



Ronald McDonald House Charities®

KEEPING FAMILIES CLOSE™

Jacksonville | **SUMMER 2018**

 RMHCJacksonville

 @RMHCJax

 RMHCJacksonville

 rmhcjacksonville.org

 904.807.HOME(4663)

A HEALING JOURNEY: CELEBRATING TRUE FRIENDSHIP

For Ollie, a rambunctious and active 4-year-old who loves BMX racing, sitting still proved to be almost impossible.

In October of 2017, after being diagnosed with rhabdomyosarcoma — a soft tissue cancer, Ollie and his family were transferred from Vanderbilt University Medical Center to Wolfson Children's Hospital in early May. After begging and pleading to go outside to play in our courtyard, Ollie's mom, Miah, finally gave in.

On the playground, Ollie met Reece, a polite 6-year-old boy from Charleston, NC, who was battling

medulloblastoma, a cancerous brain tumor. Over the next few weeks, Reece and Ollie became best buddies, and soon after meeting again during a joint chemotherapy treatment, the two boys quickly became inseparable.

Around the House, we admired their friendship, often finding Ollie and Reece walking together, hands locked, to view the new fish in our aquarium; stopping by the front desk to see our therapy dog, Reed; eating breakfast and dinner together; even comforting each other during their medical treatments.

Ollie would call Reece up and ask, "Are you feeling lonely today? Let's go play," and Reece would often help Ollie if he fell in the playroom or outside on the playground.

Both mothers appreciated the friendship that the boys forged and have remained in close contact after leaving our House to go back to their respective homes.

I heard about the Ronald McDonald House, but I wasn't quite sure what you did until I came here with my family. This is my first time going through this experience and I'm so glad that we're here. Having other children for Ollie to play with has been wonderful in keeping his morale up and ensuring that he does what children do — simply have fun and enjoy life.

