When we moved into the Ronald McDonald House, everything changed for Camilla,” said Lindsey, Camilla’s mom. “Instead of focusing on her therapy and all of her pain and fears, she focused on the Ronald McDonald House.”

“The House is so special.”

Photography by Crystal Hedberg Photography
DEAR FRIENDS,

We invite you to read the latest news from the Ronald McDonald House of Rochester, Minnesota. You will enjoy reading how we serve families safely amidst a global pandemic (thanks to our incredible community of supporters) and are sure to be delighted with our stroll down memory lane as we celebrate our 40th anniversary of providing shelter and support to ill children and their families.

2020 was not the year we expected! With the completion of our Love Tremendously Hope Exceedingly capital campaign in the fall of 2019, we were excited to begin a new year of providing shelter and support to 70 families each night. January and February were typical months at the House; families coming and going, volunteers compassionately sharing their time to make our House a home, and programs such as Visiting Artist, Paw Pals, Music Therapy, and House Dinners providing families with healthy distractions, healthy meals, and a chance to connect with other families staying in the House. All of this, of course, changed in March when the COVID-19 pandemic became a global and community crisis.

With the support of our caring and generous community, our doors have remained open every day this year and we have continued to serve families and children who have traveled to Rochester for critical medical care.

Since March, we have provided nearly 4,000 nights of lodging to families. With attention to cleaning and sanitizing, social distancing, mask-wearing, and illness-screening, our guests and staff have remained healthy for the past nine months. For families in Rochester not staying at the House due to health protocols, we expanded existing programs to help these families as well. We have provided more than 500 bags of fruits, vegetables, proteins, and snacks, 2,800 prepared meals and almost 800 totes/backpacks filled with children’s games, arts and crafts, activities, and books for families waiting to meet the safety requirements for admittance to the House. We are truly serving families where they need to be served during this challenging and unprecedented time.

Our ability to advance our mission is only truly possible because of the love and support of our Ronald McDonald House community. Generous support of our House Dinner Hero program allows us to order catered meals from local Rochester restaurants. Families welcome hot and nutritious meals seven nights per week. Support of our Keepin’ It Fresh Food Co-op allows families unlimited access to fresh fruits, vegetables, and proteins. We remain incredibly touched by the support of so many when we know everyone has been impacted by the pandemic. Thank you!

We have much to be grateful for this year, including recognizing our 40th anniversary of serving children and families in Rochester. Although our 40th anniversary in-person celebrations were not possible, we found other ways to celebrate four decades of providing shelter and support to children and families. We acknowledge with deep gratitude the Ronald McDonald House founding families (Dennis and Bonnie Bosma, Bill and Karlene Gormley, George and Cheryl Wilson, and Jo Linnus) who bravely started our story 40 years ago, the Ronald McDonald House community that makes our mission possible, and the thousands of children and families who have graced our House and touched our hearts with their presence over the past 40 years!

As we begin our 41st year of serving children and families, we are ever mindful of the impact of a caring community, the priceless joy of a child, and the boundless love families have for their children. Of all the things that have changed this year, our commitment to our mission remains unchanged. We are grateful for your partnership, support, and love. Together we will continue to provide a home away from home and caring support to the children and families we have the privilege of serving for many years to come.

Wishing you a healthy and happy new year!

Jason Boynton, Board President

Peggy Elliott, Executive Director

Mission Statement

The Ronald McDonald House of Rochester, Minnesota, provides a home away from home and gives support to families seeking medical care for their children.
Scholarship Recipients

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! Visit www.rmhmn.org/scholarships to apply!

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  |  Recipient: Kiran Somers  |  Next Deadline: March 1, 2021

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  |  Recipient: Jeremy Bouchard  |  Next Deadline: June 18, 2021

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  |  Next Deadline: June 18, 2021
“The House was our home for a long time,” Luis said. “It’s still our home.” 
“The new House…” Luis said. “...it shows families—everything will be OK.”

“Staying together as a family…” said Betty, Robert’s mom. “It was so special for us.”
“The House communicated with us and was here for us. The House ensured we were cared for and made us feel very loved.”
“The House is incredible,” said Josh, Nolan’s dad. “There is so much support for Nolan and our family. We are so lucky—it would have been such a challenge without it.”

“It has definitely made a difference.”

“The Ronald McDonald House is the best place in the entire world,” said Katelyn, Remi’s mom.

“I can’t explain it in words... it means so much to our family. It’s a significant part of our lives.”

“We did not have to worry about anything—we were able to focus on our child.”

“It’s a place we will never forget and a place we will forever support.”
Ronald McDonald House of Rochester, Minnesota, Celebrates 40 Years!

Northland House is a beacon of shelter to families

Northland House

Founded 1980

Four Rochester-area families unite around a common vision and create a 12-bedroom hospitality house for families with seriously ill children.

Northland House Becomes Ronald McDonald House of Rochester, Minnesota 1990

Volunteers and Rochester McDonald’s owner/operator succeed in their campaign to become a licensed Ronald McDonald House.

NORTHLAND HOUSE

DEDICATED MAY 3, 1980

BY NORTHLAND CHILDREN’S ONCOLOGY SERVICES, INC.

ROCHESTER, MINNESOTA
RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE OF ROCHESTER BUILDS NEW FACILITY

1995
Ronald McDonald House of Rochester builds a 24-guestroom facility on 2nd St. SW, complete with living areas, kitchen, laundry, playrooms, and games room.

RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE OF ROCHESTER EXPANDS

2004
Ronald McDonald House of Rochester adds 18 guestrooms (including six rooms specifically designed for longterm guests), making it a 42-guestroom House.

House has a new name, but service still the same

By JOHN HUGHES
Post-Bulletin Staff Writer

Rochester’s “house that love built” has a new name but will continue to benefit families of seriously ill children, community leaders said Tuesday.

