



KEEPING FAMILIES CLOSE

Life inside Oregon's Ronald McDonald Houses

THE BEST NEWS OF ALL

Music, Meals & More to Make a House Feel Like Home

William is a charismatic, energetic 6 year old who has been coming to stay with us at our Portland Ronald McDonald Houses since he was born. When William came into this world five weeks early and required monitoring in the OHSU Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, his family stayed with us so that they would not have to commute from Clatskanie, OR. **"It was a lifesaver to be able to visit William day and night,"** recalls his mother, Teresa. "My husband could stay in Clatskanie to work and help our older son, and I was literally in walking distance of my baby."

Two and a half years later, as a non-verbal toddler, doctors believed that William was on the autism spectrum. It was only after an accidental fall during a family visit to Portland, that a CT Scan revealed a cyst on William's brain. Fifteen days later, William's family returned to Portland for his brain surgery. "Following the surgery, almost all of the assumed autistic traits went away," Teresa shares. "And just two days later, and this is the best news of all, he said 'I love you, mama.'"

William continues to keep his doctors on their toes, so he and Teresa (and sometimes the rest of

the family) visit Portland often, clustering his appointments together and staying for 2–3 days, several times a year at our East Ronald McDonald House.

"We are so grateful for Ronald McDonald House! Everyone at the House respects each other, the families, and the kids, and even though it's a very open atmosphere, it's also private, which makes it a comfortable place to come home to," says Teresa. "And with late night appointments, it's so wonderful to come back to the House to find a warm meal waiting for us, thanks to the volunteers who come in to cook."

With so many visits, **William has come to feel that the House is indeed his "home away from home."** He lights up the room with his energy, his humor, and his boundless curiosity.



"Some of William's favorite things about the House are the Treasure Room ... it really makes him feel special. And the stuffed animals on the beds that he calls his 'new friends'. And on our most recent visit he got to experiment with instruments through MyMusicRX. Because of them we're now exploring music lessons for William!"

STRONGER TOGETHER 5K WALK, RUN & ROLL

Four Cities Strong Across Oregon and SW Washington

It's time to sign up for the 2017 Stronger Together 5K Walk, Run & Roll! This year the Stronger Together Walk takes place on Sunday, April 23rd. This family-friendly event brings together Ronald McDonald House sponsors, staff, volunteers, families and friends to support the thousands of families that stay in our Houses when their child is seriously ill and hospitalized.

Mark your calendar and bring your friends! Registration begins at 9AM and we start walking, running and rolling at 10AM across all cities: Bend, Salem, Eugene and Vancouver.

If you are unable to join us you can show your support by becoming a "virtual" walker and participating from afar!

Registration is \$25 for adults, \$10 for youth (ages 4-17), and free for children under 4. All participants receive a fun pair of red and white striped socks plus opportunities for additional fundraising prizes.

To sign up, visit www.rmhcoregon.org/walk. Or email walk@rmhcoregon.org for more information.



MyMusicRX

Joy Matters and #MusicHeals

MyMusicRx is the flagship "music medicine" program of the Children's Cancer Association. The program allows us to offer group and family jam sessions, live music, karaoke, and even music lessons to the children and guest families who have made our East Ronald McDonald House their home. This March we will celebrate **one year** of joyful and healing music through our partnership with this Portland based organization.

Every Tuesday and Thursday, MyMusicRx's trained music specialists can be found with a beautiful cart full of instruments in our East House Living Room – engaging the children and families with instruments and songs, filling our hallways with joyful sounds.

"MyMusicRx has been absolutely amazing for our families! We have loved watching our young guests dance to the music and our older guests learn to play instruments. The musicians are incredible and really have a way with kids," shares Lindsay Sage, Guest Services Manager, shown here singing along with former guest, Annika and MyMusicRX specialist, Chris.



CELEBRATING OUR NEW STATE-WIDE ORGANIZATION!