Miah Faircloth

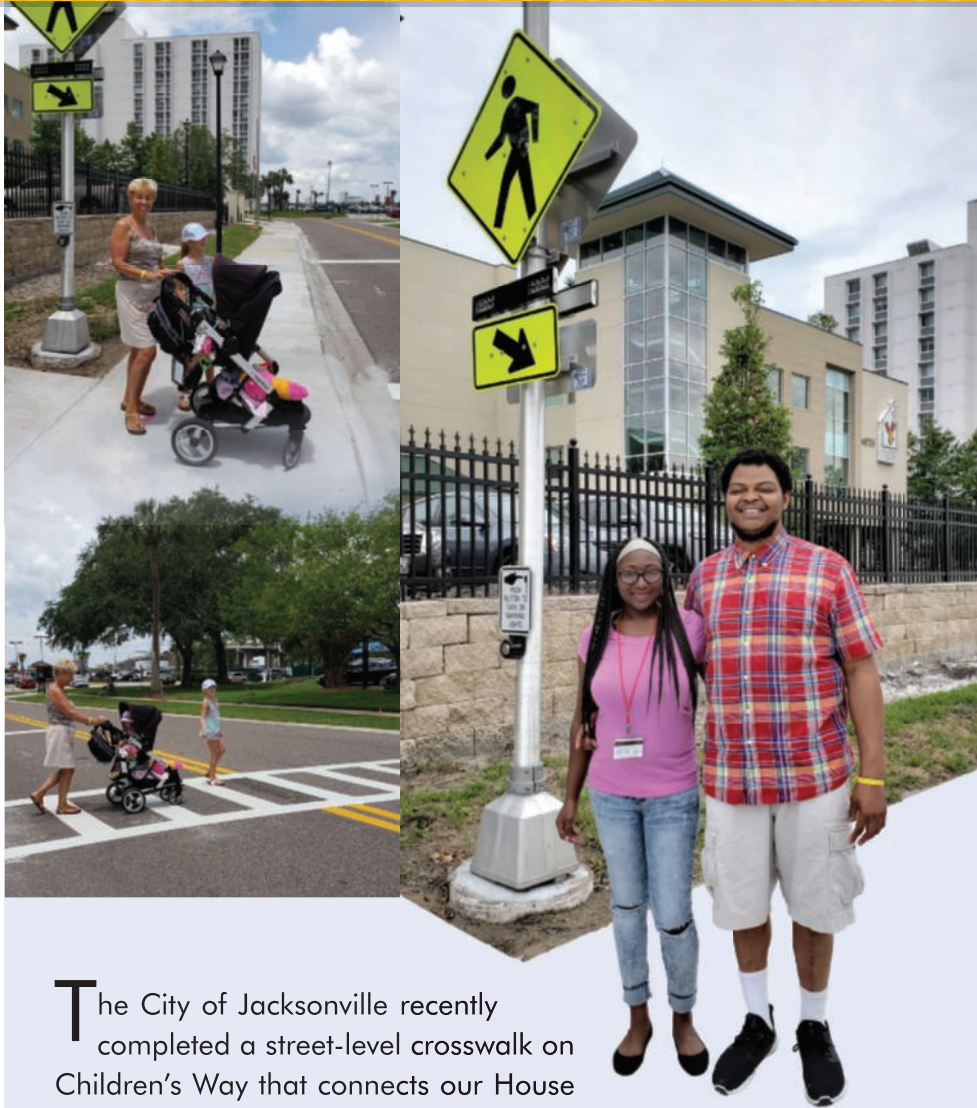


Follow their journeys on Facebook

 **REECE'S LEGION**

 **PRAYERS FOR OLLIE FAIRCLOTH**

CROSSING TO SAFETY



The City of Jacksonville recently completed a street-level crosswalk on Children's Way that connects our House to the campus of Nemours Children's Hospital.

This crosswalk is an added safety measure that allows our families to cross the street at a safe distance, away from the four-way stop signs at the intersection of Children's Way and Palm Avenue. Families have used the new crosswalk with their young children, some in wheelchairs and strollers, to get to nearby hospitals for doctor's appointments and medical treatment. Parents Raigene and Austin from Lakeland, GA, are pleased with the addition, saying, "The lighted crosswalk definitely makes us feel safer at night when we walk to visit our son in Wolfson Children's Hospital's Newborn Intensive Care Unit."

We want to thank Stephanie Cost (Ronald McDonald House Charities of Jacksonville Board Member) for spearheading this project with our House and Programs Committee, along with Chris LeDew (Jacksonville Chief of Traffic Engineering Division), Jim Gilmore (Infinity Global Solutions), and Councilwoman Lori Boyer to complete this project for the added safety and convenience of our families.



We want the **pop tabs** off of your aluminum cans! Place one of our pop tab containers next to the vending machine at your office, school, or church, and watch it fill up. Then, bring your tabs to our House. They'll be recycled for cash to fund our mission.

Contact **Faye Janes**,
Development Coordinator at
904-807-4663 ext. 669

Shopping on Amazon pays off when you choose Ronald McDonald House Charities of Jacksonville.

amazonsmile

smile.amazon.com/ch/59-2625008



100% of funds from in-store and drive-thru McDonald's **donation boxes** benefit Ronald McDonald House Charities of Jacksonville.

On Saturday, May 19, more than 500 attendees celebrated Ronald McDonald House Charities of Jacksonville's 30 year anniversary during our Caribbean Nights McGala fund raising event at the Sawgrass Marriott Resort & Spa.

Presented by Joe and Nan Ferrara, McGala highlighted the unforgettable stories of families served at our House and at the Ronald McDonald Family Room located inside Wolfson Children's Hospital. McGala, which is made possible in part through an Endowed \$10,000 Event Grant Fund established in 2005 by Delores Barr Weaver, featured an explosion of vibrant colors, island-inspired hors d'oeuvres and a live steel drum performance.

