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If anyone can understand that life is a precious gift that should never be taken for granted, it’s Shanna and her husband, Grant. They have endured extreme heartache that most of us can’t understand, but through it they found hope and even comfort through Ronald McDonald House Charities of Jacksonville.

A brick is thoughtfully placed in the House courtyard for the Karchers’ twin sons, Jaxson and Brycen, who both passed away in October 2010. It represents the family’s first life-altering moment, which introduced them to RMHC of Jacksonville. Shanna remembers coming to the Ronald McDonald House, not prepared for the hurdles in front of her. “My first initial thought was that I needed to go to the store,” she said. “I didn’t have clothes, toiletry items, anything. I soon realized that the House provided all of these items, and it was one less thing I needed to worry about. It was a huge relief.” A relief that was needed at the time because Shanna and Grant needed all the strength they could muster to get through the next few months.

It had taken the Karchs a year and a half to get pregnant with the twins. Both nurseries were set up and plans for the future had begun. When it all came crumbling down, “I couldn’t go back to our house,” Shanna said. “My husband took care of everything so I didn’t have to. He handled returning and donating the gifts, packing our belongings, and selling the house.” Shanna explains that this tragedy could have torn any family apart, but it actually brought her and Grant closer together. “Grant is the most forgiving and understanding husband, and I don’t know what I would have done without him.”

The Karchs decided to try to get pregnant again three months after Jaxson and Brycen passed away. Everett was born on October 1, 2011. A healthy and
MESSAGES FROM OUR LEADERSHIP

Dear RMHC of Jacksonville Family and Friends,

2015 has been an incredible year for Ronald McDonald House Charities of Jacksonville. As local medical facilities expand and the demand from our healthcare partners increases, we are reminded each day that our ability to serve our families is critical. We continue to focus on our primary goal — to effectively prepare the Ronald McDonald House for the expansion from 30 to 54 rooms, and more importantly, the capacity to serve 1,500 families each year. The expansion continues to evolve daily, and every time I visit the House I am reminded of the true impact this new addition will have on all the families for whom we provide a “home away from home.” We are driven and focused to continue to fulfill our very important mission — “Ronald McDonald House Charities of Jacksonville supports the health and well-being of children by providing lodging and other services for critically ill, chronically ill and seriously injured children and their families.”

I want to extend a very big Thank You to our fabulous RMHC of Jacksonville employees who are going beyond the call of duty in ensuring we are executing this mission under very difficult circumstances around the construction of our new home. Besides our staff, community groups and businesses continue to drop off dinners while the kitchen is under construction, donors continue to bring much needed supplies to keep our pantries and essentials stocked, and volunteers help keep the House running smoothly. I was fortunate to see so many of you at our annual McGAFA event in May. This year’s McGAFA was the most successful since its inception. Thank you so much for your participation in a truly memorable evening. I also had the pleasure of seeing many of you at Fries With That Wine in September. We hope everyone enjoyed this annual event, hosted by the Red Shoe Crew. The Terrace Suite at EverBank Field was filled with friends and supporters. Thank you for all of your support!

Sincerely,
Curt Cunkle
BOARD PRESIDENT

Dear Friends of RMHC,

I recently had the opportunity to stand on the steel decking of what will be our Roof Garden, the sweet smell of earth and pungent dampness of the river filling the early morning heat of a late summer’s day. Having spent the past two years immersed in the RMHC mission, I am filled with our families’ stories and heartfelt truths about what this expansion means. The beautiful skyline of Jacksonville loomed in the distance and I thought of the many families who will see that skyline — first when they come to Jacksonville and then again from our rooftop. I know that the skyline will symbolize the hope they feel as they seek the best medical care for their children. And here, on Children’s Way, RMHC will support their brave efforts with love, compassion, and comfort in our beautiful new House.

Our House is targeted for completion in February 2016. It will have an additional 24 bedroom suites, a renovated family kitchen, a volunteer kitchen, coffee bars, expanded playroom, a new community room, and a secure entry. It will provide our families with the comforts of home in its cozy design with warm and welcoming colors. A technology bar in the dining room will assure our families that they can stay connected to their loved ones and lives back home.

