



Ronald McDonald
House Charities
Oregon & Southwest Washington

SUMMER / FALL 2017

KEEPING FAMILIES CLOSE

Life inside Oregon's Ronald McDonald Houses

A COURAGEOUS TEEN, A LOVING GRANDMOTHER

Far from Home, a Family Draws Closer

Kierann Bailey was just 17 when her doctors in Anchorage, Alaska, discovered she had chronic myeloid leukemia. After two years of treatments, they recommended that she fly to Portland for chemotherapy and a stem cell transplant at Doernbecher Children's Hospital.

Now 19, Kierann and her grandmother, Martina, have been guests at Portland's Westside Ronald McDonald House for ten weeks. Her parents and younger brother, Caleb, who provided her transplant, have flown down for extended visits; Martina has stayed for the duration.

"It's hard to be away from my friends," Kierann says. "Also, because of my treatment, I can't be around a lot of people; I can't eat certain foods. It feels entrapping."

For the Baileys, long-term housing for their child was a must. "If Ronald McDonald House hadn't come through, we'd have had to try to find an apartment near the hospital," Kierann says. "We'd have needed to buy a car and sell it when we left."

Kierann says the House has been much

more than just a place to stay: She's been driven to the Japanese Garden and enjoyed a pair of OMSI passes; her grandmother loves the weekly grocery store shuttle: "An hour to get away means a lot," she says.



For the Baileys, being together physically has helped them draw closer as a family. "I think my diagnosis really opened our eyes," Kierann says. "I realize how much they love me, and being able to stay in the House together has strengthened that love."

Kierann also believes her situation has made her realize how generous people are — and how willing to help. "Staying at a Ronald McDonald House shows me that people are kind. It sounds cheesy, I know, but people are good. It's been humbling to see that."

Her grandmother agrees. "Staying with Kierann has been painful, because she's so sick and I've invested a lot in her life. But when she asked me to come, I came. I'm glad I did, because being here has changed my life."

AN EPIC BIRTHDAY BBQ BASH!

Celebrating the East House's 20th Birthday with a Fun-Packed Summer Party

On June 27, with the help of volunteers from Vital Life, a Marquis and Consonus Foundation, our Eastside Ronald McDonald House backyard transformed into party central, with kids, families, board members, and staff all gathered for our second annual Backyard BBQ. This year, however, there was something extra to celebrate: the East House's 20th Birthday!

The event was a blast: A jug band performed in front of the playhouse; Pirate Bob blew bubbles big enough to dance in; Cassie Fisher, our muralist, helped kids paint custom T-shirts.

And everyone loved the ponies, Rainbow and Jellybean!

After enjoying burgers and picnic fare provided by Portland Northeast Optimist Club, we sliced up a giant cake and gave away toys to every kid in attendance. It was a birthday party, after all: 20 years of keeping families close at our flagship East House.

One little guy, with cake on his face and arms loaded with loot, was heard to exclaim: "I hope they do this every year!" To which we say: We agree!



EXPANDING OUR COMPASSION

Our Hospitality Cart Serves Families *Inside* the Hospital

This spring, in partnership with Randall Children's Hospital at Legacy Emanuel, we launched a new program that extends our mission beyond the walls of our three Oregon Ronald McDonald Houses.

The idea is simple: Families who spend hours or days at a child's hospital bedside often lack the kind of loving support and basic needs we provide. Stocked with hot drinks for adults and snacks and toys for kids, our Hospitality Cart moves between Randall's neonatal and pediatric acute-care floors. It's staffed by volunteers, and everything on it — from coffee to coloring books — is free.

Besides bringing comfort and support to kids and adults, our Hospitality Cart is a conversation-starter, spreading the word about who we are, what we do, and how Ronald McDonald Houses help families in need. The new cart has already served more than 2,300 children and family members, and we're making plans to roll it into other hospitals across the state!

If you're interested in donating items or volunteering for the Hospitality Cart, go to rmhcoregon.org/hospitality-cart.



