



Ronald McDonald
House Charities®
Central Indiana

HEART & HEARTH

SUMMER

2022



YEARS

celebrating together,
TOGETHER

THE HOUSE THAT LOVE BUILT

P.4

40 YEARS OF STORIES

COMMUNITY REPORT P.26

ANNIVERSARY EDITION • VOLUME I

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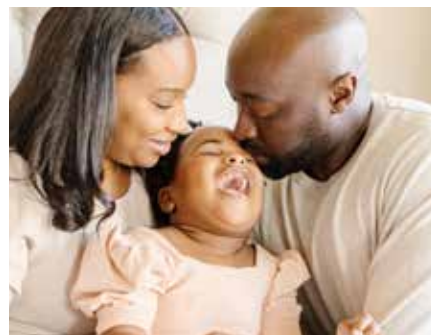
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Ronald McDonald
House Charities®
Central Indiana

HEART & HEARTH SUMMER 2022

A magazine for friends
of Ronald McDonald
House Charities of
Central Indiana

ABOUT HEART & HEARTH

Heart & Hearth is published twice annually by RMHCCIN. Our mission is provide a supportive *home away from home* for families of children receiving medical care at Riley Children's Health and other area hospitals.

On the Cover:

Celebrate 40 years of the Ronald McDonald House in central Indiana with this special anniversary edition.

Please send your comments, questions, story ideas, or address changes to:

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THE HAUG-RATCLIFF FAMILY



In April, we celebrated the early arrival of our twins, Oaklynn, born 1 lb. 12 oz, and Greyson, born 1 lb. 13 oz. Because they were born at 25 weeks, they were transferred from our home in Linton, Indiana 90 minutes away to a hospital in Evansville. There, doctors discovered holes in Greyson's intestine that required treatment at Riley Children's Health. Sadly, a few days later, our little Oaklynn passed away. While Greyson is at Riley Children's, we've been staying at the Ronald McDonald House. Since arriving in Indianapolis, everyone has treated us like family. The staff has been so sweet and makes sure we are comfortable and feel at home. We've celebrated Mother's Day and Father's Day here, enjoying the spa day for moms and the barbeque for dads, with the other families at the House.

We've been through so many emotions, coping with the pain of losing Oaklynn while celebrating how hard Greyson is fighting. Events like these helped us feel normal and escape day-to-day stresses. We want to thank everyone who donates and makes it possible for parents like us to stay so close to their children. Greyson is now four months old and weighs 10 lbs., 3 oz. The doctors and nurses at Riley tell us he's doing great and might be able to go home in September.

With love and gratitude,
Faith Haug and Quintin Ratcliff



THE HOUSE THAT LOVE BUILT



n October 14, 1982, the Ronald McDonald House of Indiana opened on the campus of IUPUI just a short walk from the renowned Riley Children's Hospital. It was the realization of efforts that had started more than five years earlier.

The concept of the Ronald McDonald House debuted in Philadelphia in the mid-1970s. Fred Hill, a linebacker for the Philadelphia Eagles, and his wife, Fran, had been enduring the stress of watching their daughter Kimberly receive treatment for acute lymphatic leukemia at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. The Hills, like many families before them, were spending their time camped in the hospital, sleeping in lounges or their child's room. Together with Dr. Audrey Evans, head of pediatric oncology at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, the Hills worked alongside the Philadelphia Eagles to raise more than \$125,000 to develop a new oncology center for the hospital.

Driven to do more and to provide a place of respite for families, the cadre continued their efforts, eventually enlisting the expertise of McDonald's advertising executive Don Tuckerman. McDonald's enthusiastically supported the idea of creating a *home away from home* for families like the Hills, and held a special *Shamrock Shake* sale as a fundraiser to bring the idea to life. Ever the visionary, Dr. Evans had already scouted out the perfect house near the hospital. With \$35,000 from the fundraiser in hand, the house was renovated, and the first Ronald

McDonald House was born. It opened on October 15, 1974. Three years later, the second Ronald McDonald House opened in Chicago, IL. Word of this innovative approach in family-centered care spread like wildfire.

The Three-Legged Stool

The development of the first two Ronald McDonald Houses demonstrated that success hinged on the buy-in and participation from three core groups: a partnering hospital, local McDonald's restaurants and corporate employees, and the community. The concept became known as the "crucial triangle," or "three-legged stool."

In Indiana, the three-legged stool would become personified by nine individuals, three from each of the core groups.

RILEY CHILDREN'S HEALTH

Dr. Steven Beering
James & Cheri Forslund
Dr. Charles Richmond

MCDONALD'S

Gerald Cassidy
Brenda Duncan
Jim Props

INDIANAPOLIS COMMUNITY

Karen Campbell
Gordon Durnil
Judy Monnier

Ronald McDonald House of Indiana's early leaders would eventually incorporate as Our House, Inc. named after the poem "Little Orphant Annie" written by Riley Hospital namesake, James Whitcomb Riley. The poem opens, "Little Orphant Annie's come to our house to stay..." As part of our 40th anniversary celebration, we will be highlighting accounts from our living founders.

A Vision for the House

The crucial triangle now formed, the founding board members set forth to introduce the Ronald McDonald House (RMH) model to the citizens of Indiana and garner the financial support that would be necessary to make the vision a reality. The board estimated it would cost about \$1.6 million to open the House, and they set the goal of opening entirely debt-free. In December 1980, Dr. Beering brokered a deal with IUPUI leadership for the land necessary for the House. His fellow board members credited him with opening doors and fostering the relationships that allowed the House to open in just two years.

With a signed lease and blueprints for the House, the Our House, Inc. board launched a statewide PR campaign led with strategic expertise from PR giants, Caldwell Van Riper (CVR). Building on the concepts of creating a *home away from home* for families, Our House, Inc. was able to secure financial support from McDonald's franchisees, Lilly Endowment, and even McDonald's founder Ray Kroc. Karen Campbell, Cheri Forslund, Judy Monnier, and several others fostered community support by speaking at religious and fraternal organizations, talking to "anyone who'd listen."

The fundraisers held from 1980 through 1982 are too numerous to list. They include button sales, a telethon, parades, and bake sales. By October 1982, with a last-minute anonymous donation of \$80,000, Our House, Inc. reached its goal of raising \$1.8 million, and the House opened debt-free on October 14.

Little Orphant Annie

(first and last verses)

Little Orphant Annie's come to our house to stay,
An' wash the cups and saucers up, an' bresh the crumbs away,
An' shoo the chickens off the porch, an' dust the hearth an' sweep,
An' make the fire, an' bake the bread, an' earn her board-an'-keep;
An' all us other children, when the supper-things is done,
We se around the kitchen fire an' has the mostest fun
A-list'nin' to the witch-tales 'at Annie tells about,
An' the Gobble-uns 'at gits you

Christopher Mize's Master of Arts thesis paper and oral history, "A History of the Ronald McDonald House of Indiana, 1980-2004" served as the source for this article. Mize conducted historical research and interviews of RMH stakeholders from 2009 through 2012.

AUGUST 2, 1981: 25¢ HAMBURGER DAY



25¢ Hamburger Day - the name says it all. For one day only, McDonald's would offer customers as many burgers as they could eat for just a quarter each – and all the money would go towards building the Ronald McDonald House in Indianapolis. As soon as restaurants opened, they were quickly swamped with customers lined up out the doors and into parking lots. Jim Props recalled the burgers selling "in increments of ten, twenty, fifty, and occasionally a hundred."

One overwhelmed operator pleaded with the event's support hotline, "I have opened my last case of meat. What do I do?" On the other end of the line, the staffer could only muster, "Are there any cows outside?" McDonald's bakeries were delivering buns so fresh they were still hot. Some owners resorted to scouring local grocery store shelves for meat and bread. One grill buckled under the pressure and "went up in flames."

It was an unmitigated success. By the time the day ended, McDonald's 144 stores had sold 1,668,671 hamburgers, raising an astonishing \$455,958.51 (\$1,710,600 in today's dollars), as well as an additional \$31,588 raised through the sale of t-shirts and buttons, making it the biggest fundraiser held for a Ronald McDonald House at the time.



