



Ronald McDonald  
House Charities®  
Greater Chattanooga

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# **Keeping Families Close®**

## **2024 Annual Report**

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## 2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Betsy Conroy**, Chairperson  
**Melanie Farrell**, Vice Chairperson  
**Mary Lynn Wilson**, Past Chairperson  
**Brad Moore**, Secretary  
**Tye Youngblood**, Treasurer

James Anderson  
John Critchfield  
Theresa Critchfield  
Melanie Farrell  
Dr. Laura Hill  
Jayne Holder  
Beth Painter  
Dr. Marcelo Rains  
Ashley Robins-Johnson  
Jimmy Scotchie  
Dr. Stephanie Stegall  
Tripp Stephens  
Tim Vita  
Nick vonWerssowetz  
Kara West  
Jeffery Wiese  
Jay Wilkinson  
Mary Lynn Wilson  
Tye Youngblood

# STAFF

**Estephania Acheson** | Director of Special Events  
**Karla Alvarez** | Environmental Associate  
**Casey Bean** | In House Wellness Navigator  
**Izabelle Bradley** | Director of Marketing and Communications  
**Dr. Michael Brown** | President & CEO  
**Leslie Bustos** | House to Home Wellness Navigator  
**Kristy Carlock** | Operations Relief Manager  
**Farin Cloyd** | Office Assistant  
**Tiffany Commons** | Chief Operating Officer  
**Ken Cook** | Chief Advancement Officer  
**Brad Dantzer** | Operations Relief Manager  
**A.J. Davis** | Chief Engagement and Volunteer Officer  
**Keshun Gentry** | McDonald's Engagement Officer  
**Louise Holland** | Operations Relief Manager  
**Cailen Jimenez** | Volunteer Coordinator  
**Susan Lemon** | Donor Database Specialist  
**Cindee McBride** | Director of Advancement  
**Melissa Milburn** | Kitchen Manager  
**Jannat Saeed** | Communications Specialist  
**Carla Sewell** | Chief Programs Officer  
**Garland Sherman** | Director of Facilities & Maintenance  
**Tiarika Taylor** | Operations Relief Manager  
**Alicia Thomas** | Environmental Associate  
**LaToya Walters** | Family Room Wellness Navigator  
**Tonya West** | Senior Director of House Operations  
**Candy Zavala** | Environmental Associate



## MISSION

To provide families with the care and resources they need when their child is sick and to support programs and services that directly improve the health and well-being of children.



**Ronald McDonald  
House Charities®**  
Greater Chattanooga



**Keeping families close®**

## Opening

Ronald McDonald House opened on November 18, 1990 with 14 bedrooms.

**1990**

## Family Room

The Ronald McDonald Family Room opens next door on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of Erlanger.

**1996**

## Room Additions

12 bedrooms are added and the House is renovated into a 26-bedroom facility.

**2000**

## Renovation

2 bedrooms are added turning the House into a 28-bedroom facility, and Hospitality À La Carte launches at Erlanger.

**2017**

## Program Expansion

In an effort to better serve families, House to Home and The Mindful Room are launched.

**2024**

# LETTER FROM PRESIDENT & CEO



***"I was a new mom that had just given birth to a child that literally had stopped growing inside of me and led to the doctors inducing labor. Her birth weight was only 5lbs."***

***"I didn't want to leave her – I told the doctors I'd sleep on the floor if possible – We were so fortunate that the Ronald McDonald House existed, I was able to be close to her."***

**-RMHC families**

Dear Supporters and Volunteers,

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to you, the invaluable supporters and volunteers of the Ronald McDonald House in Chattanooga as we celebrate 35th year. Your unwavering dedication and generosity have significantly empowered us to serve families with sick or critically ill children at an even deeper level. Because of your support, our organization has never been stronger in addressing food insecurity and pressing issues related to social determinants of health.

