



Hand-in-Hand

RONALD McDONALD HOUSE CHARITIES®

How you are helping to keep families of seriously ill children together.

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A Perfect Heart For Macy

Skipping across to the kitchen at the Ronald McDonald House®, Macy's backpack bounces right along with her — not because she forgot to take it off but because she is connected to what's inside.

Macy, a vibrant 10-year-old, was born with a three-chambered heart. Only two of the chambers worked correctly. The life-saving heart transplant she received last year means she must always carry her backpack which holds an IV machine. Her chest is strapped with a defibrillator, ready to shock her chest in case of heart failure.

Thanks to your support, Macy and her family found comfort at the Ronald McDonald House while waiting for news of a donor match for her heart transplant.

Macy is now recovering and staying at the House for a bit longer, but it's been a long journey for this joyful young girl.

Macy's family needed to be steps away from the hospital and ready at a moment's notice when the new heart arrived ...

At only 20 weeks old, doctors discovered Macy had a congenital heart defect. She underwent three open heart surgeries to try to correct it.

But shortly after her third birthday, Macy went into heart failure. After an adjustment in medication, she returned to as normal a life as possible — playing with her friends and even doing sports like volleyball and basketball.

Then, in July of 2008, Macy showed signs of heart failure once more and was sent for another evaluation. Doctors placed her on a heart transplant list.

Macy and her parents, Jordan and Karen, stayed at the Ronald McDonald House for six months while waiting for news that the right donor match — the right heart — had been found.

They needed to be steps away from the hospital and ready at a moment's notice when her new heart arrived. The family appreciated being nearby as well as the comfort in the wonderful meals volunteer dinner groups cooked each night.

At first Macy didn't want her transplant, fearing her love, thoughts, and feelings would be removed with her heart.

But when they finally got the phone call that a heart was ready, Macy was ready, too.

After being admitted and prepped for surgery, her parents' own hearts sank as they were told doctors found tissue damage and weren't comfortable giving Macy the heart.

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INSIDE: *"No parent plans for this ." One grateful mother's story.*

“No parent plans for this ...”

On what was an otherwise normal Sunday, Jade McCullough, 15, felt some numbness on the side of her face.

“My face feels funny,” she told her mother, Yashika. Days later, an MRI revealed what no parent in the world could plan or prepare for — a brain tumor.

In one instant, the McCullough family’s lives were turned upside down.

The hospital where Jade needed to go for treatment was quite a distance from their home. And because Yashika lost her eyesight from an injury while serving in Desert Storm, she was unable to make that drive each day. Her husband worked full-time, and Yashika still had to care for her other two children. The situation appeared impossible to manage.

Yashika’s heart — already broken with worry and fear for her daughter — now seemed irreversibly torn.

Then, the family discovered the Ronald McDonald House® just steps away from the hospital. It was an answer to their prayers!

Staying at the House allowed the entire family to stay together through Jade’s surgery and recovery.

“All day I dealt with doctors, nurses, and specialists,” says Yashika. “It was all too much. But as soon as I walked through the doors of the Ronald McDonald House, it was so warm. They said, ‘This is your home now.’”

And that’s just what this tight-knit family of five needed to hear, as they feared for Jade’s life.

“The strength comes and goes, but the pain never leaves. It’s your child. You just want to get them home,” Yashika says tearfully.

At the Ronald McDonald House, we see parents coping with this grief and sense of loss every day. There is no way to take away their pain. But what we can do, with your ongoing support, is provide a safe, comfortable environment that offers relief in an otherwise devastating situation.

“The Ronald McDonald House filled the gaps in my life when the news of Jade’s tumor came out of nowhere. I am so grateful for that.”

“Our whole family was able to have dinner together here. That was such a comfort as I was coming and going at all hours,” Yashika explains. “The Ronald McDonald House filled the gaps in my life when the news of Jade’s tumor came out of nowhere. I am so grateful for that.”

Thanks to your ongoing support, families like the McCulloughs can find a sense of comfort and peace in an otherwise uncertain time. Staying united and near Jade was so important to the whole family. Thank you for providing that comfort to them with your ongoing support.

Keeping families together can help a sick child heal faster. What a wonderful gift of healing you can offer! Please mail another generous donation today in the enclosed envelope. Thank you!



With a loving family and a lot of extracurricular activities, Jade was just like any other teenager — until she was diagnosed with a brain tumor. Thankfully, your support of Ronald McDonald House Charities helped her family when they needed it most.



*A colorful drawing to match a colorful personality!
With her new heart, the sky's the limit for Macy.*

A heart was again ready for Macy.

Just a few hours later, it beat in her small body for the first time.

Hours after surgery, Macy woke frightened by the ventilator mask on her mouth, frantically trying to figure out what was going on. Jordan leaned in to make out what she kept repeating.

“Dad, am I going to die?”

