are delighted to share our 2018 Newsletter with you! Inside you will find a beautiful collection of pictures and words that celebrate our ongoing commitment to children and families. Our newsletter also highlights the volunteers and supporters who strengthen our mission every day.

Please enjoy these wonderful mission moments!

Many families travel great distances seeking medical care at Mayo Clinic in Rochester. Regardless of how many miles a family has traveled, whether it is a first visit or their 20th visit, each child and each family is welcomed by a caring community of staff members and volunteers. A warm meal, fresh-baked cookies, and a soft, fleece blanket all make families feel at home during their stay. Families cherish time together in the House, especially when a visiting artist or furry therapy dog is part of the fun.

Colder weather has arrived early at the House and families visiting from distant locations are enjoying all of the festive holiday decorations. Volunteers have made our outdoor and indoor spaces warm and inviting with plants, lights and holiday décor. A new activity this season, the 1st Annual Fall Festival, was held October 2nd and 3rd at the House. The event was widely attended, thoroughly enjoyed by many, and is sure to be an annual favorite for years to come. Read more about this fun event on pages 8 and 9.

Tangible progress on our Love Tremendously Hope Exceedingly building expansion can be seen every day as our trusted construction partners work on the much needed building addition. Earlier this fall, our symbolic red heart, with the words Love & Hope displayed across the face, was at the top of the building structure for all to see. Eventually, our plywood heart will be replaced with a permanent glass heart when the two-story glass wall is installed. We continue to be humbled by the caring generosity of our Ronald McDonald House community and all who are lending a hand to ensure the success of our project.

The children and their families here inspire us with their courage each and every day. More families need our love and support and we look forward to advancing our mission to serve more families in 2019! We hope you will celebrate with us when our new addition opens in the spring.

Because you care, we will be here, providing shelter, comfort and support at this very special home-away-from-home. We are truly grateful for your partnership.

With warm fall greetings—

Dawn Davis
Peggy Elliott

Mission Statement

The Ronald McDonald House of Rochester, Minnesota provides a “home-away-from-home” and gives caring support to families seeking medical care for their children.
On May 1, 2018, the Ronald McDonald House of Rochester broke ground on its 30-room expansion. The House—which will be the largest in the state of Minnesota—will increase its annual capacity from 800 families to 1,500 families.

Total Project $17.7M  Raised to Date (September 2018) $17.0M  Needed to Complete Project $700K

“We have made significant progress towards our campaign goal thanks to the generosity of many. We invite you to join our efforts towards continued growth to meet the demand for services from families with children being treated at Mayo Clinic. Together – donors, volunteers, partners, and friends – we will reach our ambitious goal to keep 70 families together, every night.”

– Ed Clark, Campaign Chair

WAYS TO SUPPORT THE EXPANSION
1. MAKE A FINANCIAL DONATION
2. START A FUNDRAISER
3. SHARE YOUR STORY
4. SPREAD THE WORD

For the latest campaign updates and fundraising progress, please visit our campaign website at: expansion.rmhmn.org
Scholarship Recipients

The Future is Bright!

We are fortunate to have generous benefactors who established scholarships for former guests and House volunteers through three separate scholarship funds. We are proud to share this year’s recipients!

THE BARBARA HENOCH SCHOLARSHIP
Active Ronald McDonald House of Rochester, MN volunteers with more than 100 hours of service are eligible for this scholarship. Thanks to the support of Barb and her late husband, Phil Henoch, our House became a Ronald McDonald House in 1990. Barb remains a close friend to the House and the mission. Award: $1,000
2018 Recipient: Lindsay Young
Next Application Deadline: March 1, 2019

BARBARA SOIFER SCHOLARSHIP
Barb Soifer’s career at McDonald’s and Ronald McDonald House Charities spanned more than 30 years. Barb was devoted to her family, career and community and was a strong supporter of the Ronald McDonald House of Rochester, MN. Award: $1,000 1st year, $500 2nd year
2018 Recipient: Anna Booher
Next Application Deadline: June 14, 2019

THE RICKEE HENOCH SCHOLARSHIP
Rickee Henoch’s scholarship has supported former guests of the Ronald McDonald House of Rochester, MN for over 15 years. Award: $750
2018 Recipient: Ross Gengler
Next Application Deadline: June 14, 2019

Learn more or donate online to the expansion at https://expansion.rmhmn.org

Abbvie Donates $100 Million

Ronald McDonald House Charities announced a $100 million donation from AbbVie at its international conference in Chicago on August 20, resulting in a $33 million grant for the Ronald McDonald House of Rochester, Minnesota and its Love Tremendously Hope Exceedingly capital campaign.

