



Ronald McDonald
House Charities®
Toronto

THANK YOU!

Gratitude Report 2023



You're **keeping families close**
during the toughest time of their lives.

You're giving families a place to
rest, relax and recharge.

A warm meal, a comfortable bed, support for
siblings, fun activities, and so much more.

You're giving families a place like
home away from home.

THANK
YOU

from our families
to yours.



“We couldn't be more grateful to the people who generously support this charity. Because of the kindness of strangers, we've always had a home away from home when we've needed it, so that even when Bella is in the hospital, we can be together as a family.”

– Kyla Thomson, Bella's mom



Tommy is third from left

“My experience of the RMHC Family Room was the one positive thing about that time. When I think about the overall experience, it's still upsetting and traumatic. But the feeling I get about the Family Room is so positive and I am just so grateful and thankful for it. I don't know how I would have gotten through this experience without it. It really is so much more than a room.”

– Jody Yoken, Tommy's mom

Your impact by the numbers



Families served:
3,383



of meals:
23,250

Average stay:
30 days



Loads of laundry:
105,120



Average savings of **\$20,172** per month for a family staying at RMHC Toronto which equates to **\$12.2 million** back into the pockets of families

1 in 4 Canadians have used RMHC services, or knows someone who has



We believe we're serving **1 in 5** families in need (20%)

Impact numbers are for 2023

Your support directly furthers our Mission and Vision:

Our Mission

Keeping seriously ill children and their families together to improve their health and well-being.

Our Vision

To be a leader in providing a family-focused environment and innovative support services to seriously ill children and their families.

RMHC Toronto is committed to family-centred care and to ensuring all families feel welcome. We are taking active steps to building greater Indigenous inclusion.

The RMHC Toronto House is located in Tkaronto, now known as Toronto, which in Mohawk means 'where the trees are standing in the water'. Tkaronto is covered under Treaty #13 and the Williams Treaties. It is the traditional territories of many First Peoples, including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnaabe, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, and the Wendat peoples. Today, Toronto is home to many First Nations, Inuit and Métis people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work and serve families on this territory.

Thank you from our leadership! We couldn't do it without **YOU!**



A Letter from Our Leadership



Looking Forward with our Incoming Board Chair, **Aric Bhargava**

As Chair of the Board of Directors for Ronald McDonald House Charities (RMHC) Toronto, I want to express my gratitude for the opportunity to serve in such a meaningful way. The Board's unwavering commitment to our Mission of helping families when they need it most is truly inspiring. With our new strategic plan and a second Family Room at SickKids Hospital upcoming, I am honoured to champion the footsteps of our late founder George Cohon – someone my family cherished – for all he has done for so many families – including my own.

When your child is ill and in need of care, that is where RMHC Toronto comes in. In 2023 we provided compassionate care to 3,383 families that either stayed at our House, visited one of seven Family Rooms in 5 hospitals across the GTA, or accessed the 20+ programs we offer. For our families, this was 22,950 nights of comfort, and it restored \$12.2 million in savings to the family budget.

In 2024, RMHC celebrates 50 years of serving

families who stay with us in their time of need. To the volunteers and the staff, to the supporters and the donors: You've helped so many families overcome the odds. You made the difference between a family's desperation and appreciation. For this, you also have my endless gratitude.

It is an honour and a privilege to serve, and I look forward to the opportunities ahead in this Mission.

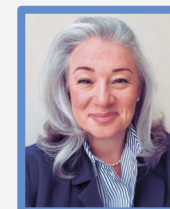


A Fond Farewell from our Outgoing Board Chair, **Denise Carpenter**

This past year has been a year of conscious change that is setting the stage for further growth and expansion. As I reflect

on our joint accomplishments I am moved and inspired by each and every person who has touched our mission and enabled us to pave the way to serve more families, better in the years to come. As I pass on the torch, I know RMHC Toronto is in strong and capable hands and look forward to seeing what the next generation of leadership unlocks for this organization that is near and dear to my heart.

