The Red Shoe Crew — our young professionals group formerly known as Discovery Circle — is off to a great start in 2014!

The Red Shoe Crew hosts fundraising, social and networking events as well as several annual service projects that directly benefit Ronald McDonald House Charities of Jacksonville. Now the title of the group has an even closer connection. Formerly known as Discovery Circle, the young professionals group recently re-branded, following suit with many Ronald McDonald Houses around the country in adopting the Red Shoe title, nodding to the eye-catching shoes of Ronald McDonald himself. They kicked off this year with a March membership meeting as well as a social at The Brick Restaurant in Avondale.

Crew members can be seen around the House and around Jacksonville wearing their red shoes.
BOARD PRESIDENT

Michael D. Kendall

Dear RMHCJ family and friends,

First and foremost, on behalf of the Board of Directors of the House, I would like to extend our sincere gratitude to Ryan Schwartz for his tireless leadership of the House for the past two years. Ryan leaves giant shoes to fill, but the Board and I are up to the challenge.

My commitment to Ronald McDonald House Charities of Jacksonville is a product of witnessing the mission of the House being carried out every minute of every day. The House is truly a “home away from home” for families from all over the world. The comfort provided is seen through the many faces of our families. Our work is only possible because of the generous support of the community and that unwavering support continues to grow and amaze! 2014 will be another exciting year for our House and I am truly honored and privileged to lead the charge of growth and awareness so that many more families can enjoy the comforts of a “home away from home.” Please join us for what will undoubtedly be an exciting year at the House!

Warm regards,

MICHAEL D. KENDALL

It is early morning in the kitchen of the Ronald McDonald House and the families are busy getting ready for their day ahead. The room is abuzz with breakfast being prepared by moms and dads, grandmas and grandpas, and the children are gathering with their families and new friends for a nutritious start to the day. Our family program staff is speaking with the family members, listening to their concerns — always there to provide guidance or just a friendly ear when needed.

I see a young mom from Orlando preparing herself for her 6th week of morning trips to the NICU at Wolfson Children’s Hospital to see her baby girl; a dad and his son from Trinidad patiently waiting for heart surgery; a mom and dad from Minnesota who, with their daughter and a practiced routine, prepare for their daily proton therapy treatment. It is week number 4 for them. The kitchen is filled with expectation, hope and the soft joyous sounds of children in the morning.

I think of the long journeys our young families have taken seeking medical treatment. The families are all so different, yet very much the same in that they are bound by their love for their children and their comforting destination home found here at the Ronald McDonald House in Jacksonville.

We serve families in so many ways — from day visitors to one night stays to families who spend months in our “home away from home.” And, as diverse as these families are, so is our incredible staff, volunteers and donors whose tireless support makes this all possible. I continue to be touched and inspired by these in-kind services and donations, events, wish list items, monetary donations and pop tab collections. Such remarkable support and this exceptional ‘can-do’ attitude allow us to meet the various needs of our families each and every day.

I want to thank you all for truly making a difference in the lives of these families and their children. I am in awe of the depth of your giving. Every time you support the Ronald McDonald House, you are an integral part of creating comfort, togetherness and hope for the families we serve.

Executive Director

DIANE BOYLE
I have now been here longer than I can count on one paw! It has been six months since I got to walk through the doors of this comfortable “home away from home” as the official Ronald McDonald House facility dog.

Amazingly enough, the very first guest I got to meet is back for a visit! What perfect timing! I love reunions! My tail wags extra hard when I get to see my friends again. Wonder if we can celebrate and break in a new tennis ball out in the courtyard?

There are always so many fun moments here! The arrival of the big blue house for our playroom was a great event! It fits a whole lot of kiddos, and me too. We sure have fun playing in it everyday.

The chilly weather brought out hats. There’s nothing better to keep your ears warm, furry or not, than a giant fuzzy animal hat. Erika donned hers and I fetched mine. We had a great time showing them off.

I even got to accept my first donation! Thanks to the Florida Coastal Law School and all the donors who make this the best place to be when you have to be away from home.

