



Celebrating 40 Years

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RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE CHARITIES® OF CHICAGOLAND & NORTHWEST INDIANA IS “RAISING THE ROOF” IN CELEBRATION OF ITS 40th ANNIVERSARY

Nonprofit Calls on the Community to Rally Support for Families in Need Through Donations of Time, Skills or Fundraising

CHICAGO, Ill. (April 12, 2017) – For four decades, Ronald McDonald House Charities® of Chicagoland & Northwest Indiana (RMHC®-CNI) has been a haven for more than 100,000 families with hospitalized children. This year, in honor of its 40th anniversary, the organization is rolling out a new campaign called “Raise the Roof” to help further their mission of providing comfort, compassion and a sense of community for families facing the most critical moments of their child’s health. The celebrations officially kick off during RMHC®-CNI’s 40th Anniversary Gala Presented by Wintrust Bank on April 22, 2017.

The Gala, which is RMHC-CNI’s largest annual fundraising event, generates substantial monetary support needed to ensure the organization’s continued ability to “Raise the Roof” over the heads of families for years to come.

“Throughout the past 40 years, we have remained committed to supporting families and growing our programming to meet the needs of those traveling to Chicagoland to receive world-class medical care,” said Holly Buckendahl, CEO of RMHC-CNI. “Childhood illness will always exist and so we must remain committed to helping families be close to their children when they need life-saving medical treatment.”

With more than 41,000 volunteers in 2016 alone, RMHC-CNI is thrilled to announce hitting a major milestone — more than one million volunteer hours logged during its 40 years of service. This year RMHC®-CNI is challenging friends, family, supporters Chicagoans to help “Raise the Roof” even more, by donating time or money toward making an exponential impact on the communities of Chicago and Northwest Indiana.

“Our families continue to face incredibly complex medical situations and their needs continue to grow, said Buckendahl. “They are traveling further distances; their lengths of stays are longer and they face the financial challenges that are associated with that. Our volunteers and donors make it possible for us to continue to provide a space where families can focus on their child. We couldn’t be more grateful for the support we receive from our Chicagoland and Northwest Indiana communities, from our hospital partners, donors, volunteers and our dedicated full-time staff.”

Charlie Marino and Ed Baum, MD conceived the idea to open the first Ronald McDonald House in Chicago on Deming Place when Charlie's daughter Gage was receiving treatment at Children's Memorial. He saw first-hand the need for housing for families with sick children was critical. To help open the house, they rallied the support of the McDonald's Operators of Chicagoland and Northwest Indiana (MOCNI) and Bill Chunowitz, president at the time, to provide funding and welcome the Morrissey family as its first guests in 1977.

Over the past 40 years, RMHC-CNI has continued to grow as the need for providing comfort and care for families of children with complex medical issues continues. Today, RMHC-CNI has five Houses near Advocate Children's Hospital (Oak Lawn, IL), Lurie's Children's Hospital (Chicago, IL), Ronald McDonald Children's Hospital at Loyola University Medical Center (Hines, IL), University of Chicago Medicine Comer's Children's Hospital (Chicago, IL) and Northwestern Medicine Central DuPage Hospital (Winfield, IL). RMHC-CNI also includes three family rooms (located within Comer, Lurie and Edward Hospital), a Care Mobile which serves children in underserved Chicago neighborhoods, and a scholarship program for extraordinary area high school seniors who are committed to community service and academic excellence.

At this year's Gala, the original RMHC-CNI founding members of the first house will come together: Ed Baum, MD, former pediatric oncologist at Children's Memorial Hospital; Charlie Marino, father of a pediatric patient at Children's Memorial Hospital; Bill Chunowitz, former President of McDonald's Owner Operators of Chicagoland and Northwest Indiana (MOCNI); and the Morrissey family, the first guests at the Ronald McDonald House on Deming Place in Chicago.

"RMHC®-CNI is a leader and true partner with hospitals in providing family-centered care, meeting the needs of families traveling great distances to seek medical treatment," says Leah Harris, MD, Professor of Pediatrics, Feinberg School of Medicine, Northwestern University, and Chief of Critical Care at Lurie Children's Hospital, Chicago. "Those of us who train to take care of sick children do whatever we can to make a child well, but our partnership with RMHC-CNI takes care of the entire family. If we are committed to being an international medical destination, we rely on Ronald McDonald Houses to take care of the families from all over the world."

To keep costs low so that no family is ever turned away due to financial reasons, RMHC-CNI relies heavily on support of volunteers and donors. Since RMHC-CNI's founding, MOCNI has provided over \$30 million and remains the single largest corporate partner.

"Since its founding, the McDonald's Operators of Chicagoland and Northwest Indiana have been proud to be a partner and help positively impact the thousands of families this charity has touched," said John De Carrier, President of MOCNI. "We think of RMHC-CNI as our own charity. It's never a question that we are there to support RMHC-CNI."

To donate to RMHC-CNI, visit <http://m.rmhccni.org/donate/>. To learn more about becoming a volunteer, please visit <http://rmhccni.org/volunteer/> or call one of our five local Houses or Family Rooms.

To learn more about the Gala, please visit <http://rmhccni.org/gala/> or call to purchase tickets.

About Ronald McDonald House Charities® of Chicagoland and Northwest Indiana (RMHC-CNI)

RMHC-CNI is an independent not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization whose mission is to care for families of children with complex medical needs by providing a 'home away from home' while their child is being treated in the hospital. Each night, we keep 153 families close to the care and resources they need because of the comfort, compassion and community at five area Ronald McDonald Houses® and three Ronald McDonald Family Rooms®. Allowing families to stay close to their child in the hospital, not only supports the health and wellbeing of the child, but saves our families over \$10 million in hotel and food costs each year. We are located near [Advocate Children's Hospital](#), [Loyola University Medical Center](#), [University of Chicago Comer Children's Hospital](#), [Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago](#), [Edward Hospital in Naperville](#) and [Central DuPage Hospital](#). RMHC-CNI also operates a Ronald McDonald Care Mobile® which provides medical care to children in underserved areas as well as a Scholarship Program for local college students. To support RMHC-CNI's mission, visit any Chicagoland or Northwest Indiana McDonald's restaurant and drop your spare change in a donation box near the front register or in the drive thru. RMHC-CNI is an approved [BBB Accredited Business](#) and holds a 4-star rating by [Charity Navigator](#). For more information visit www.RonaldHouseChicago.org. Stay connected – [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#), [Instagram](#).

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