"Since joining the RMHC Toronto family, I have witnessed firsthand the miracles that can happen when compassion meets intent. As we forge our path forward, celebrating the 50th anniversary of RMHC globally, and the 20th anniversary of our RMHC Toronto School next year, I am inspired by the community of care and support that keeps our light shining bright for families caring for a child who is seriously ill."



– **Tania Little**,
Chief Executive Officer

Thanks to you... Families have a place to rest, relax and recharge.



You're giving the Thomsons a place like **HOME** to sleep in at night, a space to spend time as a family.

I never expected my sweet baby Bella to be born with not one, but three rare medical conditions! There is no children's hospital in our hometown of Swift Current, SK, so we had to travel for Bella's treatment.

Bella was in hospital for 2 whole years before we could bring her home for the first time since she was born. Currently at age 10, Bella's been in hospital over 1000 nights.

Bella still needs frequent hospital care, and we travel to SickKids Hospital quite a lot. In fact, RMHC has been a part of our lives **for ten years** – and counting!

I honestly don't know what I'd do without it.

The Meals from the Heart program provides nutritious meals for Bella and I after a long day in hospital.

It gives me so much comfort to sleep at RMHC Toronto, knowing I am close by the hospital. So much better than a hotel, which feels isolating and scary. It helps to connect with other families who are going through the same

experience. Even just having a volunteer at the front desk that I can talk to at any time if I'm feeling anxious is so helpful to me.

My husband Lyle usually stays in Swift Current working and looking after our son Waylon. But it's such a blessing when they can travel to see us and stay at RMHC Toronto. It means so much to spend those moments together as a family.

Thank you so much to each and every one of you who donates so my family can access this wonderful 'home away from home'.

– Kyla Thomson, Bella's grateful mom





Tommy is second from left (top) and third from left (above)

You helped support **3,383 families** last year.

You gave the Yokens a **ROOM** to take a break while in hospital, to find moments of peace and calm amidst the chaos.

Tommy took ill very suddenly. Because he was a healthy, active child, we didn't expect to be living at the hospital for 11 days. We went from living a normal life to being rushed to the ER. We showed up at the hospital without anything (not even clothes, toothbrush, or a phone charger!).

The Family Room provided the necessities that we didn't have time to gather beforehand.

Having a space to relax in the hospital was critical. My son was touch and go at some points and I needed to be able to get to him as soon as possible. At the Family Room the doctors could get in touch with me and I could be right there to support my son.

The second I walked through the doors of the Family Room... it felt like a home and not a hospital. It was quiet and private. It felt like I had stepped into a different world. And it was the break that I really, really needed but hadn't been able to take.

In this situation everyone asks, how can I help you, what can I do, can I bring you food or watch your kid? We had great support during that time, but **the Family Room is the one thing that truly helped me.**

THANK YOU. The Family Room was our rock of stability and provided a small sanctuary during the worst time in our lives. This is why it is so important to us to give back to RMHC Toronto.

– **Jody Yoken**, Tommy's grateful mom and RMHC Toronto donor



Thanks to you... Families can enjoy a **nourishing meal** after a long hard day.

It can be challenging for any of us to cook a healthy meal after a long day. You can imagine how tough it is for parents who spend every waking hour in hospital with their child who is seriously ill.

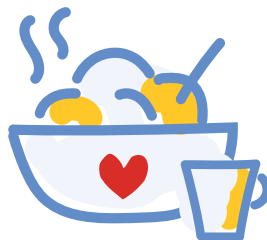
The demand for RMHC Toronto's meal programs has skyrocketed. In the past year alone, we've provided **44% more meals** than the previous year!

THANK YOU for making sure this vital program continues to be there for families in need.

With your help, families have access to three chef-prepared dinners each week, and lunches twice a month. They can grab food and cook it in our kitchen at any time. You also help stock our pantry with "grab and go" items and a "help yourself" fridge with pre-made food.

You provide more than food to these families. You offer comfort, nourishment, and convenience during an incredibly turbulent time. Plus, you provide significant relief for families who experience financial strain trying to feed their family while away from home.

With your amazing generosity, we are not just keeping families close; we're keeping them nourished and comforted during some of the most challenging times of their lives.