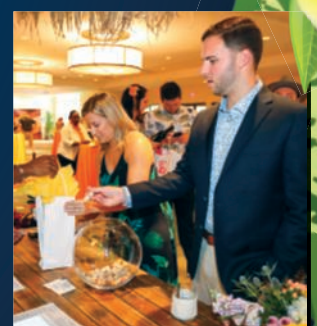
During the program, Executive Director Diane Boyle spoke to the importance of our mission and the evening's theme: *"Tonight pays tribute to the many families who over the years have come to us from the Caribbean. They come from Trinidad & Tobago, Grenada, Barbados, Mexico, the Bahamas, and most recently a number of families from Puerto Rico. They seek the best healthcare for their sick child here in Jacksonville. As you can imagine, coming here from the Caribbean is not easy — physically, emotionally, or financially. This is why our mission is so important."*

We also welcomed back one of the first families to enter our doors in 1988. An infant at the time, Tanner Wright, along with his mother Cindy, stayed at the first House, then located on Jefferson Street. Today, Tanner is a Resident Physician serving in pediatrics at Tampa General Hospital. Dr. Wright explained how his experience at the Ronald McDonald House helped shape him throughout his residency, saying, "I now understand its role — it is one of healing."

McGala also recognized Honorary Chairs Peter and Meg Kuchar of Ponte Vedra Beach for their ongoing support of McGala and the families of RMHC Jacksonville. Thanks to the support of event sponsors and attendees, McGala raised more than \$300,000 to support the families of critically ill children.

Caribbean Nights

30TH ANNIVERSARY MCGALA



Our Leadership

We welcome to our leadership, newly elected member to our Board of Directors, Greg Lechwar, Chief Financial Officer at W&O Supply. New members to the Advisory Board are Vince Ferrigno and Seeman Zimmerman.

2018 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chair Don Baldwin
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**Member Emeritus*

RED SHOE CREW

Matthew Lindberg, <i>Chair</i>	Laura Tuck
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Sabrie Edmonston	Ashley Reidel

May 19th was a night to remember at Sawgrass Marriott. Sponsors and donors came together to celebrate our 30th Anniversary McGala, "Caribbean Nights."

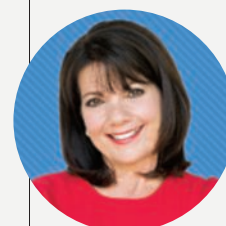
Kicking off the evening was the delightful sound of children's voices as "Don't Miss a Beat" performed a medley of songs that reminded us all of the importance of our mission and why we support the health and well-being of children and their families.

For 30 years our mission has provided support and access to healthcare for over 32,000 families and over 100,000 guests at RMHC of Jacksonville. Across Children's Way at Wolfson Children's Hospital, hundreds of thousands of Jacksonville visitors

have found rest and support in the Ronald McDonald Family Room. It is a beautiful and caring space complete with volunteers and a rooftop garden. We are an important part of the Jacksonville pediatric healthcare support system and we are committed to being here when families need us the most.

Thank you for supporting us for over 30 years. You have believed in our mission and made our growth possible. We reflect your commitment to this mission. Today, we are making a social impact for more families by easing the financial burden of having a sick child by providing access to care. We are providing access to our RMHC of Jacksonville community

with support that is compassionate and supports health and wellness, physically and emotionally with expanded nutrition programs and counseling. Our families are supported with access to technology and access to the normalizing activities of play and learning for their children. Thank you for enabling us to build and grow. And, thank you for allowing us to be, for a short time, what our families need us to be — their "home away from home."



Best regards,
Diane Boyle
Executive Director

RMHC OF JACKSONVILLE STAFF

Rebecca Briones Executive Assistant	Susan Gendzier, CPA Finance Director	Faye Janes Development Coordinator	Allie Runnestrand Family Service Associate	HOUSEKEEPING & MAINTENANCE Shenique Fisher Jerry Gagnon Safeta Krdzic Eric Pearce Tina Thompson
Lisa Brock Facility & Lead Manager	Sharon Green Family Service Associate	Angela Johnson, MPA, CICA Staff Accountant	Vernetta Stewart Chef/Kitchen Manager	
Sandra Brown Data Entry Coordinator	Steffanie Harling Family Service Associate	Shelli Martin Family Operations Manager	Manya Stone Family Service Manager	
Amy Christus Outreach & Volunteer Manager	Carol Harrison Development Director	Ashley Strickland Marketing Manager	Brittany Walker Family Service Associate	
Lourdes Curetcruz Family Service Associate	Tonda Hoyt Family Service Associate	Martha Melendez Family Service Associate		