40 FROM OUR 40

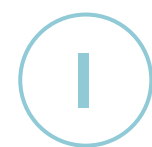
To celebrate the 40th anniversary of Ronald McDonald House Charities of Central Indiana, we launched 40 From our 40, a storytelling initiative that showcases stories, memories and moments from 40 individuals that have had an experience with RMHCCIN in the past 40 years. The first 20 stories are published in this issue of *Heart & Hearth*, with the final 20 to be showcased in our winter issue.





01 JIM & CHERI FORSLUND

INTERVIEWED BY KARIN OGDEN



In 1975, Jim and Cheri Forslund were awaiting the arrival of their second child; their firstborn, Ericka was 16 months old. Life was good. So good that Cheri had recently talked to her grandmother and shared just how perfect their lives were and their excitement at the new baby's arrival. Cheri said, "I'll never say those words again." When baby Michael arrived in September of that year, the Forslunds immediately noticed something was wrong. Michael was soon diagnosed with Hallerman Streiff, a rare syndrome that presents as physical deformities and causes a myriad of challenges, including difficulty eating. Their world was starting to turn upside down.

When Cheri went into labor with Michael, Ericka spiked a fever of 104, and they later noticed her eyes began to cross. Doctors examining Michael said they were more concerned about Ericka at that point and began tests. The doctor soon returned with tears in his eyes to share the test results. It was some form of cancer. He had contacted Dr. Robert Baehner at Riley Children's Hospital (now operating at Riley Children's Health) who advised the Forslunds to go straight to the hospital. Ericka was admitted and began treatment. Michael's treatment soon followed.

Six months later, as was often the case with pediatric cancer in the 1970s, Ericka passed away, one week shy of her 2nd birthday. For the last six weeks of Ericka's life, Cheri never left Riley Children's; alternating only between working to feed Michael, who could not nurse or swallow, and comforting Ericka. Cheri was simply trying to stay functional.

After Ericka's passing, Cheri shared, "When the unthinkable happens, you can go to bed, drink, and take pills, or do something positive. She was our only daughter and our firstborn. I decided the only thing to do was fight."

Cheri had developed a bond with Dr. Baehner and asked what parent group she could join that was raising money for pediatric cancer research. As Dr. Baehner was unaware of such a group, Cheri asked if there was another parent that might be interested in joining her to organize one. The doctor suggested Pam Evans, whose son Rob had passed away a year earlier from Burkett's Lymphoma.

Pam and Cheri got together and as Cheri describes it as "We were just two moms in a condo. We talked about what we could do. We asked Dr. Baehner what Riley needed." Thinking they might procure a few hundred dollars, he suggested books.

The women had bigger ideas. They wanted every dollar they raised to fund research. Getting the green light from Dr. Steven Beering, Dean of the Indiana University School of Medicine, they filed the legal paperwork and in October 1976, founded Riley Cancer Research for Children (RCRC). "While we were doing this for Ericka and Rob, it was for every child, so the name resonated."

The day after RCRC's kick-off event, Michael passed away. He was 17 months old. Genetic testing showed no connection or pattern between Ericka and Michael's health issues. Sadly, the Forslund's first two children's conditions were simply a medical anomaly. Doctors shared that Jim and Cheri could have healthy children. When Michael passed away, Cheri was eight months pregnant and one month later, a healthy son, Richard, was born. Their fourth child, Dan followed in 1979. Cheri remembers, when each of the boys turned two, "We celebrated; it was a milestone we hadn't experienced."

Dealing with loss and grief is something many Ronald McDonald families have in common, and it is never easy. Though well meaning, families that have not personally experienced the loss of a child may struggle to support friends. After both Ericka and Michael passed away, Cheri and Jim recall, "People did not know what to say to us. That meant hearing well-meaning people say things like 'at least you had them for a while, you're so strong.' Those are the worst things to say to people suffering from the loss of a child. We had no choice but to be strong. Better

"We did it for our kids."



▲ Jim & Cheri Forslund

to just say I'm sorry."

Cheri channeled her anguish into RCRC. Word was spreading and other parents were joining, like former Indiana Republican Party Chairman Gordon Durnil and his wife Lynda. The Durnils had spent a great deal of time at Riley Children's with their son, Guy, and understood the importance of the cause. When RCRC gave their first \$100,000 to Riley, Cheri laughed with Dr. Baehner and said, "This doesn't go to books."

Through their work, Cheri learned of the Ronald McDonald Houses (RMH) that were springing up in Philadelphia and Chicago. She shared her findings with fellow RCRC volunteers and Dean Beering. He too, had lost a child and supported her continued investigation into the prospect of a local Ronald McDonald House. Many of the RCRC parents knew, from sleeping in a recliner next to their children in the hospital, what an impact a House could make. Several decided to simultaneously lend their efforts in beginning a Ronald McDonald House chapter in Indianapolis. Cheri discovered one

of the prerequisites was a parent group. "We had that with RCRC." Conversations with McDonald's Regional Marketing Manager, Brenda Duncan, began and soon Cheri, Jim, and the Durnils took on simultaneous roles at RCRC and as founders of Our House, Inc., the first legal name for Ronald McDonald House of Indiana. Dean Beering joined as well.

Jim became the President of the first Our House, Inc. board in 1979. Jim explains "I was President because Dean Beering said it didn't make sense for Cheri to be President of RCRC and Our House, Inc. at the same time, but she was a founder for both."

Cheri says, "We learned the best way to raise funds was to share the message of the House with organizations that were collecting money and needed a place to donate it. Groups like Stansfield Circle, Sertoma, and Kiwanis gave year after year." She, along with others, talked to groups large and small; "it was easier to raise money for the House than research; —it was bricks and mortar that people could get excited about that." As

history reflects, their mammoth efforts were successful, the money was raised, and the opening was slated for October 1982.

Jim recalls the night before the opening, the House was a flurry of activity with many volunteers cleaning and getting rooms ready for the next day. A young couple with a child at Riley Children's came to the door. Hospital staff had told them the House was opening, but they were not sure when. The group initially turned the family away sharing that the House was to open the next day. As the couple turned to leave, Jim quickly had a second thought, "Are we nuts?" They welcomed the family back and assigned them a room.

The House held their official opening a couple of days later. Pam and Cheri were looking down from the second floor into the great room. Pam said, "Rob would be proud of the work we've done." Cheri agreed and said, "we got this done, now we must get back to research." Today, she declares, "we did it for our kids."



WORLEY
ERHART-
GRAVES

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LEAVING YOUR LEGACY

There is no doubt the great feeling that comes from donating your time or money to one of your favorite charitable organizations. Have you ever wondered, though, if you could continue making an impact by giving to your charitable organization of choice even after you're gone? While estate planning is usually no one's favorite topic, it is important to know that a properly executed estate plan can allow you to decide in advance of your death how you would like your assets to be distributed. One of the components of your estate distribution strategy you might consider is how you could continue supporting Ronald McDonald House Charities of Central Indiana after you die.

The way to leave a legacy to the organizations you're passionate about supporting is through planned giving, which can be beneficial not only to the charity but also to your other heirs in the form of legal and tax saving strategies. A planned gift can be completed in a number of different formats including legacy planning within a donor advised fund (DAF), charitable remainder trusts (CRT), charitable lead trusts (CLT), naming a charity as a direct beneficiary of an account or life insurance policy, or a bequeath of funds or personal belongings to a charity within a will or trust document.

Depending on your personal situation, any one or a combination of these strategies can be an excellent option. So, talk to your financial planner and your estate planning attorney about what the best strategy might be for you to leave a legacy to your chosen organization.

- **Margaret Gooley, CFP®, CDFA®**
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02 LEE MURPHY

INTERVIEWED BY MEREDITH SMITH



▲ Lee and Patrick

To say 1984 was a bittersweet year for Dave and Lee Murphy is an understatement. As they were happily awaiting the birth of their son Patrick, David's sister-in-law died in a car crash leaving behind two sons under the age of five who were about to spend a lot of time with their aunt and uncle in Fort Wayne.