Over the past year, with the strategic guidance and support of our Board of Directors chaired by Betsy Conroy, we have made remarkable strides in expanding our services. Through our "House to Home" initiative, we have extended our reach to the Cleveland area, in partnership with the Y. This expansion enables us to serve even more families in need. Additionally, we have introduced Wellness Navigators in our Family Room, House, and Cleveland locations. These dedicated individuals provide essential guidance to families, helping them navigate through the unfamiliar and challenging terrain they face during the difficult journey of having a sick child.

As we continue to serve more families, it is imperative that we sustain our growth and expansion to meet the increasing demands of families with sick or critically ill children. Our mission-driven work would not be possible without your steadfast support and commitment.

Thank you for your continued dedication and for being an integral part of our mission. Together, we are making a profound difference in the lives of families during their times of greatest need.

With sincere appreciation,

**Michael Brown, Ph.D. SBS**  
**President & CEO**

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michael Brown".





# LETTER FROM CURRENT BOARD CHAIR



Dear Friends,

At Ronald McDonald House Charities of Greater Chattanooga, we often say our mission is to “keep families close”—but every day, I’m reminded that what happens inside our House is so much more than that. It’s not just about proximity to a hospital. It’s about compassion, dignity, and community at a time when families need it most.

This year, we are proud to celebrate 35 years of providing a home away from home for families with ill or injured children receiving treatment just across the street at Erlanger. For more than three decades, RMHC of Greater Chattanooga has been a constant source of comfort and stability, offering meals, lodging, and—perhaps most importantly—hope during some of life’s most difficult moments.

I’m incredibly grateful for our CEO, Dr. Mike Brown, whose leadership continues to inspire us all. His thoughtful stewardship honors our rich history while boldly guiding RMHC of Greater Chattanooga toward new heights. Alongside him, our dedicated board members work tirelessly—both strategically during board meetings and meaningfully at the committee level—to advance our mission and ensure a strong future for the families we serve.

As we look ahead, I’m excited to share that the future of RMHC includes supporting families in new ways and for longer through our Continuum of Care program. We know that the need doesn’t end when families leave our House. This initiative helps families connect with critical services once they return home—whether that’s occupational or physical therapy, follow-up medical care, or referrals to specialists. And we’re thinking beyond the child’s care alone—offering resources like family counseling and holistic support to help the entire family heal and thrive.

To our generous donors, selfless volunteers, dedicated staff, and hardworking board members: thank you. It is your unwavering support that transforms a temporary stay into something far more meaningful. Every smile, every meal, every donation helps make this House a true home—for today, and for the future.

With gratitude,



**Betsy Conroy**  
**2024-2026 Board Chair**

A handwritten signature of Betsy Conroy in blue ink.



**418**  
families served



**451**  
meals provided



**8,255**  
nights provided to families



**39,774**  
total number of bedside hours



**482**  
children cared for by RMHC



**136**  
nights being the longest stay

***Your support made a difference in 2024***







**418**

individual volunteers



**43**

volunteer groups



**176**

event volunteers



**101**

new volunteers



**575**

Adopt A Meal participants



**11,605**

volunteer hours

***Our volunteers made it happen in 2024***







[Learn More](#)



## MEET THE *Brown* FAMILY

When Audrea Brown was rushed to the hospital with dangerously high blood pressure, she thought she was just being cautious. Within hours, she was diagnosed with severe preeclampsia. “Congratulations, you’re having a baby today,” the doctor said, and in an instant, everything changed.

At just 32 weeks, baby Adler was born via emergency C-section. He was tiny and fragile, placed immediately in a bag to regulate his body temperature, and rushed to the NICU for critical care. Audrea, still recovering from the magnesium drip and surgery, wasn’t able to hold her son or even see him for more than 26 hours. **“Being ripped away from the child you carried — not even getting to touch him — was one of the hardest things I’ve ever experienced,”** she shared.

After spending one night in the hospital room, Ethan and Audrea were offered a place at the Ronald McDonald House.

**“We didn’t know what to expect,”** Ethan shared. **“But it was more than we imagined. It was warm and welcoming. The staff was amazing—one of them even moved us to another room because the AC was making a noise and she wanted us to rest.”** At the House, the Browns found a safe place just steps from their son.