“It’s an incredible gift,” Executive Director Peggy Elliott said. “The House has been blessed in the expansion process and today is no exception. AbbVie has made a lasting and meaningful impact on children and families. It still brings tears to my eyes.”

AbbVie—a research-driven biopharmaceutical company headquartered in Lake Bluff, Ill.—made the donation with the intent to accelerate the building process for Houses in the midst of capital campaigns. AbbVie wants to ensure all children have access to healthcare and that families are able to stay together during that time.

The Ronald McDonald House of Rochester was considered for the grant due to its diligence and thoughtful volunteer leadership and progress made in the capital campaign—every gift and every dollar counted. The capital campaign has received more than 1,400 gifts to date, led by six of $1 million or more.

“When we say each gift, each dollar is important and significant, it’s true,” Elliott said. “Our House was selected to receive a grant because of the tremendous support already received from the community on the project. We can’t begin to thank everyone who has supported our project thus far and who paved the way for this grant to happen.”

The grant from AbbVie reduces the remaining funds to be raised for the Love Tremendously Hope Exceedingly capital campaign to less than $700,000.

Learn more or donate online to the expansion at https://expansion.rmhmn.org
Two Stays, One Story

with some hearing loss, but she has been very fortunate with her health since her premature birth. She is entering kindergarten this year.

Three years later, Aliyah became a big sister to Makaylee, who was born happy and healthy—emphasis on the healthy, per Bobbi Jo.

Two years after that, they once again added to their family. Unfortunately, healthy seemed like a distant memory.

Carson was born in Fairmont before being airlifted to Rochester. He was diagnosed with tracheal stenosis, a congenital defect that causes a narrowing of the windpipe. Doctors said they needed to open his chest to repair it, but they would have to wait for him to grow before they could perform the surgery. What followed were the longest six weeks of their lives.

“The girls anticipated bringing their little brother home,” Bobbi Jo said. “When that didn’t happen, they were confused. The House, much like our home, was a place for them to be kids. It provided a great community and support system for our entire family…twice.”

Three weeks after Carson’s surgery, the Freking family checked out of the Ronald McDonald House of Rochester and journeyed home to yet another community of supporters in Sherburn and at St. John’s Lutheran Church.

Bobbi Jo described how confident in the care we would receive at Mayo Clinic and the hospitality we would receive at the Ronald McDonald House. It gave us comfort.

Surgery was a success and Carson is on the road to recovery.

Bobbi Jo is growing and doing well. He will need to visit Mayo Clinic for frequent scopes to ensure that his trachea is growing as he grows. But it gives them comfort to know that the House will always be here.

“The House is an amazing place,” said Bobbi Jo. “We can’t express how thankful we are to the staff and volunteers. When you go through a situation like this, you realize that there’s a lot of really good people in the world—more than you know.”

Bobbi Jo wanted the opportunity to thank all of the Mayo Clinic doctors and nurses in Fairmont and Rochester, the congregation and pastors at St. John’s Lutheran Church in Sherburn and staff, volunteers and families at the Ronald McDonald House of Rochester. But most of all, Bobbi Jo wanted to thank a member of the NICU Flight Team—even though they have never met.

“Nurse Lori was so calm and confident,” Bobbi Jo said. “As a mother, it is your job to keep your baby safe, and when I was laying helpless on the operating table, I only heard her voice. I held on to her confidence. I knew that when I couldn’t be with my son, she would take care of him. I hope I can personally thank her one day, because I will never forget the sound of her voice.”

Bryce and Bobbi Jo also thanked their family, saying they would not have been able to get through these difficult times without them.

“For two of our children, their memories start at the Ronald McDonald House of Rochester. Bobbi Jo talked about the House being there despite everything that was going on, saying sometimes the smallest things are the biggest blessings.”

“And now…it’s time to go home.”

“The House is an amazing place. We can’t express how thankful we are to the staff and volunteers.”

– Bobbi Jo Freking
Behind the Scenes

Volunteers truly are the heart of the House. From HouseWarmer who volunteer on a regular basis to group activities and service projects – there are many different ways people give their time and talents. Below are some volunteers who have found a unique way to serve the children and families at the House.

Denny started volunteering as a HouseWarmer in 2009. In 2014, he transitioned to being a weekly painter and has been painting ever since.

Paulette began as a HouseWarmer in 2000 and continues to do so, while also training new volunteers and serving as a liaison for service groups.

Lori came on board as a HouseWarmer in 2002 and did so for 12 years. She now manages food donations, assists community groups as House Dinner host and helps with special events and activities.