Patrick was born in late December on the day of David's parents' 42nd wedding anniversary. An hour later, David's father, Jack Murphy, died after a long-drawn-out battle with colon cancer.

In January, baby Patrick began having difficulty breathing and developed a severe, barking cough. He was admitted to Parkview Hospital in Fort Wayne, Indiana, but transferred to Riley Children's Health on Valentine's Day. One night at Riley, Lee found herself sleeping in the unlikelyst of places. A closet in the waiting room looked like her only opportunity for a bit of privacy and rest. However, the waiting room was soon host to another family grieving the loss of their daughter, and Lee found

herself in the middle of the emotional tumult. It painted a raw picture of families' very real need for privacy, care and comfort in a hospital setting.

Physically exhausted and emotionally devastated, Lee was grateful when Patrick was diagnosed with having abnormally formed blood vessels that could be corrected with surgery. A room at the House gave her a much-needed escape from the stresses of the hospital ward.

"Riley Children's saved Patrick's life, but the Ronald McDonald House saved mine," she said.

Back in Fort Wayne, Lee and David quickly found ways to give back to the House. They developed a local fundraising chapter and raised money during the city's Three Rivers Parade, and the entire family volunteered at the Central Indiana House one weekend a month. The family would stay at the House where Lee would serve as a weekend manager and David would shuttle families back and forth. Ten-year-old Erin would give tours to families or visitors.

Eventually, Lee returned to being a full-time special education teacher in Fort Wayne and the family spent less time at the House. Last year, Lee and her daughter Erin returned to volunteering at the newly opened Ronald McDonald Family Room in Riley Maternity Tower.

She offers the new families a listening ear and often gives advice she learned first-hand: "With all you have been through, the only way in your journey is up!"



▲ Raising support for the House at Ft. Wayne's Three Rivers Parade.

BRENDA DUNCAN

INTERVIEWED BY ADAM LOWE

In 1974, the first Ronald McDonald House opened in Philadelphia. This innovative approach to helping families of seriously ill children being treated at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia became a reality as the result of an extraordinary partnership representing the hospital, McDonald's restaurant owners, and community volunteers.

1977 saw the opening of the second Ronald McDonald House located in Chicago. Just a year before, Brenda Duncan had become the regional marketing manager for McDonald's Corporation, working from their Indianapolis Regional Office. Remembering those early days, Brenda says, "Throughout our history, McDonald's philosophy has been to give back to the communities where we do business. The concept of the Ronald McDonald House truly had the potential to bring our philosophy to life in a very significant and impactful way. Understandably, news of the success of the Philadelphia and Chicago Ronald McDonald Houses spread quickly throughout the McDonald's system." By the end of the 1970s, more than 40 Houses would be built or were in development.

Duncan recalls, "The McDonald's family (corporate employees and restaurant owners) in central Indiana agreed we needed to found a Ronald McDonald House. Riley Children's Hospital (now operating as Riley Children's Health) was a world-class children's hospital. Therefore, helping families from all over Indiana whose children were being treated at Riley was a critical need that a Ronald McDonald House, built near to the hospital, could meet."

Brenda knew that developing a House at Riley would require forming the same partnership structure that built the first Houses, the "three-legged stool." The legs are represented by the groups vital to the success of founding a House – McDonald's, hospital partners, and volunteers from the community. The stars aligned when Karen Campbell, a founder of the Chicago Ronald House, relocated to Indianapolis. In 1978, Duncan, Campbell and McDonald's restaurant owners Gerald Cassidy and Jim Props





▲ Front Row (L-R) Brenda Duncan, Judy Monnier, Karen Campbell Back Row (L-R) Roland Long, Dr. Charles Richmond, Dr. Morris Green

began working in earnest to cultivate interest at Riley Hospital to develop a Ronald McDonald House. They discovered a group of similarly minded individuals, that had already connected due to their experiences at Riley including Jim and Cheri Forslund and Dr. Stephen Beering, among others.

Those efforts paid off by late 1979. Duncan explains, "Dr. Stephen Beering, who at the time was Dean of the Indiana University School of Medicine and Director of the Indiana University Medical Center, let us know of his team's interest in building a House at Riley. The potential reality of an Indiana Ronald McDonald House really kicked into high gear when Dr. Beering successfully negotiated with IUPUI to donate one of their properties close to Riley to be the location of the Indiana Ronald McDonald House."

Duncan recalls the ambitious fundraising goal the founding board set. "Our board treasurer, Jim Props, said that we could not break ground until we raised the \$1.6 million dollars (\$5.6 million in today's dollars) to build the 24-bedroom Indiana House, making it one of the largest Ronald McDonald Houses in the United States at the time. We set a goal of opening debt-free in fall 1982 and immediately embarked on a very ambitious, non-stop, two-year statewide fundraising campaign."

Hundreds of fundraisers, both big and small, from bake sales to a telethon and McDonald's statewide 25¢ Hamburger Day would be held over the course

of those two years. Duncan reminisces, "I am still amazed whenever I think about our 25¢ Hamburger Day. We raised a grand total of \$487,546 (\$1,710,600 in today's dollars), the biggest fundraiser held for a Ronald House at the time. Its phenomenal success ensured we could break ground in fall 1981."

"Thanks to the leadership of our board, partnerships with Riley Children's and McDonald's, and the efforts of our tireless volunteers, we were able to open the Indiana Ronald House debt-free on Thursday, October 14, 1982," Duncan shares. "Personally, it was a day I will never forget. It was the realization of a dream to open the Indiana Ronald McDonald House. For me, it represented a celebration of a tremendous amount of hard work, friendships formed that would last forever, and the fulfillment of knowing that, together, we had built a *home away from home* that would forever support families of critically ill children being treated at Riley Children's."

It was a powerful, memorable experience that has lasted Brenda, now happily retired, a lifetime. "In my 40 years with McDonald's, I moved to other regional offices, and I served on other Ronald House boards. However, I must admit that I never experienced the same emotional connection that I had and continue to have with the Indiana Ronald McDonald House. I know it's because I was a founding board member. For me, it is the most meaningful and fulfilling thing I have done in my life, and I will be forever grateful for that experience."

04 JO PLANT

INTERVIEWED BY MARY FRIEND

took a Master Gardener class that required 40 hours activating their new skills. They did that at the House grounds starting in 1997. Soon, Jo was also volunteering in Guest Services, a post she kept after Hugh passed away in 2012.

When Hugh was in hospice care, Jo's time at the House became a needed escape and a place of personal comfort. She's been amazed by the breadth of corporations and individuals whose support makes it possible for the House to offer so much to so many.

"The House is a haven," she says. "It is much more than four walls. It is a welcoming, warm place for everyday people whose children are facing unbelievable health challenges. When they have had a difficult day, they look to us because they know here, they will find a quiet and safe place to deal with their emotions. A simple smile, a warm meal, a place to stay close to their child, can help them regroup and know that tomorrow will be better."



The House is a haven for families in crisis, but volunteers find needed solace here as well. Take Jo Plant, for example. She celebrates 25 years of service this year.

Jo came to Indianapolis in 1995 with her husband, Hugh, to be closer to their daughter. Wanting to be active participants in their new community, they



05 CONNIE CRIPE

INTERVIEWED BY ADAM LOWE

As the House Guest Service Manager in 2004, Connie Cripe was happy to help families in crisis find needed respite. Many, she observed, were so focused on the well-being of their child, they forgot to take care of themselves, including their own nutritional needs. "That's why the House is so important," she says.

"Families can relax, be themselves, get some sleep, maybe get something to eat, and just get a second to themselves," she said.

Connie continues to help families in need as the director of the Ascension St. Vincent House.



06 JIM GLASENER

INTERVIEWED BY THERESA DUNN

In 2012, Jim Glasener learned of the Ronald McDonald House when he headed a 250-person construction crew at Riley Children's Health at IU's Simon Family Tower. Intrigued, he started sharing leftovers from crew lunches with the House but wanted to do more.

His crew was a great resource. "People will pay money to see the project manager lead stretches in a chicken suit," he says.