“Absolutely not,” her dad said. “You are going to be great. You got a new heart.”

For three weeks after the transplant, Macy and her family stayed

at the Ronald McDonald House. It had become their ‘home-away-from-home’ during such a worrisome time. It helped ease some of the fears they faced. And it gave them the privacy and dignity they needed to deal with the uncertainty of Macy’s condition.

In the end, Macy finally got her perfect heart. And it warmed *everyone’s* hearts to see Macy improving each day.

Every day, your gifts are put into action to help keep families like Macy’s together and speed healing. Thank you for your compassion and kindness!

Story continued from cover ...

A Perfect Heart

But two months later, Macy and her family got better news.

Wonderful news, in fact!

Helping Hands

Though Mary Ann Denker, 60, retired a few years ago, she hasn’t stopped working. Not when it comes to the cause of helping families who are worried about the health of their ill or injured child.

Mary Ann has been a volunteer for Ronald McDonald House® for the last several years. She says she likes to lend a *helping hand* because of what she went through *firsthand*.

“My niece was born with a heart defect,” explains Mary Ann. “When she was at the hospital, my brother’s family lived in the House for two months while she was being treated. I would come on weekends. This wasn’t just accommodations. It was a place for them to live.”

Mary Ann was impressed with the warmth and love her family was shown during such a difficult time. And she never forgot it.

That’s why, two years before she retired, she volunteered her time to the House on Sundays and progressed to being a weekend manager. For the last three years, 2-3 days a week, she’s been commuting 85 miles to get to the House so she can help write

thank-you cards, check on families, and do whatever is required to support those who really need it.

“When you hear and see what’s going on with these families, it puts life in perspective,” she explains. “Holding someone’s hand when they need it or telling them how to get somewhere is what it’s about. I answer questions and listen. These are families far away from home. They’re afraid. But at the House, we all have each other.”

You can make a tremendous difference by lending a helping hand — and some hope — to worried families of seriously ill children. Call us to find out more about volunteer opportunities. Thank you!

Mary Ann Denker learned firsthand how much the Ronald McDonald House means to families with ill children. That’s why she gives her time so generously to help others.



Rita Cyr
Executive Director



You Help Lift Heavy Burdens

Dear Friend,

In our newsletter, we talk so much about helping families cope after their child becomes ill. But we don't often mention how an illness can place a heavy financial burden on families who already struggle with so many worries and fears. This recession has made it even harder, because those who have the least have been hurt the most.

Can you imagine the hotel costs if a child was hospitalized for weeks or months? Or how a parent would pay for gas to get to the hospital every day?

That's why we not only provide a comfortable, loving place for families to stay — we make it affordable.

But we can only do that with your kind donations.

Since moving into our second location almost 11 years ago, RMHC-MVR has been able to offer our services free of charge. This may not be the case next year when we will celebrate our 30th anniversary. Due to the turn in the economy, we may need to start requesting a contribution from our guest families. Please know that no family will ever be turned away due to an inability to pay.

Your generous, ongoing support helps families in so many ways. And it means they can focus on what matters most: getting their child better ... and back home again. Thank you.

Kids Helping Kids

“On May 1st, I walked into Centennial Elementary and witnessed kindergarten through second-grade children running in a relay chanting, ‘Kids Helping Kids ... Kids Helping Kids ... Kids Helping Kids.’ My eyes welled up with tears. The amount of school spirit and dedication at Centennial Elementary of Wapakoneta is tremendously overwhelming. I have never witnessed anything like it,” says Lezley Pisone, Ronald McDonald House Charities-MVR’s Development Director.

For the past year, students, teachers, and staff of Centennial Elementary conducted a service learning project in support of the Ronald McDonald House Charities of the Miami Valley. “The school clearly embraced RMHC’s mission and by doing so they surpassed the act of raising money. They were on a mission to improve the community and to truly make a difference.



Local school kids helped raise funds — and spirits — for families with ill children.

“The amount of school spirit and dedication at Centennial Elementary of Wapakoneta is tremendously overwhelming.”

The difference they have made equates to keeping families together so a hospitalized child has a loving hand to hold when illness or injury strikes.” Lezley says.

Ronald McDonald House – MVR is sincerely grateful for Centennial Elementary School’s passion for the well-being of our region’s families and children. Their donation of \$13,226 and 1,641 pounds of donated pop tabs has made a significant difference. Thank you!

Don't forget to visit our new website at www.RMHCdayton.org

Welcome!

Please join us in welcoming our newest staff member to the RMHC Team!

Dani Graff is our new Volunteer and Guest Relations Administrator. Transplanted from Boise, Idaho, Dani has a background in marketing and business, a love for European travel, her 2 dogs, and energetic volunteers.

Dani is actively recruiting volunteers. If interested, please contact Dani at 937-224-0047 or dgraff@rmhcd Dayton.org for a volunteer application.