



Ronald McDonald  
House Charities®  
of Connecticut &  
Western Massachusetts

# From the Heart

*Stories of how you keep families together when it matters most*

Fall 2021





## Reflections of Gratitude

We've reached the time of year when summer heat gives way to crisp autumn air and colorful falling leaves. Much like the seasons, our Ronald McDonald House programs have changed over the last 18 months.

One year ago, we were able to slowly increase care for children and families in RMH Connecticut and RMH Springfield again. Today, our Houses are booming with the laughter and voices of children and families. We welcomed the DeFelice Family at various stages of their journey; first mom and dad joined us, then baby Sam, and finally, baby Charlie as they were all able to leave for home.

Our Guest Chef Meal Program has returned, evolving from exclusively catered meals to including small groups of volunteers cooking for our guests in each House. We will continue this hybrid approach to ensuring nutritious and safe family meals for the upcoming months. Fundraising events have returned slowly and cautiously, with each step carefully planned for the safety of attendees, staff, and volunteers while raising critical funds to support our mission.

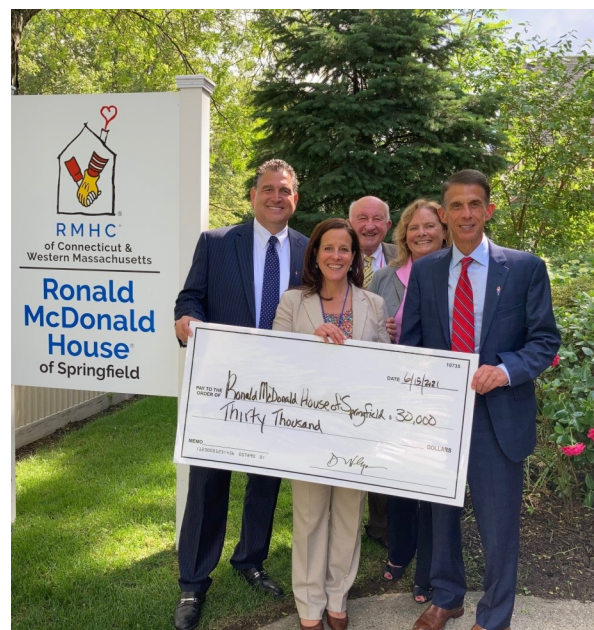
Our greatest achievement during this 18-month evolution was the completion of RMH Springfield's Lower Level. While a formal unveiling and celebration is on hold for now, we are thrilled to share the final phase of our Room Makeover Project in this issue. We have immense gratitude for the special donors who made it happen.

Thank you for all you do to support the children and families of Ronald McDonald House Charities of Connecticut and Western Massachusetts. No matter where our journey takes us, your support, compassion and generosity will continue to impact families every step of the way. As long as they need us, we need you!

With gratitude,



Michelle D'Amore, Executive Director



## Holiday Giving Challenge

November 1 –  
December 31, 2021



Gifts from donors who  
increase their last gift  
will be **DOUBLED!**



Gifts from first time donors  
will be **TRIPLED!**

\*Donations will be matched up to \$15,000

# The DeFelice Family

When Bob and Kate found out they were expecting twins, they were shocked and excited. Kate had a challenging pregnancy and was ultimately referred to a specialist. One of the very first resources her care team mentioned was the possibility of staying at the Ronald McDonald House while their identical twins were cared for in the NICU. Commuting almost an hour each way to visit their sons daily did not seem like the best option while Kate recovered, so they found themselves experiencing the magic of the Ronald McDonald House first-hand.

"When we arrived at the House, we were greeted by welcoming staff, a calm and comforting environment, and a sense that we were in the right place. Even during COVID, the House was warm and friendly. It was so nice to be able to cook a warm meal, do laundry for the babies, and relax, knowing that you are just a crosswalk away from the NICU.

RMH was instrumental in helping to make our NICU experience less stressful by allowing us to spend more time with our boys and less time in the car. If it weren't for the Ronald McDonald House we would not have been able to be together as a new family. When Bob's paternity leave ended, he was able to work from the House while I spent time at the NICU, something I would not have been able to do otherwise as I was recovering from my c-section and could not make the hour-long drive by myself. We loved the convenience of having a full kitchen on site so we could prepare meals and rely less on getting takeout. The fact that we were able to prepare healthy meals when it worked for our schedule made a world of difference, not only in our ability to maximize our time with the boys in the NICU, but also for my overall recovery.

## RMH gave us the gift of being able to be a brand-new family.

Because of the House, we could be actively involved in the early care of our boys. We were able to build stronger relationships with our clinical team and bond with our little ones from the very first day. The NICU experience is stressful, so having the opportunity to be close by our babies and communicate openly with their care team is one of the greatest gifts a family could receive. Thanks to the Ronald McDonald House, a less than ideal situation was made so much more manageable.

On the surface, RMH is a home away from home for families who have a child undergoing medical care. In reality, it is so much more than that. The House is comfort, offering families peace of mind knowing they are just a short distance from their child. The House is the family you never necessarily wanted but are so glad you have, sharing laughs, warmth, and empathy throughout a difficult time. The House is strength, providing the opportunity to recharge and the resources to keep families focused on recovery."



Bob and Kate stayed 32 consecutive nights plus additional stays when the boys were having procedures or needed testing. Sam and Charlie were in the NICU for a total of 36 and 76 days.