A decade of service to RMHCCIN later, the senior project executive at Messer Construction chairs the House Board of Directors. He and his family serve Christmas Day meals to House guests.

"The House," he says, "represents a place of safety, fulfilling basic needs, so that families can focus on what is truly important."



07 NICOLE BLANTON & IREM

INTERVIEWED BY ADAM LOWE

Members of the Institute of Real Estate Management's (IREM) local chapter provide significant House support through their annual Heroes for the House 5K Run/Walk. The 16th iteration of the event this year pushed IREM past a cumulative total of \$260,000 raised. But, their support doesn't stop there.

"We love hosting Heroes for the House, but we really love serving dinner to House guests," says IREM Association Executive, Nicole Blanton. "The families we meet are so grateful and eternally appreciative. It's a special experience for IREM Indy members, knowing the House provides an inviting, safe harbor for families facing hardship."



"The first night, after we finished the event, my wife and I sat in the parking lot at the Indianapolis Country Club and just cried happy tears because we had pulled it off and raised \$14,500 for the House." He has been championing the cause ever since, playing, organizing, and making it the tremendous success it is today. The event is supported by many McDonald's vendors as well as other corporations in the community. It is a top-of-class day of golf with competitive and recreational golfers all out to help families heal together.

When asked why RMHCCIN is important to the community, Pete shared, "The Ronald McDonald House supports families and children and the mission is so relatable, it's hard to find anyone that hasn't been touched by it." Family is extremely important to Pete. His family has been a part of the event since the beginning, and he is working to train his son Dawson to take over the tournament one day. But until that time, Pete looks forward to the challenges each year brings, new exciting courses, new fundraising goals and of course, the unexpected.

08 PETE WOJTOWICZ

INTERVIEWED BY STACY CLARK

This is a special year for anniversaries at Ronald McDonald Charities of Central Indiana (RMHCCIN). Not only is the House celebrating a major milestone, Swing for Kids and the event's founder, Pete Wojtowicz, are celebrating 35 years of golf benefiting RMHCCIN.

Pete is a true leader and champion of the House. It is his vision and passion for this annual golf tournament that has raised millions of dollars for RMHCCIN since its inception in 1986. Pete is a second-generation McDonald's Restaurant Owner/Operator and so he knew about the Ronald McDonald House. At that time, Owner/Operators were required by McDonald's to demonstrate involvement with their local communities. Pete thought it over and wondered if it were possible to combine his passion for golf with a way to raise funds for Ronald McDonald House.

He was successful when he created the Swing for Kids Golf Tournament and has been captaining the event ever since its inception. He reflected on his favorite moment in the tournament's long history,



▲ Pete and his wife Melissa with two of their children, Audrey and Dawson.



▲ Ronald McDonald helps Pete kick off another Swing for Kids.

THIS YEAR'S SWING FOR KIDS



The 35th Annual Swing for Kids Golf Tournament presented by **NextGear Capital** was a resounding success, raising \$210,000 for RMHCCIN! A special thank you to our sponsors, food and beverage partners, golfers, and volunteers.

NextGear additionally issued a \$20,000 matching challenge to event attendees. Thanks to the generosity of all involved, we turned a \$20,000 gift into \$40,000 – that's 400 overnight stays for families. Contributions raised at Swing for Kids help cover the \$100 actual cost of operating a room.

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THANK YOU TO OUR EVENT PARTNERS





INAUGURAL SUMMER SHINDIG A SELL OUT EVENT!

On July 21st, over 800 guests came out to The Children's Museum of Indianapolis to support Ronald McDonald House Charities of Central Indiana's inaugural Summer Shindig event.

Summer Shindig, presented by **Riley Children's Health**, was started this year to celebrate 40 years of keeping families close. Alumni families, community members and friends of Ronald McDonald House came from all over the state to celebrate with us. The families currently staying at the Ronald McDonald House were invited for free and shuttled to the museum. All guests were treated to a private takeover of the museum complete with a catered dinner buffet, a museum-wide scavenger hunt, a 40th Anniversary t-shirt and a surprise appearance from Ronald McDonald himself.

One sponsor said, "This was a wonderful way to celebrate the great works of the House and again, keep families together." We loved having so many families and supporters in one place to Celebrate Together, Together.





THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

PRESENTING SPONSOR



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09 JUDY MONNIER

INTERVIEWED BY ADAM LOWE

Judy Monnier first heard about Ronald McDonald House (RMH, now operating as Ronald McDonald House Charities) through her sorority, Alpha Delta Pi. The sorority had recently made RMH its national charity of choice, and Judy, a Duke University graduate, fell in love with the concept of providing a *home away from home* for families needing a place to stay while they are caring for their hospitalized child. She knew she wanted to get involved.

Judy wanted to bring a Ronald McDonald House to Indianapolis. Even before the Our House, Inc. founding board formed, she was feverishly

contacting the Central Indiana McDonald's office as well as Riley Children's Health to see how she could help bring a House to Indianapolis. The founding board enlisted Karen Campbell to speak to Alpha Delta Pi. It was through that connection that Judy was recruited to help promote awareness of RMH in Indianapolis. "My first activity was to put volunteers in all the McDonald's on Hamburger Day," she recalls.

Together with Karen Campbell and Gordon Durnil, Judy was one of the original members of the community "leg" of the "three-legged stool." Part of their initial work was to travel throughout central Indiana, raising awareness, money, and recruiting volunteers. They would frequently speak to crowds great and small at schools, social and service clubs, and anyone who wanted to learn more and get involved. Monnier recalled an instance of how she went to one meeting expecting it to be a quiet, small group, only to encounter a crowd of nearly

200 waiting to hear about “the Ronald House.”

By the spring of 1981, the Our House, Inc. board had already raised nearly \$175,000 in cash. But not all meetings centered around financial donations. Just as today, the House would need to rely on strong partnerships within the community and the donation of items that would offset the purchase of supplies to build and stock the new House. So, when this grass roots public relations machine finished their presentations, they often walked away with new contacts and relationships in the community. Those relationships frequently lead to in-kind donations of supplies, building materials, and even appliances.

Judy, no doubt, left her mark on the founding of the House, but she insists her work to build the House left it's mark on her, fostering life-long friendships. “My life was changed so much by the people I met at the Ronald House. Most of my close friends are people I met through RMH.”

Once the House opened, Judy shifted her focus to creating awareness and volunteer recruitment. Speaking engagements became opportunities for volunteer recruitment. New recruits spread the word and brought even more people to serve.

“My life has changed so much by the people I met at the Ronald House.”

Soon, “Friends of the Ronald McDonald House” chapters began sprouting up across the state in the mid-1980s, helping with fundraising events, propagating the House message, and recruiting even more volunteers. “Friends” chapters continued to operate through 1989, raising thousands of dollars for the House.

If she had only one word to describe the House, Judy has a quick answer, “Love.” She served as an active board member through 2011, and is today a loyal donor, an avid supporter, and overwhelming proponent of RMHCCIN.

▼ *Judy Monnier spent her early years with the House traveling throughout Indiana to speak, recruit volunteers, and fund raise.*



10 LATIANNA KELLY

INTERVIEWED BY ADAM LOWE

When LaTianna Kelly's three-year-old son, Da'Zoni, was airlifted to Riley Children's Health, she was on her own with no nearby friends or family.

"The House gave me a safe place to stay even when I didn't have anywhere to turn," LaTianna said. "It was home for me for five months, and during that time I was given hope, love, and knowledge that there was going to be life after leaving. The House would be there as long as I needed it."

LaTianna plans to sponsor dinner at the House in Da'Zoni's memory and to continue the mission of the House.



11 BETH ANDERSON & ALLEGION

INTERVIEWED BY STACY CLARK



Helping House guests feel safe and secure is a natural fit for Allegion, the global security products and solutions provider, that for years, has supplied volunteers (once a month) to the Ronald McDonald House for meal preparation.

"Every Allegion team enjoys the experience, and it allows them to live one of our core values: 'Serve others, not yourself,' in a very meaningful way," says Senior Channel Marketing Manager Beth Anderson.

Beth stayed at the New York City House when her brother was undergoing medical treatments, so the monthly opportunity has special meaning.