Donna started as a HouseWarmer in 2000, adding many hats over the years; assisting as House Dinner Host, helping the community learn about the House as an Ambassador, working with service groups as a liaison and preparing and serving meals for families.

Ron began as a HouseWarmer in 2014 and, in addition to that role, utilizes his IT skills by developing and enhancing a volunteer program for scheduling, hours tracking and more.

Thank you to all volunteers for the endless ways they support the House and its mission!

In Celebration of Dennis Bosma

Dennis was one of the founders of the Ronald McDonald House of Rochester, Minnesota, originally incorporated as Northland Children’s Services, Inc. – or “Northland House”. The Ronald McDonald House would not be here today had it not been for the vision, perseverance and dedication of Dennis and the other founding families. Dennis was always willing to roll up his sleeves and get the work done, whether it was serving as Board President, speaking to groups in the community, washing windows or raising funds to support the House. Dennis was a champion for children and families, especially those who called the House their home-away-from-home.

Our dear friend Dennis passed away on Oct. 26, 2018, but he left a lasting legacy – the Ronald McDonald House of Rochester, Minnesota.
Ways to give your time to the Ronald McDonald House of Rochester this holiday season and throughout the year:

Ongoing Opportunities

- **Become a Housewarmer** and help keep the House a Home all year long
- **Volunteer as a House Dinner Host** and help keep our House dinners running smoothly
- **Serve as a Ronald McDonald House Ambassador** and help us spread our mission to the community throughout the year
- **Volunteer as a Gardening Angel** and keep our outdoor areas fresh and beautiful

One-Time Opportunities

- Looking for a one-time opportunity? We are looking for volunteers to help us **take down decorations following the holiday season**
- Gather a group of your friends, family, co-workers or organization members and **host a House Dinner** for all of our families
- **Donate 42** (one for each family) of a fun item (snacks, toys, etc.) to the House and we will use them as mailbox stuffers so families have a fun surprise to come back to after appointments
- **Decorate pillowcases** so children and families staying at the House can see day-brightening messages and pictures first thing in the morning

*Learn more about all of our volunteer opportunities by visiting our website at [www.rmhmn.org](http://www.rmhmn.org)*

Celebrating 20 Years of Service

Congratulations to these special volunteers who have donated the gift of time to our House and families for 20 years!

Bea Klavetter

Mary Streit
The Ronald McDonald House of Rochester hosted its 1st Annual Fall Festival in October.

The festival was two evenings of food and fun for the whole family, including: pumpkin painting, wood sign painting with Canvas & Chardonnay, outdoor games, candy guessing jars, scavenger hunt, cookie decorating, beaded pumpkins, campfire with s’mores, homemade soup and apple pie.
During this Season of Giving YOU Can Make a Difference

Angels of Inspiration

We would like to extend our heartfelt sympathy to all of our families who have lost their precious children. While their lives were far too short, their spirit is with us forever. The following children earned their angel wings between August 1, 2017, and July 31, 2018.

Anthony
Anthony
Ava
Cora

Cully
Elliot
Hannah
Jacob

Jason
Jeffrey
Jenna
Jeremiah

Jesse
Jett
Kendal
Kirsten

Madison
Marlee
Niavh
Oliver

Riley
Samuel
Scarlett
Travis

Tucker
Zeehan

Sadly, we don’t always know when a child passes away, but we always care. If you would like your angel remembered in our next issue, or if you’d like to include memories of your child in our Angels of Inspiration memory book honoring House children who’ve passed away, please contact Paula at pharaldson@rmhmn.org.

Hearts of Gold – Give a Gift That Endures

When it comes to defining your legacy of caring, your options are many. Here are just a few flexible, versatile and secure ways you can help keep families close for years to come. Even people of modest means can make a difference in the lives of children by planning a Hearts of Gold legacy gift.

• Include us in your will – Designating a percentage of your estate for the Ronald McDonald House of Rochester, MN in your will can help future generations of children in need.

• Establish a life income gift – Receive fixed or variable payments for life and gain valuable tax advantages when you create a life income gift.

• Donate life insurance – You can easily support our mission by naming the Ronald McDonald House of Rochester, MN as a beneficiary on a policy you already own.

• Consider your retirement plan assets – By making a simple designation on your plan’s beneficiary designation form, you can save your loved ones from a heavy tax burden while helping us.

• Give property – If you have a house or another piece of property you no longer want to manage, it may help us continue our vital work.

Learn more by contacting us:

We’re here to answer any questions you may have about planning a gift. Please contact Samantha Whipple at (507) 424-3216 or swhipple@rmhmn.org for more information or to share your intentions.

