

"Cooking is love made visible! A pinch of patience, a dash of kindness, a spoonful of laughter, and heaps of love!"

We have increased our Meal Makers policies and guidelines in the wake of COVID-19.

*These parameters prioritize the safety of our families, volunteers, and staff alike, so all groups must abide by these rules to participate. **Failure to comply with all rules may result in immediate dismissal from the RMHCJAX location and may hinder future participation in volunteer opportunities.***

Participation Requirements:

- **Meal Maker groups may include a maximum of 8 volunteers.** Everyone who comes with your group will count toward this total and must be there to actively participate.
- **Meal Maker volunteers must be at least 16 years old.** As an increased precaution currently, children are not currently able to participate.
- **All volunteers must be completely illness/symptom free (cold, flu, fever, stomach virus, etc.) for at least 14 days prior to volunteering.**
- **Volunteers must wear gloves and hairnets/hair ties.** Additional health practices during participation will include frequent hand washing and changing gloves, and no face, hair, or phone touching.

Volunteers should consider personal health risks and limitations prior to volunteering. The [CDC defines higher risk individuals](#) as older adults (65+), and people with serious, chronic medical conditions (heart disease, diabetes, lung disease, etc.).

Food Safety:

- **Cooking On-Site:** All food must be prepared, cooked, and assembled in our Ronald McDonald House kitchens, or must come directly from a restaurant, catering facility, or professional licensed kitchen. Sealed, unopened food prepared at a grocery store is also permitted.
- **Permissible Food:** Only unexpired, packaged food in unopened containers, and whole fruits and vegetables, may be used.
- **Safety Practices:** Volunteers must practice healthy food safety hygiene. i.e., frequent handwashing, eliminating cross contamination/raw foods, wearing hairnets/hair ties, face masks and gloves, etc. All refrigerated items should stay in chilled as long as possible, and food in the kitchen should always stay covered.



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- **Menu Selection:** Your group is welcome to get creative with your meal ideas. Recipes you or other volunteers enjoy at home would also be great for our families.

Meal Service and Clean-Up:

- **Packing Meals:** To reduce the spread of germs, volunteers will pack all prepared food into individually sized containers for families to enjoy either during or after the mealtime.
- **Family Dining:** House dining rooms will have limited seating capacity, ensuring our families are able to practice safe social distancing while eating. Additionally, some families may choose to eat in their rooms depending on seating availability and their comfort level.
- **Clean-Up:** After preparing and packing the meal, volunteers are responsible for thoroughly cleaning the kitchen. Cleaning instructions will be provided by our House staff, and all volunteers are expected to stay until clean-up is complete.

RMHC families often have inconsistent schedules due to patient treatments and may not be available to eat while your group is on-site.

Volunteer Expectations:

We strive to create a safe, welcoming, and respectful environment for our families, staff, and volunteers alike. As such, we expect volunteers to adhere to the following:

- Bring compassion and respect to your volunteerism.
- Volunteers are to always follow the leadership and direction of RMHCJAX staff. Failure to comply may result in immediate dismissal from our program location(s) and may hinder your participation in future volunteer opportunities.
- We welcome volunteers, staff and families of all backgrounds, races, and religions. Please exclude any personal religious influences while on-site to ensure a welcoming space for all.

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- You may take photos and videos of your group only and must thoroughly wash your hands upon taking pictures or using your phone. You may not take photos or videos of RMHC families.
- Volunteers are prohibited from exchanging personal information with or soliciting services to our families.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is there an age requirement? To ensure the health and safety of all volunteers, families, and staff, as well as the food safety of the meals being prepared for our families, all Meal Maker volunteers must be at least 16 years old.

What is the maximum number of volunteers per group? Groups currently have a maximum group size of 8 volunteers. Following COVID-19 we are limiting the group size to reduce the number of people in and out of our Houses. If your group includes more than 8 volunteers, we ask that you divide your group and provide meals on different dates.

I have extra volunteers or children who want to attend, can they still come and watch without volunteering? No – everyone who comes with your group should be there to actively volunteer. Adults beyond the maximum group size of five volunteers are not able to attend.

I have illness or symptoms that are not associated with COVID-19, so can I volunteer? We require all volunteers to be entirely illness and symptom free for at least 14 days before volunteering. We will not allow volunteers with an illness or symptoms of any kind to participate at this time.

I volunteered and then tested positive for COVID-19. Should I let RMHCJAX know? We ask any volunteers who test positive for COVID-19 within 14 days of volunteerism to inform us immediately. This allows us to take the necessary steps for the wellbeing of anyone else who may be impacted.

How long is my group expected to be at the House? Groups should plan to volunteer for two- four hours. The exact timing of each opportunity differs based on the meal. *Please note – groups are required to clean up after serving our families, so all volunteers should expect to be at the House until all clean-up is complete.*

Can I start meal preparation at my home? No – to ensure food safety, all preparation must be done in the Ronald McDonald House kitchens. Any food or groceries brought with you must be unopened and unaltered from the time of purchase.

Catered food is allowed if it was prepared in a commercial kitchen and transported directly from the store or restaurant to the RMHC location.

Do I need to bring my own dishes, serving utensils, plates, kitchen tools, etc.? The Houses provide all dishes, drinkware, cutlery, and kitchen equipment needed to prepare and provide your meal. If you have a question about a specific item, please contact the House where you plan to volunteer.

What does my group need to bring? As noted above, our Houses have all the kitchen equipment needed to prepare your meal. Your group is responsible for providing all food/ingredients to make the



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meal, as well as facemasks and hair ties for your volunteers to wear while participating. We ask volunteers to limit the personal belongings brought to the House, so please just stick to the essentials.

Is RMHC staff on-site during Meal Maker volunteerism? Yes, there will always be RMHC staff present while you are in the House to answer questions, get you situated in the kitchen and ensure everyone is participating in a safe manner.

Following COVID-19 our staff will check-in with each group at least every 30 minutes to facilitate glove-changing, handwashing, proper social distancing and to ensure that all safety measures are being upheld. We appreciate your understanding as we strive to prioritize the health and safety of everyone in the House.

Can my group get a tour of the House? Yes, tours will be given prior to group preparing dinner.

I still have questions, so who can I talk to for more information? If you have any questions about Meal Makers, these guidelines or your group's participation, please contact our Chef Vernetta Stewart, Culinary Director at vstewart@rmhcjax.org 904-807-4663 Ext. 661