Thanks to you... Children have a place to keep up with their schooling.

Ronald McDonald House Charities (RMHC) Toronto School is a private school, recognized by the Ministry of Education, for patients and their siblings who are staying at the House. Our School compassionately provides a unique, student-centred, learning environment to facilitate academic, emotional and social success.

Students in K to Gr. 8 can attend in-person classes. Tutoring sessions are available for secondary students and children who can't attend full-days. Preschool children receive weekly activity bags to explore with parents.

"Both my children loved attending [RMHC Toronto] School. The staff took a very stressful period of our lives and made it infinitely better. I can't thank them enough. My oldest attended full-time and loved school there so much he didn't want to leave."

– Roxanne, parent of Grade 4 and 5 students

"My child participated in 1:1 tutoring given her immunocompromised state. Having that scheduled each day was motivating for her and gave me a small break some days."

– Amy, parent of Grade 6 student

74 students served in 2022-2023 school year



Thanks to you... Families have access to 20+ other programs that make our **HOUSE** feel like a **HOME**.



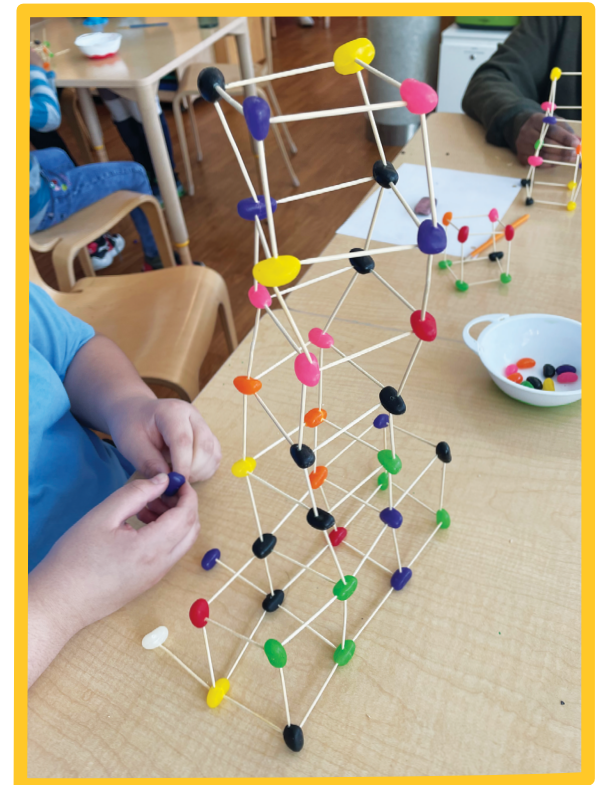
These include programs designed to foster **social and emotional** well-being, like:

- **Coffee Talk** – a casual time for caregivers to unwind and socialize while kids have fun doing a supervised activity.
- **Circle Time** – toddler-aged kids can sing songs, listen to stories and play.
- **PAWS** - children and families get to interact with specially trained dogs.

As well as programs designed to promote **fun and creativity**:

- **Artwork & Woodworking** - families participate in arts and crafts or woodworking projects.
- **Books N' Crafts** – children can listen to a story and create a craft based on the book.
- **Family Dances** – DJ and party snacks and dancin' grooves!

Thanks to you... these programs provide our families with **moments of joy** and opportunities for **deep connection** with one another. This drastically improves families' social and emotional well-being. These programs provide the space and resources children and families need to not only recover from times of uncertainty but rise from them stronger than before.



Thank YOU for giving from your heart!

The Four Oaks Foundation: A Family Foundation

Through his family's foundation, The Four Oaks Foundation, Spencer Newlands has been supporting RMHC Toronto for over 20 years. With a mandate to support youth in crisis, it's easy to see why they support our special House.

Spencer says, *"It's hard for people outside of the charity to understand how special it is until you come here...you get true appreciation for what places like RMHC Toronto do when you spend time there."*

When presented with the chance to be the lead sponsor of the new Family Room at SickKids Hospital the Foundation jumped at the chance. Spencer says, *"For families spending so much time at the hospital, RMHC Toronto Family Rooms are a place that they can feel comfortable and where they can relax."*

Thank you Spencer and The Four Oaks Foundation, for your continued generosity.