# Donor Spotlight - Gary Rome Auto Group

Gary Rome is the President and CEO of Gary Rome Auto Group, consisting of Gary Rome Hyundai and Gary Rome Kia. He has been an entrepreneur since the early '80s and worked at his father's car dealerships prior. Gary has built Gary Rome Hyundai into one of the largest Hyundai Dealerships in the country! Not only is Gary a businessperson, he is a community philanthropist.

Gary formed a relationship with Ronald McDonald House of Springfield in 2019 when talks of bringing Trees of Hope to the Springfield area started taking shape. He embraced the idea and quickly recommended using his Gary Rome Hyundai showroom in Holyoke as the viewing platform. Together, plans to launch the event began and will come to fruition this November.




During this time, Gary and his employees found different ways to ensure RMH of Springfield was well cared for and the families were always top of mind. They helped provide essential items during the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure the families could comfortably and safely prepare food in their rooms through donations of microwaves and mini refrigerators. Staff held collections and purchased storage containers, plastic ware and utensils along with daily essentials to help families adjust to the new normal.

As our partnership with Gary and his employees continues, we look forward to the Inaugural Trees of Hope to be held November 6- 19 at his Hyundai dealership in Holyoke with a first year goal of raising \$80,000. It will be a celebration of the hard work and passion of Gary Rome Auto Group, the community at large, the mission of RMH of Springfield and the splendor of the season.

*We are very fortunate to have Gary Rome involved with the Ronald McDonald House of Springfield. In addition to his work with RMH of Springfield, Gary supports causes such as breast cancer research, autism awareness, and children's literacy.*

**To learn more about how your company can support the  
Ronald McDonald House Charities of Connecticut & Western Massachusetts,  
contact Dick Popilowski, Chief Development Officer,  
[rpopilowski@rmhc-ctma.org](mailto:rpopilowski@rmhc-ctma.org) or 203-777-5683.**





Announcing the Inaugural  
Ronald McDonald House of Springfield

# Trees of Hope

NOVEMBER 6 - 19, 2021

150 WHITING FARMS RD, HOLYOKE, MA

PRESENTED BY

**GARY ROME**  
**HYUNDAI**



32nd Annual

Ronald McDonald House of  
Connecticut

# Trees of Hope

December 4th - 12th, 2021

Maritime Center

555 Long Wharf Drive, New Haven, CT 06511





## Selfless Acts of Kindness



### Warm Meals from a Warm Heart

"I am passionate about keeping families together and especially helping families with children suffering from illness. Having a family member with a serious illness is difficult enough, but when that person is your child, the stress level can be extreme.

Therefore, I like to contribute to the RMH's mission by hopefully taking a 'load' off the families and bringing warm, healthy meals to the House once a month. I want the children and their families to know that they have support outside the walls of the House, and that they never have to go through difficult times alone."

-Stef Corsi-Travali

## A MEANINGFUL WAY TO SUPPORT RMHC CTMA GIFTS OF SECURITIES

Donating stock directly to the Ronald McDonald House Charities of Connecticut and Western Massachusetts is one of the most tax savvy ways to give.

Gifts of securities can work in your benefit when:

- ◇ your stocks have appreciated greatly since you purchased them.
- ◇ a surge in value of one of your holdings has thrown your portfolio off balance.
- ◇ you want to focus on other investment categories.
- ◇ you are looking to maximize your donation.

Donating stock that has appreciated instead of cash is a great way for you to give. By doing this, you are giving 20% more than if you sold the stock and gifted your earnings because you can avoid capital gains taxes. The maximum federal capital gains tax rate is 20% on long-term holdings.

You can deduct the full fair-market value of the stock you donated from your income taxes, up to the overall amount allowed by the IRS (in 2021, it is 100% of your adjusted gross income).

If you are interested in making a securities donation, please contact Dick Popilowski at [rpopilowski@rmhc-ctma.org](mailto:rpopilowski@rmhc-ctma.org) or 203-362-9820 for more information.



## Unveiling a Labor of LOVE

We are thrilled to announce that the lower level of RMH Springfield has been completely remodeled, bringing to a close the Room Makeover Project. Family spaces were beautifully reconfigured to allow for spacious and comfortable use. Our Board room was relocated and upgraded with electronics that allow staff and Boards to hold virtual meetings with ease. The most exciting addition to the lower level is the creation of the Family Resource Center.



Equipped with computers, printers and resources from community partners, this room enhances a family's ability to stay on top of their child's treatment as well as day-to-day life back home. Parents can find a quiet space to connect with their jobs, insurance companies, and handle all business needs. The Resource Center also allows for research on their child's condition, connecting with loved ones far away and educational tools such as language lessons.

RMH Springfield continues to make strides in increasing resources and programming for families that call us home. After 30 years of supporting families, it is fitting the tradition continues with this beautiful addition to the House.

Special thanks to our  
donors whose passion  
and generosity  
transformed this idea  
into reality



Estate of Gerald & Estelle Landry, The Young Family, Smith & Wesson, The Beveridge Foundation, Liberty Bank, Bob Langevin, HAI Architecture, Houle Construction, Kiwanis Club of Springfield, La Z Boy Furniture, and the Junior League of Springfield.





**Ronald McDonald  
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 **DONATE**

Did you know a gift of just \$15 covers  
the cost of a family's one night stay?  
Visit our website to donate today!

[rmhc-ctma.org](http://rmhc-ctma.org)

# Little by little, we can do a lot!

There are 3 great ways to give to RMHC families when  
visiting a McDonald's restaurant:

Donation Boxes  
Round-Up for RMHC  
Fixed Donation of \$1

Small change = BIG impact!

Learn more at your local McDonald's.