"My family was exceptionally grateful for the accommodations, which allowed us to stay together during that very emotionally and financially challenging time," she recalls.

12 GIL PERI

INTERVIEWED BY KARIN OGDEN

Leader to Leader with Karin Ogden and Gil Peri, President, Riley Children's Health

When did you first experience a Ronald McDonald House (RMH)?

"It was in 2007 and I was the VP of Strategic Growth for Nationwide Children's Hospital in Columbus, Ohio. It was my first experience in pediatrics, and we were expanding the cancer program. The #1 subject we discussed was where the patients were going to stay. We partnered with the Columbus RMH on an expansion that created a beautiful 80 room House. I was amazed then, and still am now, at the programs and support RMH provided the families."

Do you remember an impactful time at a Ronald McDonald House?

"I love the way the Central Indiana House is designed; it's very family centric. I've spent a lot of time with families in the hospital. I spend 40% of my time talking to patients and others that care for children. I've seen the impact when a family meets another family going through a similar experience and the support that happens when connections are made. It's powerful. Each family knows what the other is going through. Many times, they don't have to say a word to each other. That's what happens at the House."

What makes the House special to you?

"The collaboration between Riley Children's Health and Ronald McDonald House Charities of Central Indiana (RMHCCIN) is special; it is not the typical hospital/RMH relationship. It's strong because we have like-minded missions and leadership styles. Riley Children's and RMH both like to get to 'yes' by putting the patients first."



How would you finish this statement: When I think of the Ronald McDonald House...

"I think of compassion, peace of mind, and warmth. I've felt warmth every time I've visited the House."

What would you tell a family just arriving at the Ronald McDonald House?

"I know you're here for something challenging for your family. That's why you're at Riley. The place you're walking into is going to help you on your journey."

What does "home" mean to you?

"Home is being at peace, feeling love and support, and being able to be your authentic self."

Why is the House important to the community? What would you tell someone that doesn't know anything about RMHCCIN?

"Talk to a family that has experienced a Ronald McDonald House. Nothing is better than hearing their perspective. I've been to other Houses in bigger markets. RMHCCIN is never satisfied; they're always looking for ways to serve families better. The new family rooms inside the hospital are great examples of this. Riley can't do what we do without RMHCCIN."

13 THE BECKER FAMILY

INTERVIEWED BY ROBIN CHALMERS



Sean and Amber Becker's son, Trent, was born with a heart defect requiring surgery and a neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) stay at Riley Children's Health, four hours north of their Southern Indiana home.

They weren't aware of the depth of the House's services prior to Trent's arrival.

"The Ronald McDonald House was able to accommodate us every night Trent was in NICU so I could have a place to sleep, shower, eat, and rest," Amber said. "Everyone was so nice and helpful."



▲ Recreating the memory in 2022.

14 JODI MILLER

INTERVIEWED BY CLAIRE MEADE

Many Ronald McDonald House experiences are happy ones. But not every child survives, and their stories bear witness to the most important service the Houses offers: comfort in the face of the unbearable.

Jenna Miller was born in 2002 at South Bend Memorial Hospital with health complications that required her to be transported to the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) at Riley Children's Health in Indianapolis just one day after her birth. Unable to accompany Jenna, Jodi and husband Adrian spent a night at the Ronald McDonald House in South Bend before departing for Indianapolis the next day.

Frightened but hopeful, they arrived at Riley Children's only to have their worst fears realized just days later. They slept at the Indianapolis Ronald McDonald House the night Jenna passed away.

"The room gave us a space to sleep, eat breakfast, shower, make phone calls, and begin to process what was happening," Jodi recalls. "We met with some of the medical staff and got much needed rest before leaving the hospital without our sweet girl."

That morning, they discovered that a House volunteer had packed away the car seat and other items brought for Jenna's safe travel home. Tears in her eyes, the volunteer hugged Jodi. "I knew then we would not be alone in this painful journey," Jodi said.



▲ Jodi and her husband Adrian visit Riley Children's Health.

One year later, the Millers gathered at Riley's NICU with the medical team that had cared for their daughter. The team described Jenna's arrival and the time they spent before her parents arrived. This helped Jodi and Adrian fully understand what had happened. "It was like a missing puzzle piece." Upon leaving, they left a treasured photo of Jenna with the nursing team.

Nearly three years later, baby Eva was born. Breathing challenges led the Millers back to the South Bend NICU and the Ronald McDonald Family Room. This time, they went home with a healthy baby.



The Millers moved to central Indiana in 2012. Now the mother of three, Jodi volunteers at the First Floor Ronald McDonald Family Room at Riley, and often brings in treats for guests.

"When I put a plate of warm food in the hands of a caregiver, I know I am doing a small but meaningful service for someone who may be having one of the hardest days of their lives," she said. "I am so thankful that I can be there in that moment in their day and serve them with care and a genuine smile, just as others did for me when I was a grieving mom."

Recently, she was asked to fill a volunteer shift at the Ronald McDonald Family Room in the Maternity Tower at Riley just steps away from where Jenna had been treated. She was flooded by memories and a sense of gratitude.

"I couldn't have made it without the love and support of others, many of whom were strangers to me. Many of the gestures were very simple, but so profound to me. Each act let me know that I was not alone, and that people truly cared. In giving back I feel like I am honoring my daughter in a very special way and that her short life is having an impact almost 20 years later," she said.



2021 COMMUNITY REPORT

2021 **IMPACT**

The impact of COVID-19 lingered throughout 2021 with continued restrictions to ensure the health and safety of our guests. Throughout the entirety of the year, the Ronald McDonald House operated at a 63% capacity cap.



435

Families Staying Overnight



6,045

Individual Meals Prepared



10,337

Overnight Stays at Limestone House



7,820

Donated Hours by Volunteers



\$2.9 Million

Saved by Families in Out-of-Pocket Lodging & Meal Expenses

21 Days

Average Length of a Family's Stay

144

Direct Service Volunteers

12,591

Total Pounds of Food Rescued Through our Partnership with Second Helpings



NEW SPACES WELCOME FAMILIES

A milestone in bringing comfort and care **to** families **where** they need it most, more than 2,400 guests visited our two new Ronald McDonald Family Rooms inside Riley Children's Health after opening in November 2021. Providing quiet escapes from the stress of hospital life, caregivers can enjoy a well-deserved break, warm meals, snacks, naps, and more. For families, they're private spaces away from the medical place.



NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2021

2,434 Guests

Checked in at the Family Rooms



1,599 Meals

Provided at the Family Rooms

498 Snack Bags

Provided at the Family Rooms





2021 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

TOTAL ASSETS

\$ 15,485,004

TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES

\$ 161,935

TOTAL NET ASSETS

\$ 15,323,069

TOTAL OPERATING REVENUE

\$ 3,181,804

Contributions \$1,581,178 49.7%

Foundations/Grants \$750,676 23.6%

*Includes Employee Retention Credit

Gifts Through Planned Giving \$83,644 2.6%

Guest Rooms \$56,547 1.8%

Special Events (Net) \$215,980 6.8%

Value of In-Kind Donations \$493,779 15.5%

*Grant and In-Kind revenue increase related to buildout of new Family Rooms

TOTAL REVENUE

\$ 4,343,445

*Including investment gains and losses

TOTAL EXPENSES

\$ 2,615,142

Administrative & Management \$ 313,455

Community Relations, Awareness,
& Fundraising \$ 698,697

Family Services & Programs \$ 1,602,990

FOUNDER \$20,000+



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FOUNDATION

BAHLER FAMILY
FOUNDATION



NEXTGEAR
CAPITAL

Panera
BREAD®



Riley Children's Health
Indiana University Health



LEADER \$10,000 - \$19,999

ALLEGION™

BRIGHAM FAMILY
FOUNDATION



DR. DANE & MARY LOUISE MILLER
FOUNDATION



INDIANA
Members Credit Union



Safelite AutoGlass
FOUNDATION



URSA MINOR FUND
A FUND OF CICF

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

BENEFACTOR \$7,500 - \$9,999

Alpha Delta Pi - Beta Alpha Chapter • Barnes & Thornburg LLP • Daviess County Relief Sale
Frenzel Family Charitable Trust • HydroMassage • Prairie Farms Dairy, Inc.