Look for me on the Ronald McDonald House Facebook page. I’ll be sharing news weekly as a part of our new “Woof Wednesdays”. You won’t want to miss my weekly adventures!

WOOF, WOOF!

(Love, Reed)
Linda Louise Greiff was born in 1999 and was a happy, healthy baby. Her parents, Linda and John, looked forward to the milestones they would mark in their daughter's life. But, life doesn't always go as planned, and that is how the Greiff family came to stay at Ronald McDonald House.

Shortly before Linda Louise's second birthday, her mother noticed that she was not developing at the same rate as other children her age. Linda took her to the doctor and they were referred to Tampa for further testing. Linda Louise and her family, who were living in Flagler County at the time, packed up and went to Tampa. While in Tampa, they stayed in their first Ronald McDonald House. Linda Louise was diagnosed with Rett Syndrome, a form of autism that almost exclusively affects girls.

Rett Syndrome is an autism spectrum disorder in girls that causes loss of muscle control and coordination. By age 4, girls with Rett Syndrome stop talking and develop extreme social anxiety and begin to withdraw from people. Because of their diminished muscle control and coordination, most girls will be confined to a wheelchair, like Linda Louise.

Linda Louise is 14 years old now and is in a wheelchair. She loves horses and has many drawings of horses in her room. She visits Jacksonville and our House twice a year to see her Rett Syndrome specialist, and had scoliosis surgery at Wolfson Children's Hospital in 2010. During each of these visits, her family has stayed at the Ronald McDonald House. They have enjoyed many dinners at the House, meeting other families and connecting with the staff and volunteers.

"The staff and volunteers become like family, they have watched Linda Louise grow up and they are our extended family here. When Linda Louise is in the hospital in Jacksonville, Manya visits every Friday. We really look forward to that", says Linda Louise's mother.

The Greiff family has also taken advantage of the Day Room at Ronald McDonald House. The Day Room provides a nice respite with couches, TV, Murphy bed and full bathroom with shower. They have also benefited from the Ronald McDonald Family Room at Wolfson Children's Hospital. The Family Room is staffed by a kind volunteer and provides a break for the family. The room provides snacks, drinks, comfortable seating and often a listening ear away from the hustle and bustle of the hospital waiting room.

"I tell everyone I know how much Ronald McDonald House means to our family," says Mom.

Linda Louise has been recently receiving treatment at Wolfson Children's Hospital. That visit was her longest stay to date. Her mom was right by her side and we were all thrilled to hear when she was headed back home.

"I tell everyone I know how much Ronald McDonald House means to our family."
CONTINUED FROM COVER

“The Red Shoe Crew

“It has been fun and effective to strike up conversations about the great work of Ronald McDonald House because of my red sneakers. I am hopeful for it to catch on throughout town,” said Matt Lindberg, 2014 Red Shoe Crew Chair, who was the first to snag his red Converse in December.

“Changing something simple in our day-to-day can spark interest, and using that to engage others with a very important need generates more support for that need. It is something we can all do, be proud of, and have fun with. I am so inspired by the families we meet and feel better connected to our community by supporting the work of the Jacksonville Ronald McDonald House. Our efforts, from fundraising to making dinner at the House, make such a difference to the families that need our program”, Matt says.

There is still time to sign up! Red Shoe Crew membership dues directly support the work of the Ronald McDonald House of Jacksonville. Dues are $50 per year for individuals and $75 annually for couples. Please visit mhcjacksonville.org/redshoecrew to learn more and be sure to also connect with them on Facebook and Twitter.

Your efforts as a member make a direct impact on our families and it is a great way to get involved in giving back.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CALL SARAH YOUNG, 904.807.4669.