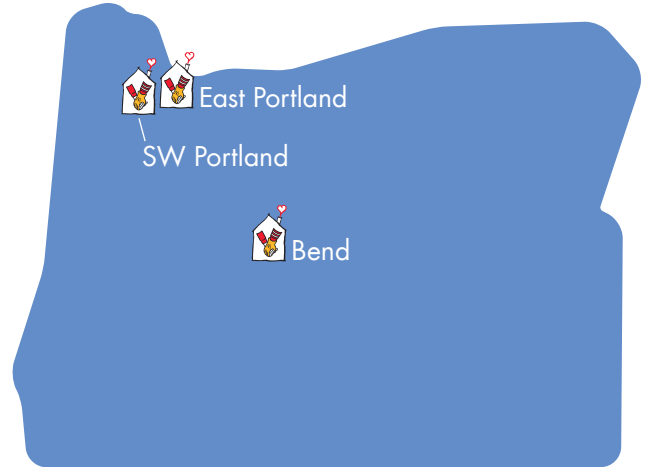
Three Houses Across Oregon and SW Washington

The Central Oregon Chapter of Ronald McDonald House Charities has joined forces with Ronald McDonald House Charities of Oregon and Southwest Washington to become a unified, statewide organization. With **three** beautiful Ronald McDonald Houses in Bend, East Portland, and SW Portland, our **33-year-old** non-profit organization can now offer a “home away from home” to as many as **56** seriously ill children and their families every night.

By joining forces across the state, we hope to reach and support more seriously ill children and families than ever before. In Bend, our beautiful **6-room** lodge style Ronald McDonald House will continue to benefit from hundreds of local volunteers and supporters while gaining access to new statewide partners and programs to deepen services and support for every family that comes to stay.

Our statewide organization continues to be governed by our Board of Trustees with strong new representation from Central Oregon as well as a newly formed local Bend Leadership

Board – working to expand awareness and support of our nearly **20-year-old** Bend Ronald McDonald House and engage more community partners, volunteers and donors than ever before.



PILING ON THE JOY!

Piles of Puppies Brings Comfort through Cuddles

Pile of Puppies has one critical mission: to bring joy to seriously ill children and their families by surrounding them with puppies! “POP was created to remind all children who have been given an extra physical challenge in their life that **there is always light within the darkness**. There is always joy even in the hardest times,” says founder Jennifer Thompson Trepanier.

Jennifer has visited the East and West Portland Houses **5 times** in 2016, bringing along Newfoundlands, Bernese Mountain Dogs, Labradors, and other responsibly-bred puppies from supportive breeders who believe in the mission of Pile of Puppies and Ronald McDonald House Charities. Puppy season is just around the corner, and we’re looking forward to more visits with Piles of Puppies in the spring!





**Ronald McDonald
House Charities®**

Oregon & Southwest Washington
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SAVE THE DATES

STRONGER TOGETHER 5K

Sunday, April 23, 2017

Bend | Eugene | Salem | Vancouver

rmhcoregon.org/walk

CENTRAL OREGON OPEN

Thursday, June 8 – Friday, June 9, 2017

Eagle Crest Resort, Redmond, OR

rmhcoregon.org/central-oregon-open

GOLF CLASSIC

Monday, July 17, 2017

Pumpkin Ridge Golf Club, North Plains, OR

rmhcoregon.org/golf

HEARTS & HANDS GALA

Saturday, October 14, 2017

Oregon Convention Center, Portland, OR

rmhcoregon.org/gala

MEALS FROM THE HEART

Feeding Our Families When It Matters Most

All three of our Ronald McDonald Houses offer beautiful kitchens where families can enjoy the comfort of a quick snack on the go, or a full meal that makes them feel right at home. The families who stay with us are so grateful for the volunteers who come in to cook, so that dinner is ready and waiting after a long day at the hospital.

Volunteers can sign up to cook dinner with a group or on their own, bake cookies and treats, prepare lunches, or even **Sponsor-A-Meal** by providing a financial donation. Visit us at rmhcoregon.org/meals or contact Maria Gargano at maria.gargano@rmhcoregon.org or **503-943-6673**.