ADVOCATE \$5,000 - \$7,499

Alpha Delta Pi Foundation, Inc. • Brave Hoods • Clarence E. and Inez R. Custer Foundation
Holiday World & Splashin' Safari • Indiana Chemical Trust • Indiana Farm Bureau Wings of Hope
Klosterman Baking Company • Mid America Beverage, Inc. • Mooresville High School • Niagra
Bottling • South Central IN Corvette Club • Terre Haute McDonald's Coop • Valeo Financial
Advisors • Vermeer Midwest • VMS Biomarketing • XL Industrial Services

FRIEND \$2,500 - \$4,999

Amazon • American Structurepoint, Inc. • ASI • Ayres Foundation • Bohlsen Group • Century
21 Scheetz Charitable Foundation • DELV Design • Dr Pepper/Seven Up • Duke Energy
Corporation • Elizabeth R. and Walter C. Nugent Foundation • Enterprise Title • ERMCO • Field
Family Foundation • First Merchants Bank • KONE, Inc. • The Mary E. Van Drew Charitable
Foundation, Inc. • Messer Construction • New Horizons Baking Company • Nicholas H. Noyes,
Jr., Memorial Foundation • Old Order Amish Church • Phi Beta Psi - Theta Alpha Gamma
Chapter • R Adams Roofing • Stoops Freightliner • Sweet Pea Foundation • TCC Gives • TouCan,
Inc. • United Natural Foods, Inc. • WOJO Restaurants • Worley Erhart-Graves Financial Advisors



OUR MCDONALD'S PARTNERSHIP

McDonald's® has been a proud mission partner of the Ronald McDonald House since its inception. Here in Indiana, your favorite local restaurants support RMHCCIN through Donation Boxes, "Round-Up for RMHC" (rounding your purchase to the next dollar), "Sleeves for Support" (sale of drink sleeves) and donations of two pennies per Happy Meal® sold, as well as hosting local charity events, and giving volunteer support. We are so grateful for our "first and forever partner."

\$220,000

From McDonald's
Donation Boxes

255

McDonald's
Restaurants in
Indiana that
directly support
RMHCCIN

\$61,500

From McDonald's *Round-Up
for RMHC* Campaign

\$131,500

From McDonald's *Penny
Per Happy Meal* Program

15 ANDY HARNER

INTERVIEWED BY THERESA DUNN



ew supporters of the Ronald McDonald House have witnessed more of the institution's positive effects than has Andy Harner, Riley Children's Health Clinical Manager for Social Work.

Andy first partnered with the House in 1989 while a social worker at Riley Hospital for Children (now operating as Riley Children's Health) where he worked in the hemophilia program, even helping families find shelter at the onset of the HIV-AIDS epidemic. In the 33 years since then, he's also witnessed the growth of the House, as well as the hospital, from very limited space to the expansions that now allow families to have their own quarters and patients to have their own rooms.

Andy's first responsibility was organizing housing for families who traveled far to get the care their children needed from the state's only comprehensive hemophilia program. The House did not discriminate, helping as many families as space would allow, and increasing that help as its capacity grew. That help wasn't limited to the confines of the House, he said.

One example of how the House went beyond beds to make a family feel at home stands out for him. An exchange student from Kyrgyzstan diagnosed with leukemia while studying in the US was admitted to Riley for treatment. His mother traveled to be with him and stayed at the House for a year while the student underwent intensive treatment. Often in pain, and no doubt frightened, the boy sought comfort in foods from his home country. The House staff drove the boy's mother to a Russian grocery store every week so she could get the items she needed to make his favorite meals.

"The House is a special place because of the staff and volunteers who think nothing of going that extra distance to bring comfort, to listen and to respond to needs expressed and implied," he said. He continued, "It's more than shelter. It's a friendly smile, a warm meal, a comfortable bed, and a place to reconnect with your family and yourself."

Just as the House team's support isn't limited by the confines of the structure and grounds, the sense of community that permeates the organization can't be contained. In his years of work and observation, Andy has seen countless families make connections with other families staying at the House that last long after the hospitalizations end. "Some of these connections are life-long," he said. "And they would never have been made without the Ronald McDonald House and all that it offers."





16 NICK & JAMI KASPRZYK

INTERVIEWED BY AMANDA CAMPBELL



McDonald's Owner/ Operators Nick and Jami Kasprzyk support the House with fundraising efforts at their nine restaurants in the Terre Haute area, including Round Up for RMHC and giving a penny to the House with each Happy Meal® sold.

Jami also volunteers her time and serves on the House Board of Directors.

"My favorite event is our annual board dinner. As we serve the meal, we get to hear personal stories and see first-hand just how much the House impacts these families, who are going through the most difficult time in their life."

ROUND-UP for RMHC Central IN

An easy way to give!

Ask how to "Round-Up" your total to the nearest dollar and help RMHC families at local participating McDonalds.



BENEFITING



WELCOME TO THE TEAM!



KAREN DOE

Director of Operations

With a master's degree from Michigan State, Karen has spent the last 16 years serving in multiple capacities with the YMCA of Greater Indianapolis. In her many roles, she helped grow revenue, influence best practices, served on the association diversity and inclusion team, and improved employee and guest experiences.

Karen and her wife Elaine live on the near northwest side of Indianapolis with their dog Jerry, a rescued yorkie-poo. Karen loves being outside, running, biking, and spending time with family and friends.



NICKIE CORNETT

Database Administrator

A native Hoosier, Nickie understands the challenges faced by families with chronically ill children, having a little brother who was a Riley patient. As a teenager, Nickie also collected pop tabs for RMHC. Now, she is delighted to serve the mission using her data management skills. In her free time, Nickie can be found volunteering in community theater, training dogs and handlers for Paws & Think, and spending time with her family and beloved pets.



TOP TEN WISH LIST

Thanks to generous donors like you, thousands of families that stay at our House have access to free snack foods, cleaning supplies, toiletry items and more. We've listed our top 10 most used items here, but a full list can be found online at www.rmhccin.org/wishlist. If you are able to help donate the items on our list, we ask that you consider having them shipped directly to our Limestone House at **435 Limestone St. Indianapolis, IN**. In-person deliveries are still welcomed between the hours of 9:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

1. All Purpose Spray Cleaner
(Multi-Surface)
2. Liquid Laundry Detergent
3. Deodorant
4. Dish Soap
5. Disposable Menstrual Products
6. Hair Brushes
7. Individual Sized Snacks
8. Microwaveable To-Go Containers
9. New Cookware
10. Disposable Surgical Masks
(Adult & Child Sizes)

17 SHIRLEY WEESNER

INTERVIEWED BY MARY KLEIMAN



Shirley Weesner learned of the Ronald McDonald House in 1985, when her 15-year-old daughter, Sherry, was diagnosed with a brain tumor.

Sherry's doctor told the Cambridge City, Indiana family about the House and helped them get a room. Sherry's treatments did not always require her to stay at Riley Children's Health full-time, and she spent many nights with her mom, where she fell in love with the House and its volunteers.

Shirley loved to cook, and one day former House Director Lona Damron asked if she would like to cook occasionally for the families. For several years, Shirley and Sherry would travel the one-hour trip from their Wayne County home to cook one or two Saturdays a month for the families and the volunteers. They also participated in activities to raise funds for the House, including making and selling t-shirts, bracelets, dolls, baskets, and other craft items at various craft fairs and other events around central and eastern Indiana.

Shirley says the House is special to her because it is a *home away from home* where they were welcomed and made comfortable. Shirley says that she and Sherry made lots of friends while staying there and Sherry was always more comfortable when she could stay at the House and not in the hospital.



▲ Sherry Weesner (L) and mom Shirley (R).



▲ Sherry hangs out with Ronald McDonald.

**“When I think of
Ronald McDonald
House, I think of a safe
place to be with family
and friends.”**



18 MARGE BORGMAN

INTERVIEWED BY JUDY MONNIER & ADAM LOWE

In 1987, Marge Borgman's husband, Roy, was planning to retire from *The Indianapolis Star*. They both wanted to spend their newly found free time volunteering, but they didn't know where.