IN LOVING MEMORY
CHILDREN WE LOST IN 2013
WHO WILL REMAIN IN OUR HEARTS FOREVER
Thomas Blakemore
Bentley Compton
Luke Crosby
Coraline Fitzgerald
Ehrren Gillespie
Mattie Goble
Levi Gonzalez
Tristan Kaphan
Sarah Kelly
Hayden Kimberlin
Liam Meyer
Barnabas Newlyn
Adrian Parker
Nyle Persad
Madison Smith
Osias Wenner
Chandler Wood
Janine Veneracion
Elizabeth Zygmunt

THANK YOU TO THE DUVAL COUNTY FARM BUREAU

Dalton Dowdy and the Duval County Farm Bureau board present a check to Carol Harrison during Food Check-Out Week, a consumer outreach program to celebrate the abundant, nutritious food Florida farmers and ranchers produce.

In the mid-1990’s, the Duval County Farm Bureau began what has become a long-standing and significant relationship with Ronald McDonald House Charities.

The Farm Bureau recognizes the importance of the mission of RMHC and their gifts reflect the strong ties agriculture has to local communities. Being part of Food Check-Out Week is just one of the many ways they have supported the House over the years.

They partner with the Duval County 4-H program, the University of Florida Cooperative Extension Service Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, and Duval County Farm Bureau Insurance as they support the House programs throughout the year. This group coordinates many on-going fundraising opportunities in addition to Food Check-Out Week. They also go above and beyond by hosting wish list and paper towel drives every year.

We are grateful to the Duval County Farm Bureau for their kindness and generosity!
On Thursday, April 3, Ronald McDonald House Charities of Jacksonville hosted the 20th annual Volunteer Recognition Dinner. Staff rolled out the red carpet for volunteers at the Hollywood-inspired event. Approximately 100 volunteers were in attendance and they were treated to performances by DeWitt Gibbs and the FCWE Brass Quintet. There was also a special appearance by Ronald McDonald. It was a fun-filled evening of gratitude.

Four volunteers were recognized through the annual awards presentation. Congratulations to Rita Chmielewski, who was presented the Winn-Dixie Award on behalf of all Ronald McDonald House Charities of Jacksonville volunteers. This plaque recognizes the efforts of all volunteers. Last year more than 22,000 hours were given by volunteers. Gail Aills along with Dale and Julie Cockley were recognized as the 2014 Earth Angel Award winners. The Earth Angel Award is presented each year to an individual who has demonstrated commitment to families, regular service, service above the expected, inspiration to others, and the true joy of helping others. Volunteers who have given 5, 10, and 15 years of service were also recognized.
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RONALD McDOALD
SIGHT AND SOUND PRODUCTIONS

Thanks to all our partners for providing a wonderful dinner!

Volunteers enjoy dinner before the awards presentation.

CHECK OUT OUR NEW LOOK!
rmhcjacksonville.org
2014 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MAY 03
THE GREAT McGALA
Sawgrass Marriott Resort

SEP 18
FRIES WITH THAT WINE
EverBank Field

OCT 27
RMHC JACKSONVILLE GOLF CLASSIC
TPC Sawgrass – Stadium Course

For more information on special events, please contact Sarah Young, 904.807.4669

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To support us, use code PINFLAG

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WISH LIST

Ronald McDonald House Charities® of Jacksonville need many of the same items you use in your own home (and lots more of them!) to successfully operate.

Food
• Individually packaged cereal, chips, cookies, fruit, soups and meals
• Breakfast bars & toaster pastries
• Coffee creamer
• White vinegar

Household
• Bleach & detergent
• Lysol disinfesting spray
• Swiffer dusters & dry clothes
• Magic Erasers

Kitchen
• Paper towels
• Paper cups, bowls, plates
• Plastic forks, knives, spoons
• 1 & 2 gallon Ziploc bags
• Oven gloves / pot holders
• NEW non-stick pans

Office Supplies
• 8.5 by 11 copy paper
• 1/3 tab cut manila file folders
• Hanging file folders
• Legal size writing pads
• Post-it notes
• Scotch tape
• Standard size staples

Gift Cards
• Gas
• Walmart & Sam’s Club
• Home Depot & Lowe’s
• Target
• CVS & Walgreens
• Publix & Winn-Dixie

Miscellaneous
• Garden hose sprayers
• Area attraction tickets

Please call 904.807.HOME (4663) to schedule the delivery of your donation. Don’t forget to save your pop tabs too!