Spencer and Jordon Newlands



Redeveloped kitchen prep space made possible by generous donors



John Iacobelli and his wife Priscilla, farthest to the left

John Iacobelli: Family is at the heart of business

John Iacobelli's family has been in the food production business for 50 years, with nationally recognized brands like Unico and Primo. Family has always been at the heart of their business.

When John heard about RMHC Toronto, our mission resonated with him immediately. He thought of his niece who needed surgery as a baby, and the stress his whole family felt during that time. Driven by empathy and the desire to support families in their most challenging moments, John and his family became major donors to RMHC Toronto, supporting vital projects including our kitchen redevelopment and new Family Room at SickKids.

"No parent should have to worry about food and showers while their child is battling a serious illness," remarks John.

Thank you from our family to yours, John, and Primo Unico for your amazing support!

You're in good company! Meet a few of our supporters... and learn why they give.

Lou's Room: A grateful family and the power of community

Baby Elouise, affectionately known as "Lou" contracted COVID19 just a few months after her birth. Her condition deteriorated to the point that she needed a bone marrow transplant at SickKids. Lou's family stayed at RMHC Toronto for 70 days.

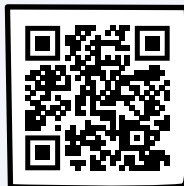
During their stay, Lou's family found themselves surrounded by love and compassion from their community. Some friends and family stepped up to donate blood to support Lou's transfusions. They formed a group called "Lou's Crew" to rally behind her.

Other friends and family who were unable to donate blood still wanted to contribute. Inspired by Stephanie's grandmother, who had been an active volunteer and supporter of RMHC Toronto for many years, the idea of the "Lou's Room" fundraiser was born.

The initial goal of the fundraiser was to support the family's stay at RMHC Toronto and contribute to the organization. Friends, family, coworkers, and even local hockey teams came together – not just financially but also with well wishes and encouragement.

"We were overwhelmed by everyone's generosity," says Stephanie. "Not only did people contribute financially, but the power of our community really helped us get through our situation."

Thank you to Lou's family – and community – for your incredible generosity!



Learn more about this story!



Parents Stephanie and Spencer along with baby Elouise (Lou)



Thank you to each and every one of you — and all that you give to support our families!

The Cryderman Family: Honouring the legacy of Jordin Jewel

The Jordin Jewel Cryderman Memorial Golf Tournament is an annual event in Thunder Bay, raising funds for Ronald McDonald House Charities.

Cindy Cryderman shares, "RMHC Toronto was truly a 'home away from home' for us. It relieved us of the financial burdens of accommodations and dining during our extended stay. But more importantly, it offered us understanding, compassion, and strength through the friendships we formed with other parents facing their own fears of having a critically ill child. We will forever be grateful for our beautiful, sweet Jordy. She is missed every day."

Thank you Cryderman family – and all golf tournament participants – for your kindness and support.



Learn more about this story!



Cindy Cryderman, Jordin's mom



From left, Alex Cryderman, father of Jordin, alongside Jake (Jordin's sibling) and Brittany Cryderman

Thank you... to our amazing partners and sponsors!

RMHC Toronto Golf Classic:

Thank you to each and every one of the golfers and sponsors who **helped raise \$240,000 for families on July 17, 2023**. The success of the event is a testament to the incredible generosity and compassion of our sponsors – led by our presenting sponsor, **Scotiabank**.

Presenting Sponsor:

Scotiabank

Supporting Sponsors:

Adaptall	H+K Canada Inc.
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CIBC	Pepsico
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Danone	Saputo Inc.
Deloitte	Scotiabank – Ontario Region
Dynamic Funds	Transcontinental PLM
Giesecke+Devrient	TransUnion
Graphic Packaging International	



Learn more and see other great photos!



Remembering George Cohon

George Cohon passed on November 24, 2023, but he will be remembered forever and always as the founder of, and deep champion of Ronald McDonald Houses across Canada.