We will be a bigger Ronald McDonald House, growing by 80%. But at our core we will always be the same... For we are our mission. We will always be here for families in need with our “home away from home,” hospitality, and support that tells families we are here for them. We are on a journey, but along the way I must say thank you to our incredible staff and volunteers who are working so hard through this transition, to our Board of Directors and Advisory Board Members who with their foresight have led the way, to our donors and friends of the House that share in our vision with their unwavering support and to every family who has called us “home.”

Best regards,
Diane Boyle
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
happy boy, Shanna says that Everett “saved her from herself.” She brought him to Jacksonville to introduce him to the House staff and “family” that supported her and Grant during their darkest hours. When Everett was six months old, the Karchers decided it was time to expand their family, and twins were soon on the way.

At 15 weeks their world was turned upside down once again. Shanna went to see a specialist in Miami, and she received the heart-wrenching news of Twin to Twin Transfusion Syndrome (TTTS), a serious disorder that occurs when a shared placenta has connected blood vessels. Shanna was once again facing a fight that no mother ever should.

Due to her condition, she checked into the Ronald McDonald House of Miami and went to the hospital every single day to monitor the twins’ progress. On January 2, 2013, Shanna lost Paxton at 24 weeks, but she could not give up, because she still had Preston fighting for his life inside of her. On January 7, Preston Karcher was born at 25 weeks and 2 days. He was admitted to Wolfson Children’s Hospital Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) where he would spend the next 99 days.

Since the Karchers’ home was in New Smyrna Beach, they checked into the Ronald McDonald House of Jacksonville. The initial diagnosis included heart, kidney, and eye conditions that would all need surgery. Miraculously, all of these conditions eventually self-corrected, and no surgery was required.

Shanna said she could feel how much everyone truly cared about her and her family—from the volunteers that greeted her in the kitchen when she went to get something to eat in the middle of the night, to the people that dropped off donations and pop tabs to help support the House.

She stays in touch with the two Wolfson Children’s Hospital nurses who cared for Preston while he was in the NICU. The Karchers keep in touch with the staff at RMHC of Jacksonville, and have made friends for life with other families that stayed at the House. The House will always be a part of them.

Shanna, Grant, Everett, and Preston Karcher are a beautiful and happy family. Just by looking from the outside, you’d never imagine what they’ve been through. While some families wouldn’t even be able to see past the heartache, the Karchers have persevered. We look forward to sharing in their happy memories for years to come.❤

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**REED’S REPORT**

All of our staff, including me, start every meeting with a “Mission Moment.” This is a fun way to share meaningful stories about happenings here with our families, volunteers and staff at the House.

One moment that I want to share is a visit from my friend Amanda, and Locke, a fellow service dog. Amanda was a guest at our House when I first started my job here. Soon after, she and Locke became a team and attended their first year in college, where Amanda has embraced the mission of Ronald McDonald House by studying non-profit business management. She volunteers at the Baltimore House while at college and then at the Orlando House when home for the summer. This was the first time Locke and I got to meet!

We went through the same training but have different jobs when it comes to working with our people. That didn’t stop us from taking a moment to have a good romp around the courtyard.

I’m excited for both of my friends as Amanda starts her second year in college pursuing a worthwhile career!

In other news, I celebrated my 4th birthday and 2nd anniversary at the House with plenty of peanut butter ice cream! Let’s raise a big biscuit for many more to come!

Remember, you can follow my “Woof Wednesday” posts on the Ronald McDonald House of Jacksonville Facebook page, or visit our web site, rmhjacksonville.org, to check out my page, “Meet Reed.” Don’t forget to pick up one of my signature trading cards and get a high five when you stop by for a visit.