During the upcoming Season of Giving, we invite you to make a charitable gift that will help keep families together when it matters most. To make your year-end contribution extra special, we suggest giving it in honor of a friend or loved one. Share the joy of the holiday season and make a difference for families in need.
2018 Special Event Highlights

15TH ANNUAL HEARTS & DIAMONDS SPECTACULAR
The 15th Annual Hearts & Diamonds Spectacular was held on Saturday, Feb. 3, 2018 at Somerby Golf Club. The event continued its 14-year tradition with diamonds, dining and dancing. The theme was Celebrate and celebrate we did! The 270 attendees heard from a guest family and were reminded of the importance of their support. The event raised more than $215,000! Sterling State Bank was the Presenting Sponsor, while Hight & Randall Personal Jeweler was the Exclusive Diamond Sponsor. Somerby Golf Club was the Event Sponsor and McNeilus Companies, Rochester Motor Cars, Weis Builders were Major Sponsors. Save the date for next year’s Hearts & Diamonds Spectacular: Saturday, Feb. 2, 2019.

4TH ANNUAL RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE FAMILY WALK
As part of the Scheels Med City Marathon, the 4th Annual Ronald McDonald House Family Walk was held on Saturday, May 26, 2018. The two-mile walk raised more than $6,500. Data-Smart Computers and Telecommunications was the Major Sponsor for this year’s event. Save the date for next year’s Ronald McDonald House Family Walk: Saturday, May 25, 2019.

40TH ANNUAL SWING YOUR BIRDIE GOLF CLASSIC
On Friday, July 27, 2018, 137 golfers gathered at Willow Creek Golf Course for the 40th Annual Swing Your Birdie Golf Classic. The best-shot tournament, which is the longest-running golf tournament in Rochester, raised more than $60,000. Think Mutual Bank was the Presenting Sponsor, Benike Construction was the Lunch Sponsor, Dunlap & Seeger was the Social Hour Sponsor, Coca-Cola was the Exclusive Cart & Refreshment Sponsor and Subaru of Rochester was the Golfer Gift Sponsor. Save the date for next year’s Swing Your Birdie Golf Classic: Friday, July 26, 2019.

3RD ANNUAL PARTY AT THE PAVILION
The 3rd Annual Part at the Pavilion was held on Thursday, Sept. 6, 2018 at Willow Creek Golf Course’s outdoor pavilion. Fernando Ufret and Nels Leafblad & Nate Larson were the featured musical artists for this year’s event, while LTS Brewing Company provided attendees with craft beer tastings. Founded by Wendell & Dianne Pittenger, the event raised more than $25,000. Knutson Construction was the Major Sponsor, Bremer Bank was the Premier Music Sponsor, Heartman Insurance was the Opening Band Sponsor, Townsquare Media was the Media Sponsor and Premier Bank Rochester was the Raffle Sponsor. Andy’s Liquor, Double Tree by Hilton, Hilton Garden Inn and Dunlap & Seeger were Heart of Hope Sponsors. K&M Glass and Subaru of Rochester were Heart of Love Sponsors.

The Ronald McDonald House of Rochester special events are a key component of our mission to keep children and families together and near the care and medical support they need. In 2018, our four signature events raised more than $300,000 for the children and families we serve. Thank you to all of our sponsors, attendees and the community for supporting our special events!
Share Your #RMHMNStory

Each family who has stayed at the Ronald McDonald House of Rochester has a unique and beautiful story...including your child's! Your story makes the House special. Your story is a support for families with similar situations. Your story is the reason people support the House. Your story is our story!

Are you willing to share your child’s story with the Ronald McDonald House of Rochester? Please contact Jacob Dreyer at JDreyer@rmhmn.org.

Letter from the Heart

“Thanks so much for all you do to make the Ronald McDonald House a home away from home. We very much appreciated having a place close to the hospital while our newborn son was in the NICU and special care nursery.”

– RMHMN Guest Family

Holiday Wish List

Thanks to the generous support of our community, we are able to make the holidays a little brighter for our families. By stocking our Snowflake Room with gifts for all members of the family, families can focus on what’s really important during the holidays - keeping their children close to the support and medical care they need.

Our full holiday wish list is available at rmhmn.org or you can find our wish list on Amazon by searching Ronald McDonald House of Rochester, MN.

• Baby and Toddler Toys
• LEGO and DUPLO Sets
• Sketch Books and Adult Coloring Books
• Remote-Control Cars
• Art Kits
• Travel Coffee and Water Cups
• Gift Cards

Donations can be dropped off at our front desk seven days a week.