Marge had heard about the Ronald McDonald House through her sorority, Tri Kappa.

"I suggested the Ronald McDonald House. Roy said he'd go but probably wouldn't like it," she said. "He immediately fell in love with it. Even before he retired, we started working at the House."

During their early years, they would play Santa Claus and Mrs. Claus at Christmas.

"It was a great part of our lives," she said. She added at that time, it was common for volunteers to speak to school assemblies and organizations about the House. The pair were a fixture at the House and shared countless hours meeting new families, listening to their stories, and finding common connections.

"He and I would walk in together, and leave together, and that was it!" Marge said.

Roy passed away in 2018. In their long tenure, the Borgmans saw the House and its full-time staff grow. What hasn't changed is "the love of children," she said. Her secret to being an effective volunteer: being genuinely concerned for families and to understand, like, and believe in what you're doing.

Volunteering at the House has created lifelong bonds. Marge and founder Judy Monnier remain the best of friends. Marge regularly visits with other founders and McDonald's Owner/Operators.

The best thing about the Borgmans' volunteer experience is "all the friends we've had; those that are still around and those that aren't," she said. "There's something holding us together, and it's love for the House."



▲ Roy and Marge Borgman as Santa and Mrs. Claus.



19 JEANNE WHITE-GINDER

INTERVIEWED BY ADAM LOWE & KARIN OGDEN

Visitors to The Children's Museum of Indianapolis can learn about *The Power of Children* by stepping into the shoes of four extraordinary young people who stoically fought against hate and discrimination, and in doing so, changed the world. Their names: Anne Frank, Ruby Bridges, Malala Yousafzi, and Indiana's own, Ryan White.

The Ronald McDonald House has a special connection to Ryan, who continues to have a profound effect on how the world views AIDS-HIV and its patients.

To understand Ryan's impact, we must revisit the 1980s. The Centers for Disease Control reported the first cases of what would become known as AIDS, in 1981. The HIV virus, which causes the disease, was new, spreading fast and deadly, primarily among gay men and intravenous drug

users. Nearly 1,500 cases had occurred in the U.S., 558 of them resulting in death, but it wasn't until May 1983 that the disease was acknowledged as an epidemic the federal government would fight.

Much like with the COVID-19 virus in modern days, as reports of the new disease grew, so did misinformation, paranoia, discrimination and even violence. Many saw HIV/AIDS as divine retribution. Even some medical professionals were hesitant to treat patients.

Against this backdrop came Ryan White, a quintessential 1980s small-town kid with an endearing smile. He liked G.I. Joe, skateboarding and Michael Jackson. He was also born with hemophilia A, a blood system disorder that prevents blood from clotting and can cause internal bleeding and organ damage. Ryan was treated with Factor VIII

blood injections sourced from anonymous blood donors.

Because the virus that causes AIDS was new, there were no screening protocols to detect it, and it didn't take long for blood harboring HIV to be administered to hemophilia patients, including Ryan. On December 6, 1984, 10 days after his 13th birthday, Ryan was transported from Kokomo, Indiana, to Riley Children's Health with respiratory distress. The next day, he was diagnosed as HIV positive and given six months to live.

Ryan's mom Jeanne, and his 11-year-old sister Andrea, traveled to Indianapolis to be with him and slept in the waiting room outside the intensive care unit for several days. On Christmas Eve, a Riley Children's social worker told Jeanne there was room available at the Ronald McDonald House. Few other opportunities were open to the Whites due to fear of AIDS and HIV.

Arriving at the House, Jeanne remembers the huge poinsettia tree that filled the lobby and

almost reached the ceiling. "It was beautiful; the biggest I'd ever seen." The team at the House had learned that the White's home had been burglarized just days before, leaving the family with nothing for Christmas.

"The team at the House had Christmas for the kids, for Ryan and Andrea both. I do not know how they found so many presents, but they did. It was neat," Jeanne said.

Jeanne's parents joined them at the House for a few nights so the family could celebrate the holidays together. Jeanne still remembers how welcoming the staff and guests were.

"In January, Ryan was allowed to have a visitor's pass, and he would come over to the House for a while and then go back to the hospital. That staff was always so wonderful. The families were very warm and friendly. They knew the reason we were there, and even if the diagnosis was different, they were in similar situations," she said.

Most families who stay at the House are just "everyday families," Jeanne said, adding that they share a common experience beyond having a child in the hospital – the tremendous financial toll it can take on a family.

"But I found everything I needed at the Ronald McDonald House," she said. "The House manager was always asking 'do you need anything?' I was extremely fortunate. I could focus on Ryan. If you were thirsty, you could get something to drink. You did not have to worry about finding a vending machine. The first week at the hospital Andrea and I both lived off vending machines. People at the House would cook meals and leave them out to share. They would leave signs on the refrigerator welcoming you to take anything you wanted."

Being Close Matters

"Everyone said I was so strong, but really it was Ryan," Jeanne said. "It is so hard to say, but I think kids are stronger than their parents, if they know their parents are always going to be there. That's one thing Ryan always knew: that no matter what, Mom was always going to be there. It's so important for a sick child to know that mom and dad are close by. If they are needed, they can be right there."

Outside the House, the world was not so welcoming.



▲ Jeanne White-Ginder with her son, Ryan White. Photo courtesy of The Children's Museum of Indianapolis.

When Ryan recovered sufficiently to return to school, he was refused admittance. School officials feared the disease would spread to other children by casual contact like using public restrooms or even handling the newspapers Ryan had delivered prior to his illness. Other children taunted him, and grocery store cashiers refused to touch Jeanne's hands when making change.

As Ryan attended school by listening in via telephone, Jeanne filed a lawsuit protesting the decision. Their battle for Ryan to go back to school served as a national rallying cry for establishing fair treatment of individuals with HIV/AIDS and started an educational movement confronting myths and misinformation. All Ryan really wanted was just to be a normal kid. By being himself and maintaining a positive attitude as he told his story, Ryan helped turn hysteria and fear into compassion. Celebrities and world leaders befriended the White family. Elton John remains a close friend to Jeanne.

Ryan also proved his doctors wrong, living five years longer than predicted. He passed away in 1990 at 18, just before he would have graduated high school. Later that year, Congress passed the Ryan White Comprehensive AIDS Resources Emergency (CARE) Act, the largest federally funded program in the U.S. for people living with HIV/AIDS.



20 BETH JOHNSON

INTERVIEWED BY KARIN OGDEN

Leader to Leader with Karin Ogden and Beth Johnson, First Executive Director of RMHCCIN

You served the House as the very first Executive Director. What is an accomplishment that you are most proud of during your years of leadership?

"I started with the Ronald McDonald House in August of 1990, not long after the opening of the south wing expansion that more than doubled the size of the original House. Of note is that we were the largest Ronald McDonald House in the world at that point. By then the enthusiastic and dedicated board of directors had guided the organization from the idea stage through the start-up stage and into a very fast growth spurt. I am most proud to have been given the opportunity to help guide this important mission through that growth and into long-term maturity to assure organizational stability. This consisted of establishing processes and procedures for daily operations, financial

processes including budgeting and fundraising, as well as the staffing and volunteer infrastructure necessary for a mature and stable organization. In addition, we were able to expand our mission through the establishment of the location inside of Riley Hospital. Since leaving, I am proud that the organization has continued the growth and renewal of its mission under new and fresh leadership."

What was an experience at the House you will never forget?

"An experience I never got tired of was chatting with parents in the kitchen over a cup of coffee and learning their stories. How they thought their child was experiencing a serious bout of the flu that turned out to be cancer. How they took turns sleeping in their car at night to be close by, all the while hoping a room would open for them at the

Ronald McDonald House. How they often had to endure the roller coaster ride of the ups and downs of their child's illness. How happy they were on that day when they all finally got to go home. And, unfortunately how devastating it was when they went home to bury their child. The strength and resilience I witnessed on a day-to-day basis was life changing."