A PASSION SPANNING NEARLY 14 YEARS

Marilyn Daly

Meet Marilyn, who has served as a volunteer for almost 14 years! On any given day of the week, you'll find her smiling face buzzing around our House. Marilyn often assists our families at the front desk, helps unload in-kind donations, and decorates our entire House with fun, festive themes around the holidays. She has also led the completion of our newest room, a children's enrichment initiative called The Learning Center. As a member of Parrot Heads in Natural Settings (PHINS) of Jacksonville — a non-profit that assists in community and environmental concerns — Marilyn has organized the PHINS Open Golf Tournament that raised nearly \$10,000 for our House.

Thank you Marilyn, for all that you do for our families and our House.

BUILDING A STRONG COMMUNITY WITH DAVID WEEKLEY HOMES



During May, David Weekley Homes employees volunteered at our House.



Volunteers helped with landscaping, painting, and pressure washing.



They provided a financial gift to our House for the purchase of HEPA filters, luggage carts, and additional security cameras.



We are so grateful for the ongoing support and commitment of these dedicated employees.



Become a Family Room Volunteer

Step into our newly renovated Family Room inside Wolfson Children's Hospital, and you'll find some of the most amazing people you've ever met!

Our Family Room offers complimentary snacks, coffee, support and a listening ear to families of children receiving medical care. Our Family Room volunteers play an integral part in creating a comfortable and relaxed environment for the thousands of families that visit each year.

We are looking for volunteers who are dedicated, compassionate, and friendly to join our amazing group of Family Room Volunteers. Enjoy benefits such as free meals, discount tickets to Florida attractions, gift shop discounts, and more!



Joyce Richards, 9-year volunteer



John Risler, 7-year volunteer

CONTACT Amy Christus, Volunteer & Outreach Manager | 904-807-4670 | achristus@rmhcjax.org

Is Your Birthday Coming Up?

Birthdays here are a big deal! Each child who has a birthday during their stay in our House is treated to a homemade cake, streamers, and balloons. When you renew your vehicle tag and driver's license around your birthday, consider making a donation to our House so we can continue celebrating the birthdays of critically ill children. Just look for the Ronald McDonald House listing on both mailed and online renewal notices.



In **2017**,
we counted...



988
**FAMILIES
SERVED**



17,062
**VOLUNTEER
HOURS
LOGGED**



Want to know more about
how your support positively
impacts our mission?

Updates are coming in our
2017 Annual Report!



RMHC[®] Jacksonville 824 Children's Way
Jacksonville, FL 32207

NON-PROFIT ORG.
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2018–2019 CALENDAR

DON'T MISS OUT ON THESE SIGNATURE EVENTS!

For sponsorship opportunities — call Carol Harrison, Director of Development: 904.807.4672

SEP 21 **STEINS AND VINES**
Intuition Ale House
Jacksonville

OCT 15 **GOLF CLASSIC**
TPC Sawgrass
Ponte Vedra Beach

DEC 01 **children's way 5K & family day**
824 Children's Way
Jacksonville

MAY 18 **2019 McGala**
Sawgrass Marriott
Ponte Vedra Beach

HOUSE WISH LIST

1. Bottled water
2. Plastic forks
3. Liquid laundry detergent
4. Bleach
5. Paper bowls & plates
6. Disinfectant spray & wipes
7. Magic Erasers
8. Tea bags (assorted flavors)
9. Individually packaged cereals and breakfast bars
10. Large plastic containers with lids

Donations can be dropped off at our House any day between 9am and 5pm.



Stay up to date with our daily House happenings by following us on Facebook! See our mission in action by checking out our newest House video featuring our Executive Director Diane Boyle, our families, and volunteers. Don't forget to leave a great review!

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.