The Northland House, 613 Second St. S.W., beyond the original 1989 Ronald McDonald House in an inaugural ceremony Tuesday, is open. The change officially is in name only, because Northland Children’s Services Inc. will continue to operate the home with local funds, Northland President Mike Condon said.

The house, since May 1999, has provided free and reduced rent, typically by $60 and $85 per day, for families of seriously ill children.

The 42-room facility is fully staffed and always has a waiting list of 12 families, Condon said.

Jason Gaas, one of Northland’s most famous former residents, was among several visitors and community leaders who welcomed the new name in a ceremony at the house Tuesday afternoon.

Gaas, 12, joined national fame when the book he wrote while undergoing cancer treatment at Mayo Clinic, “My Book For Kids With Cancer,” was published. Gaas, who was a frequent visitor to the home, said he thought of the house as a place for families of seriously ill children.

“The people that stay here know it’s much more than just a place to sleep,” said Gaas, who made permanent friends while staying at the house. “When Dorothy said, ‘There’s no place like home, there’s no place like home,’ that’s because she hasn’t been to Northland House,” Gaas said.

McDonald’s restaurants officials proved there are additional benefits besides a new name for the McDonald house. The officials pledged to give $50,000 to the house during Tuesday’s ceremony.

McDonald’s, however, also financially supported the house before the new change.

Ronald McDonald House is the cornerstone of Ronald McDonald Children’s Charities, which began in 1946 in memory of McDonald’s founder Ray Kroc. The organization sets out to award grants to organizations that benefit children.

Condon said becoming a McDonald house is something that was discussed because McDonald’s has been so involved with the Northland house.

He said McDonald’s could be helpful in Northland’s effort to find more space for the 12 or so families permanently waiting for space at the current house.

He said Northland officials will be able to cooperate with and pick up tips from 155 other houses in the McDonald network, and that the house was the ideal place to start.

Tuesday’s celebration also honored the house’s 16 successful years of serving about 1,000 families.

Carol McCarthy, one of the house’s original founders, said organizers 16 years ago spent virtually all of a limited budget to secure the property.

“We had nothing to go on but the good will of many, many people,” McCarthy said.

But repeatedly, Rochester residents have supported the house, Mayor Chuck banana said.

“It was the start of a dream,” he said. The house now is “a symbol of a community that cares and responds to the needs of children and their families.”

Northland volunteers raised funds and in 1997 purchased the home from Mill and Rose Schumann, who had been using it as rental property.
RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE OF ROCHESTER EXPANDS AGAIN, BECOMES LARGEST IN THE STATE OF MINNESOTA

2019

Ronald McDonald House of Rochester expands to 70 rooms, making it the largest Ronald McDonald House in the state of Minnesota, 11th largest in the country, and 17th largest in the world.
HEARTS OF GOLD

Hearts of Gold is a recognition program for donors who have chosen to leave a legacy of love and include the Ronald McDonald House of Rochester as a beneficiary in their will, life insurance policy, retirement plan or trust. Members of Hearts of Gold are special friends of the House who have demonstrated their long-term commitment to our mission of providing a home-away-from-home and support to families whose children are facing a critical medical diagnosis. In many instances, a planned gift can make a significant impact without sacrificing income or security for a person’s own family. Watch for additional information coming to www.rmhmn.org in 2021!

For more information on how you can support the House, please contact the development staff: Jamie Bingner (507-424-3484, jbingner@rmhmn.org), Angela Christensen (507-252-2163, achristensen@rmhmn.org), Samantha Whipple (507-424-3216, swhipple@rmhmn.org).
Sadly, we don’t always know when a child passes away, but we always care. If you would like your child remembered in our next Newsletter, or if you’d like to include memories of your child in our memory book honoring House children who’ve passed away, please contact Paula at pharaldson@rmhmn.org.

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 passed away between August 1, 2019, and July 31, 2020.

- Caleb
- Gabriella
- Gianna
- Grace
- Greyson
- Jude
- Madalyn
- Mateo
- Myles
- Vincent

$46,875

Con-Tech® Manufacturing, Inc., Kenworth, and Kenworth of Central Florida, partnered to donate a Mixer Truck to auction off at CONEXPO-CON/AGG with 100% of the proceeds going to charity. The proceeds were donated equally to four charities, including the Ronald McDonald House of Rochester, Minnesota! The result was a $46,875 donation for children and families!
The Ronald McDonald House of Rochester hosted the **17th Annual Hearts & Diamonds Spectacular** presented by Sterling State Bank on Saturday, Feb. 1, 2020, at Somerby Golf Club. The 270 attendees enjoyed diamonds courtesy Hight & Randall Personal Jewelers, dining, and dancing, as well as a lyrical performance by Emily Forst and an impact story from the Szabo family. Knutson Construction and Rochester Motor Cars were Major Sponsors. The event raised $221,180!

**REGISTER TODAY** for the 2021 Hearts & Diamonds Spectacular, an interactive virtual event, on February 6, 2021 by visiting heartsdiamonds.rmhmn.org!

The 6th Annual **Ronald McDonald House Family Walk** sponsored by Data-Smart Computers and Telecommunications was the first-ever virtual event. Children and families from across the country participated in the two-miler on Labor Day Weekend. The event raised $7,063!

The longest-running golf tournament in the Rochester area was played for the 42nd year! Nearly 100 golfers participated in the socially distanced **Swing Your Birdie Golf Classic** presented by Think Bank on Monday, August 10, 2020, at Somerby Golf Club. The event raised $51,816!

**SAVE THE DATE** for the 43rd Annual Swing Your Birdie Golf Classic: Monday, June 14, 2021!
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.

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