“A LIFE-CHANGING EXPERIENCE”

After 111 Nights at our East House, One Family is Committed to Giving Back

Arriving from Bend, Oregon, last October, the Burrus family stayed in our East House while their daughter, Anika, was in treatment in Portland. “We walked through the door a family in crisis,” Anika’s mom, Anna, recalls. “We were overwhelmed and in shock.”

Yet almost immediately, the Burruses found the House to be a place of compassion, where staff and volunteers sought to provide comfort and support for families like theirs. “Everyone was so engaging,” Anika says. “It was amazing. For me, the House became the epitome of a ‘home away from home.’” They stayed for 111 nights.

Today, the Burruses continue to support Ronald McDonald House Charities. They joined our Stronger Together Walk, volunteered at the Central Oregon Open, and take part in local fundraisers. Anika volunteers weekly at our Bend House, where she hopes to give back some of the love and support she received. “Seeing both sides has given me a stronger sense of empathy,” she says. “I don’t want to forget that.”

For Anika’s mom, the Ronald McDonald House provided her stressed family some peace. “Staying there was a life-changing experience for us,” she says. “It restored our faith in humanity.”



CLOUDS OF INSPIRATION

Photographer Neal Johnson Captures the Silver Linings

Once a week, families staying in our Portland Ronald McDonald Houses have the chance to receive a free photo session with a professional photographer: Neal Johnson, a longtime Ronald McDonald House Charities volunteer with a talent for catching the joyful moments that can be rare for families with seriously ill children. Her photos provide our families a positive keepsake to remember a challenging time.

“Taking those photographs is the most inspirational thing I do every week,” Neal says. “I have so much respect for these kids and what they’re going through, and if I can make them a little happier or ease their family’s pain, it makes me happy, too.”

Last month, we unveiled our second beautiful ‘photo cloud’ — collections of Neal’s photographs — in the hall of our East House. The groupings of Neal’s images serve as a comforting reminder to families as they check into our Houses that even when they’re critically ill or injured, a child can find a reason to smile.

“When I photograph children at the Ronald McDonald House, I see so much joy in their faces, and love between them and their parents. I can’t tell you how fortunate I feel to be able to do that.”

“Children are meant to smile and laugh,” she adds, smiling herself. “No matter their circumstances, I want to capture

those moments and give them to the family.” We think she’s succeeding. Thank you, Neal!





Ronald McDonald House Charities®
Oregon & Southwest Washington
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SAVE THE DATES



HEARTS & HANDS GALA
Saturday, October 14, 2017
Oregon Convention Center, Portland, OR
rmhcoregon.org/gala



STRONGER TOGETHER WALK
Sunday, April 22, 2018
Bend | Eugene | Salem | Portland Metro
rmhcoregon.org/walk



CENTRAL OREGON OPEN
Thursday, June 7 – Friday, June 8, 2018
Eagle Crest Resort, Redmond, OR
rrmhcoregon.org/central-oregon-open



GOLF CLASSIC
July 2018
Pumpkin Ridge Golf Club, North Plains, OR
rmhcoregon.org/golf

FEELS LIKE HOME

Our New Food Drive is Up and Running!

Across our three Oregon Ronald McDonald Houses, we serve breakfast, lunch, and dinner to thousands of families with seriously ill children every year. In 2016, that meant more than 5,000 meals — and that's a lot of food! Our **Feels Like Home Food Drive**, which launched in early August, gives you, your friends, your company, and your civic group an opportunity to partner with Ronald McDonald House Charities to help provide meals for families at a time when normal life can be a struggle.

Whether you provide a full meal, supplement items for snacking, or help stock our grab-and-go station, every donation you make helps us cut our food costs. Please take a moment to learn more at rmhcoregon.org/food-drive, where you can view a full list of needed items.

We're excited about our new food drive program and hope you'll help us make it a big success!

DROP-OFF LOCATION

Portland Eastside Ronald McDonald House, 2620 N Commercial Ave., Portland, OR 97227

CONTACT

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