Woof, woof!❤️

(Love, Reed)
Growing the Hotel

- Stair Tower
- Rooftop Garden
- Dining Room Expansion

There are naming opportunities still available for the expansion and renovation project. Please contact Carol Harrison: 904.807.4672
Ronald McDonald House Charities of Jacksonville is pleased to honor the generosity of Mrs. Mary Virginia Terry and the late Mr. C. Herman Terry by formally naming our Ronald McDonald House facility the Mr. and Mrs. C. Herman Terry Campus.

Not only has our organization benefited from the generous gifts of Mr. and Mrs. Terry but we also have been fortunate to have their active involvement and leadership. Mr. Terry served as the Chair for the original Capital Campaign for the current House in 1998, and Mrs. Terry serves as Honorary Campaign Chair for the current Expansion Campaign and is also a member of our Advisory Board.

Mrs. Terry’s generosity and support of our expansion and renovation project will allow us to meet the increasing demand of families who need our program. Her gift has already inspired others in the community to be a part of this monumental time at the House. We are proud to recognize the Terrys for the long-lasting dedication and support for more than 26 years.

We extend our sincere love and appreciation to Mrs. Terry for continuing her and her late husband’s legacy of giving and “Growing the House That Love Built.”

DID YOU KNOW? YOUR GIFT CAN BE MATCHED BY DELORES BARR WEAVER!

A LETTER FROM DELORES BARR WEAVER

Dear friends,

The Ronald McDonald House has long been a special place for Wayne and me. We were involved in the campaign for the current house and are excited to share in this exciting new phase of expansion for Ronald McDonald House. As a member of the Advisory Board, my continued involvement in the House has allowed me to see firsthand the necessity and impact of the Ronald McDonald House and its programs for families who are in crisis during the illness of a child.

As Jacksonville continues to grow as a destination for world-class pediatric care, more and more families are traveling to our community to seek treatment for their children. While no parent ever wants to be in this position, the Ronald McDonald House provides the care and comfort that can help them continue their difficult journey. The addition of 24 bedrooms and a completely upgraded facility will allow the House to continue their mission of offering a soft place for these families to land.

As part of my personal gift to the Expansion Campaign, I have pledged to match all public gifts of $25,000 or less up to $500,000. Please know that no gift is too small to make a significant difference for the families that call Ronald McDonald House home for a few days or many weeks.

I am delighted to be a part of another expansion, and I invite all of you to support this important campaign. The transformation from the current House of 30 bedrooms to the demand for an expanded House of 54 bedrooms clearly indicates how much Jacksonville has grown and progressed over the past 30 years. Will you help move us closer to our $13,000,000 goal?

Ask any family who has been touched by the Ronald McDonald House, any volunteer, or any staff member, and all will relay that the mission is not served without collective involvement. From the volunteer groups preparing family dinners for sixty-five people each night to all the ways people find to contribute to the House, it truly takes all of us to offer a “home away from home” to families who need it most. I am hopeful you will join me on the journey of “Growing the House That Love Built” and together we will help serve and welcome more families to our wonderful city.

Sincerely,

Delores Barr Weaver
Did you know that approximately 2,000 volunteers give more than 21,000 hours annually to support the mission of RMHC of Jacksonville? We are so grateful every day for our amazing supporters, and we celebrated all of our wonderful volunteers at the Volunteer Recognition Lunch held at The Garden Club in May. If you would like to join our volunteer family or if you would like to schedule a tour for a potential new volunteer, please contact Amy Christus, Volunteer Outreach Manager, at 904.807.4670 or achristus@rmhcajax.org.

RMHC of Jacksonville Recognizes the Following Volunteers:

**WINN DIXIE JACKSONVILLE AND NORTH FLORIDA FROZEN FOOD ASSOCIATION VOLUNTEER AWARD**
- Nancy Burrows
- Frances Fowler

**HELPING HANDS AWARD**
- John & Susan Risler

**YOUNG STAR AWARD**
- Carlos Arteaga

**EARTH ANGEL AWARD**
- Pat Allalemdjain

**SERVICE COMMITMENT AWARDS**
- 10 YEARS of SERVICE
  - Helen Cooke
- 5 YEARS of SERVICE
  - Erlinda Armoreda
  - Joyce Richards

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**GIVE & GO ONE HUNDRED**

Purchase any Jaguars regular season home game ticket to automatically donate $10 to RMHC of Jacksonville. After 25 tickets are sold, your donation will be matched dollar for dollar via the WeGive.org project. After 100 tickets are sold, the match becomes 3-to-1 and could generate up to $30 per ticket!