A recipient of the Companions of the Order of Canada, George was a tireless volunteer and supporter. He cherished family values and loved eating Big Macs! He also loved joining the PAWS program with his wife, Susan, and their two therapy dogs, Annie and Chloe – much to the delight of children with serious illnesses and their families staying at the House.

Thank you George, you will be remembered always with fondness and love.

Thank you, McDonald's! Our Founding and Forever Partner.



Todd and Marcia Finlayson, Owner/Operators, Finlayson Hospitality Partners Inc. from left, alongside Roger Keeley and Ken Wade of the Fabulous 15

We celebrated McHappy Day on May 10, 2023 with our Founding & Forever Partner, McDonald's, Owner/Operators, crew and our collective community of supporters. Together we raised over \$1M to support families.

Thank you to all franchisees and crew that provide extra support for the RMHC Toronto mission, on McHappy Day and throughout the year.



Read more here!

Feeling Proud: This McDonald's crew member knows our mission firsthand

Kerstin knows what it's like to have a child who is seriously ill in the family. Her niece, Cameron, was born with a genetic disorder called Trisomy 18 and, for the first few months of her life, she was in and out of the hospital.

Now, as a McDonald's crew member, Kerstin takes pride in knowing that the work she does every day helps to support families caring for a child who is seriously ill.

"It's thanks to the generosity of guests who purchase Happy Meals, RMHC cookies, or who support McHappy Day, that RMHC can continue to provide such essential support to families in need," says Kerstin. "It makes me proud to know that I'm part of supporting thousands of families at RMHC Toronto each year."



Thank you Kerstin and to every McDonald's crew member and franchisee for your hard work and dedication.



Read more of Kerstin's story here!

Thank you... to our dedicated volunteers. You are the heart and soul of RMHC Toronto.

It's because of you that we're able to deliver on our mission of keeping seriously ill children and their families close to improve their health and well-being.



"One of the most memorable moments I have is of a mom who had her child in the Pediatric Ward. She visited the room, and I took the time to show her around, explained where everything was, and let her sit in the room as she was working virtually.

After a couple of hours, we got to talking—nothing special, I thought—until after I left for the day, she wrote a thank you note and left it in the room for me, thanking me for spending time with her and how much she appreciated us being there.

It's just the little things that make our role as volunteers so special and appreciated by the families."

– **Terri Toms**, RMHC Toronto Family Room Volunteer



of volunteers in 2023: **287**

14,000 volunteer hours in 2023

If you'd like
to become
a volunteer,
scan here:





"For me it's about seeing the children. You can make a big impact giving a monthly gift – one smile at a time."

– Annie, Monthly Donor

2023 Board of Directors

Denise Carpenter (*Chair*)
Aric Bhargava (*Vice-Chair*)
Michelle Chaisson (*Secretary*)
Clara Shin (*Treasurer*)
Angela Clayton
Joe Cooper
Anthony Faiella
Jim Fennell
Marcia Finlayson
Josef Hrebik
Karen Kinnear
Jeff Kroll
Rocky Malfara

Brett Mooney
Dr. Daniel Morgenstern
Victor Rocca
Elke Rubach
Andrew Turnbull
Tania Little, CEO (*ex-officio*)
Geoff Behm *
Teri Brown *
Kristy Carscallen *
Robert Lawrie **
Catherine Bridgman + (*former CEO*)