What are you hopeful that the House accomplishes in the next 40 years?

"I hope we continue to find new ways to meet the needs of families of ill and injured children. The recent opening of the new Ronald McDonald Family Room in the Maternity Tower, the reconfiguration of the existing Ronald McDonald Family Room on the first floor of Riley and the addition of Meals that Heal are all wonderful additions. I grew up as a sibling of a seriously disabled brother, so the development of services geared toward the needs of patient siblings is something I would like to see. And of course, for as long as I have been involved, the demand for lodging at Ronald McDonald House has far surpassed capacity. I hope that one day soon we will be building a bigger and better House to serve the need. And when we do, I hope to be right there supporting the effort as a volunteer and donor."

How would you finish this statement: When I think of the Ronald McDonald House...

"I think of the love, dedication, and support of the many volunteers, without whom it could not exist."

Beth Johnson served as the Executive Director of RMHCCIN from 1990-2014, then as the Chief Operating Officer from 2014-2017.

LETTER FROM OUR CEO

I write today celebrating summer and the exciting things happening at Ronald McDonald House Charities of Central Indiana (RMHCCIN). Instead of digging into sandy beaches, we are digging into the archives of RMHCCIN history. Instead of relaxing into a slower pace, we are moving full steam ahead.

We have returned to serving families at 100% capacity at the Ronald McDonald House on Limestone Street. In summer, we typically see more children around the House and this year is not an exception. It is great to see kids getting a chance to feel at home playing in our game room, on the playground, and with our House dog Mac.

Additionally, our Ronald McDonald Family Rooms continue to serve more families. When we opened our First Floor Family Room in Riley Children's Health in November 2021, we provided 333 meals that month. This past June, we served more than 2,000! What that number really means is that we fed more hungry moms, dads and weary caregivers that didn't have to find lunch in a vending machine or make important care decisions for their little one on an empty stomach.

We've enjoyed our trips into the archives and journeys down memory lane, capturing stories from the past. Meeting the individuals that laid RMHCCIN's firm foundation has been an honor. I have loved the chance to comb through old photos and articles in the process. We'll be sharing more stories of our 40-year history in our upcoming fall/winter issue of *Heart & Hearth*.

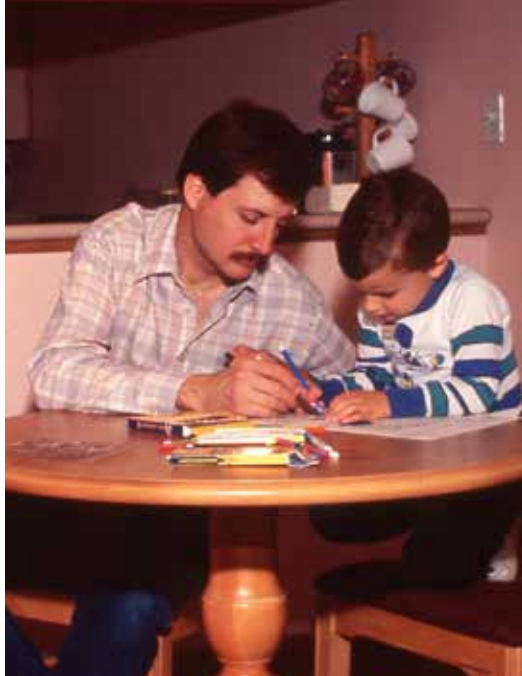
Unfortunately, though, summer doesn't last forever. As days get shorter, school starts and summer ends, I look forward to fall knowing we are just a few months away from October 14 and our official 40th Anniversary. Since last year, we have been planning, researching, and reconnecting in preparation for this special occasion. While so much has changed in the past four decades, so much about RMHCCIN remains the same. We provide families with a place to heal, rest, and find peace. We know we couldn't do it without you! Thank you for your continued love and support.

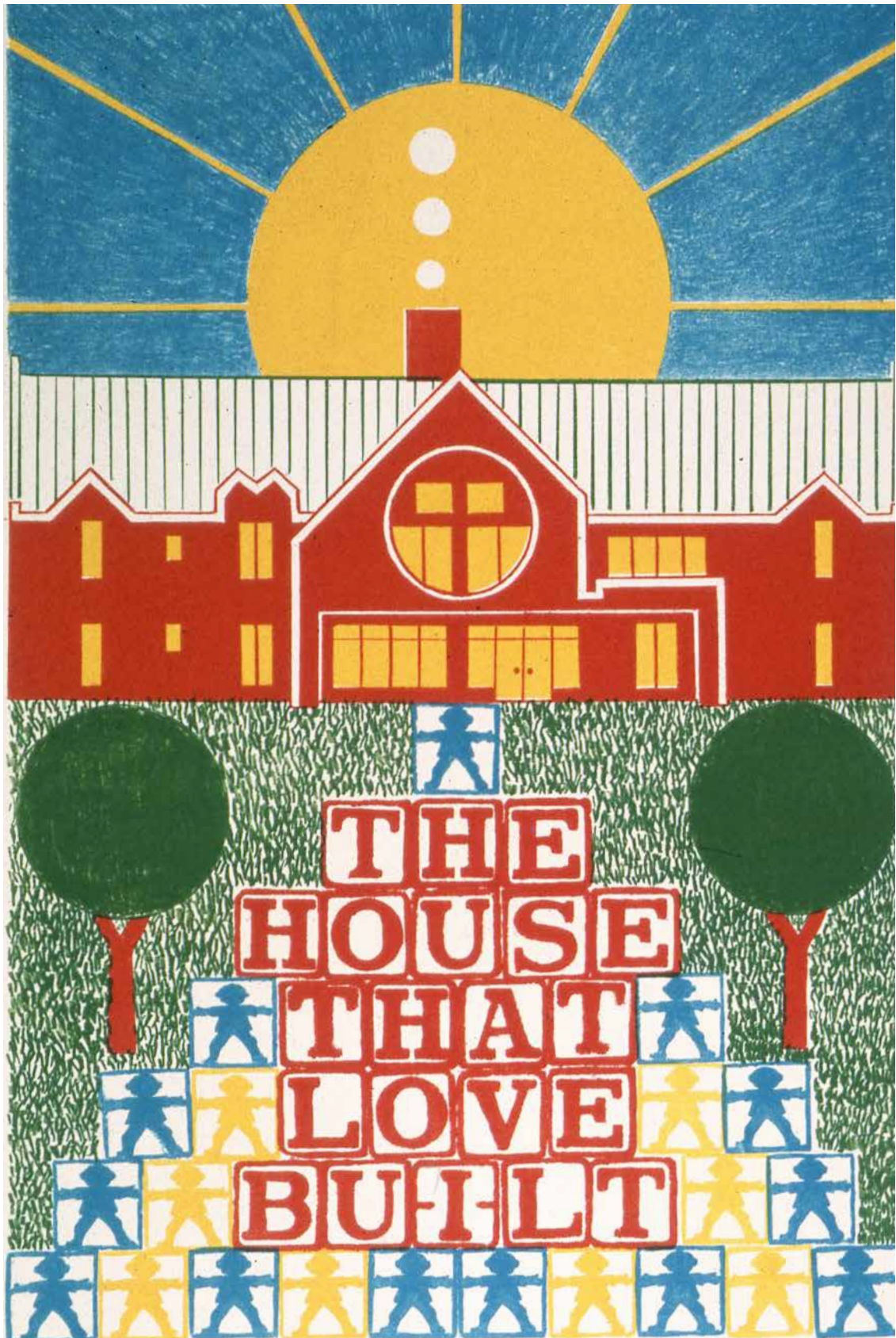
Wishing you find something to celebrate this summer before the first leaf falls.



Karin Ogden

KARIN OGDEN
Chief Executive Officer





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JOIN US IN CELEBRATION & **MAKE A GIFT OF SUPPORT**

Please consider making a gift to honor our anniversary that will impact families like the Santiagos today and into the next 40 years.



The House has become our home – the staff, volunteers and other families are our family. Thank you to the donors and partners who help keep the House open for the families. We are so thankful to be a part of the RMH family.”

-April Santiago



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