**TO PURCHASE TICKETS:**

[BIT.LY/GIVEANDGOFORRMHC](http://BIT.LY/GIVEANDGOFORRMHC)

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Hockey for the House is an annual fundraising event hosted and organized by our long-time supporter Clay Loveless. Clay plans and organizes all aspects of the annual hockey game, from recruiting players to securing the venue and exciting raffle items. This year’s event was held on Saturday, August 22nd and raised over $5,300 for the House! We are so grateful for the amazing support of Clay and his fellow hockey players.

You can support RMHC Jacksonville by organizing a fundraiser with your own civic group, school, or business. We are happy to help provide House information or set up a table at your event. For more information contact our Development Manager, Taylor Belshouse, at 904.807.4669.
The 21st annual McGALA was held Saturday, May 30th at the Sawgrass Marriott Golf Resort & Spa in Ponte Vedra Beach. This year's co-chairs were Emily Dostie and Maryellen Williamson. The theme was “An Evening in the Garden” and was inspired by the future rooftop garden that will sit atop our newly expanded and renovated House in early 2016.

Over 480 guests were in attendance including our healthcare partners, construction team, long-time local corporate sponsors, individual donors and supporters from our young professional group. For this signature event, guests enjoyed treats courtesy of Sweet Pete’s and a bourbon bar provided by Bacardi. Ray Scott of Ardis Design supplied décor and artfully created our garden-inspired setting. Guests also had the opportunity to preview storyboards highlighting the future interiors of the expanded House.

Our fabulous silent auction items included a cabin getaway in North Carolina, the Jacksonville Jaguars owners’ suite, a trip to see the Jags play at London’s Wembley Stadium, a ride on a private yacht, and an exclusive experience for four to enjoy breakfast at Tiffany’s in the jeweler’s famous Fifth Avenue store. The auction process was simplified with mobile bidding and a text-to-give application. Over $300,000 was raised for RMHC of Jacksonville.

The 2015 McGALA’s top sponsors included CSX, The Endowed $10,000 Event Grant Fund established in 2015 by Delores Barr Weaver, Danis Construction and Facility Automation Solutions.
**Event Calendar**

**GOLF CLASSIC**
OCT 26
The Players Stadium
Course at TPC Sawgrass

**2016 McGALA**
MAY 21
Sawgrass Marriott Golf Resort & Spa

**FRIES WITH THAT WINE**
TBA 2016

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**Wish List**

Ronald McDonald House Charities® of Jacksonville needs many of the same items you use in your own home (and lots more of them) to successfully operate its Ronald McDonald House® and Ronald McDonald Family Room® programs. The items needed most are:

**FOOD**
- Individually packaged cereal, chips, cookies, fruit, soups, and meals
- Breakfast bars & toaster pastries
- Coffee creamer
- White vinegar

**HOUSEHOLD**
- Flashlights
- Bleach & detergent
- Lysol disinfecting spray
- Swiffer Dusters
- Swiffer Sweeper dry cloths
- Magic Erasers

**KITCHEN**
- Paper towels, cups, bowls, plates
- Large plastic containers with lids
- Plastic cutlery
- 1 & 2 gallon Ziploc bags
- Oven gloves & pot holders
- New non-stick pans
- Baking & frying pans
- Dish towels
- Kitchen cooking utensils

**OFFICE SUPPLIES**
- 8.5 x 11 copy paper
- ½ cut manila file folders
- Hanging file folders
- Legal size writing pads
- Post-It notes

**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!