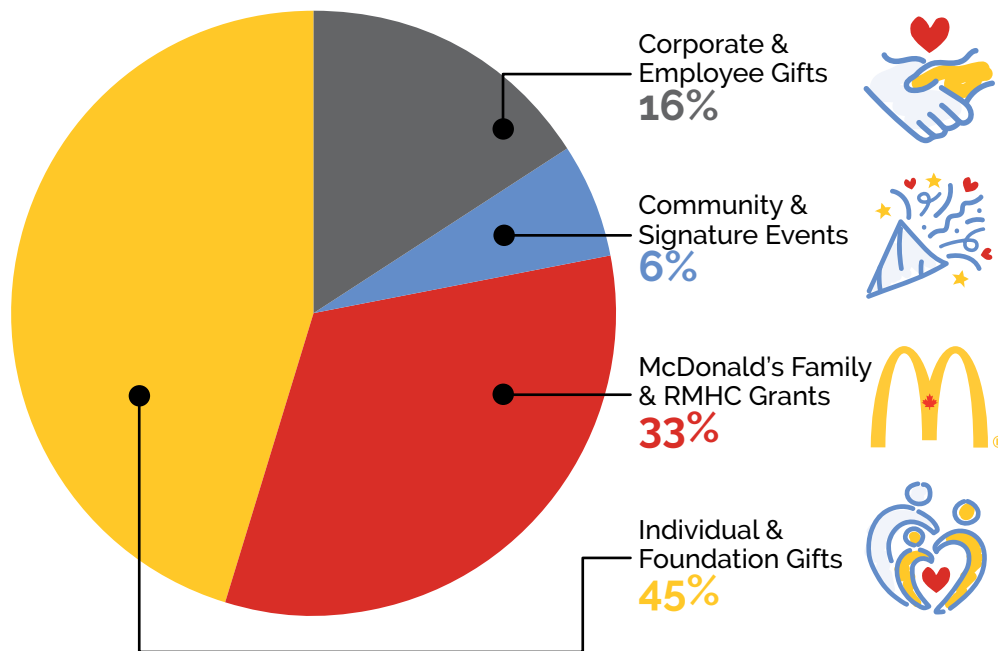
* Term completed March 2023

** Term completed October 2023

+ Term completed April 2023

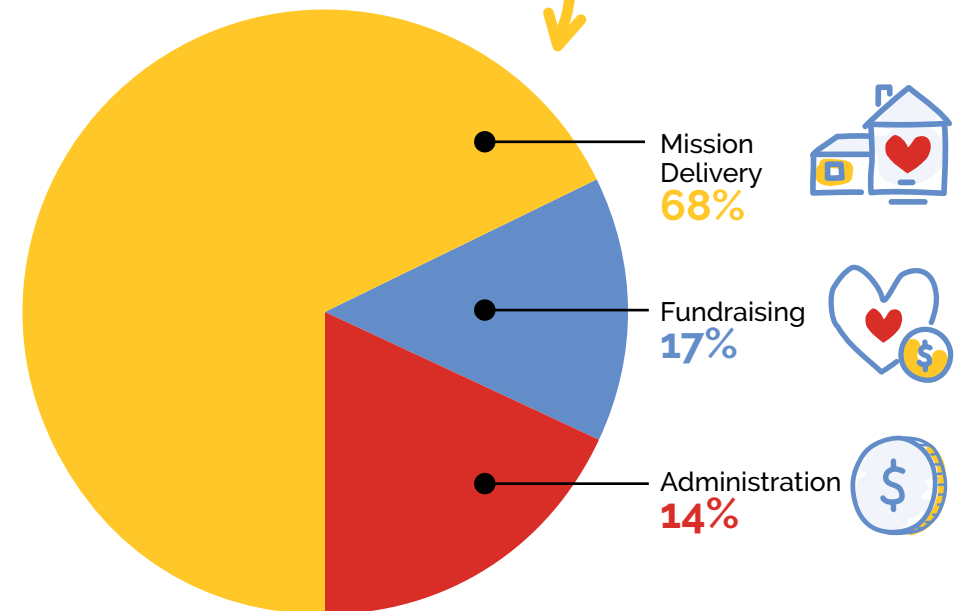
Thanks to you... by the numbers!

Donations from partners and programs:
\$9,849,206 raised!



View our full audited financial statements. Financial accountability and transparency are important to us. Ronald McDonald House Charities Toronto operates under the legal name Toronto Children's Care Inc.
*Percentages have been rounded which is why the totals do not equal 100%.

Your support at work



Thank you! Our community of supporters helps uplift families.

The stories in these pages are
only possible **because of you!**

Please stay connected to us
and keep families close.

Questions about the impact of your gifts
in action or want to learn more about how
you can help? Please get in touch!

Call us at 416-977-0458 or email us at
info@rmhctoronto.ca.



Scan to
donate!



THANK YOU!



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