Over the course of 38 nights, the Browns found stability in the little things: having a hot meal ready after a long day in the NICU, talking with other parents going through similar challenges, and knowing they could walk across the street to be with their son. **“It was a place where we could breathe,”** said Ethan. **“You don’t realize how much that matters.”**

***Hope365***

**\$150** is the value of a family’s night stay at the Ronald McDonald House.

[How can you help?](#)



The days were long, filled with medical updates, learning to be first-time parents in a NICU setting, and trying to keep faith that their baby boy would continue to grow stronger. But each small milestone Adler reached was celebrated, and the House gave his parents a space to heal, rest, and show up for him.

"The Ronald McDonald House made a huge difference for us," Audrea said. "It helped us be there for Adler every single day. It gave us the support we didn't know we would need."



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**"It's a House you never think you'll have to use, but when you do, it's a Home you never forget"**  
**-Ethan Brown**

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Thanks to the unwavering support from Ronald McDonald House Charities and the generous contributions of the community, Audrea and Ethan found peace in knowing they didn't have to endure exhausting daily drives to be with baby Adler. Embracing RMHC as their comforting sanctuary, the Brown family remained by their child's side in the hospital, grateful for the closeness it afforded them during a challenging time.

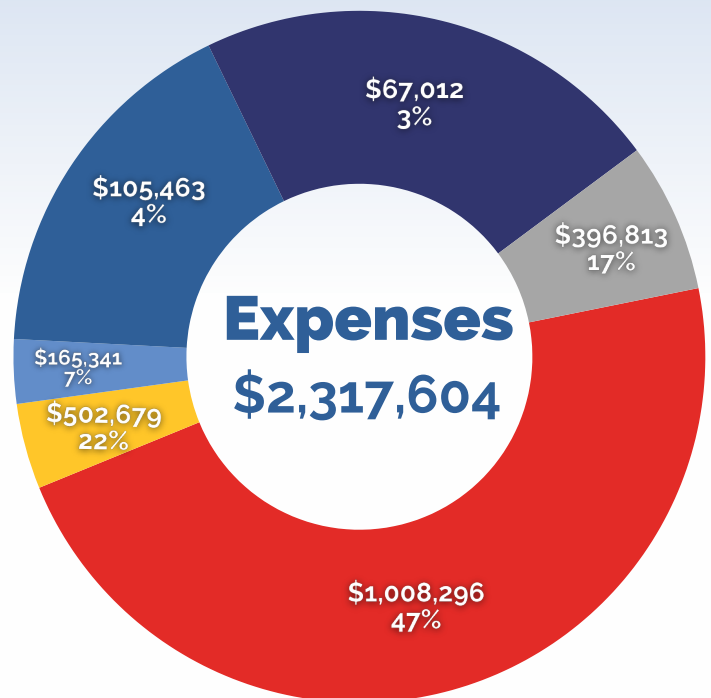
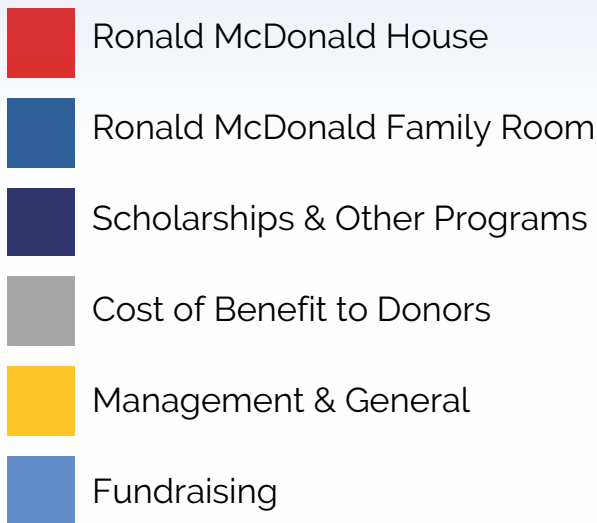
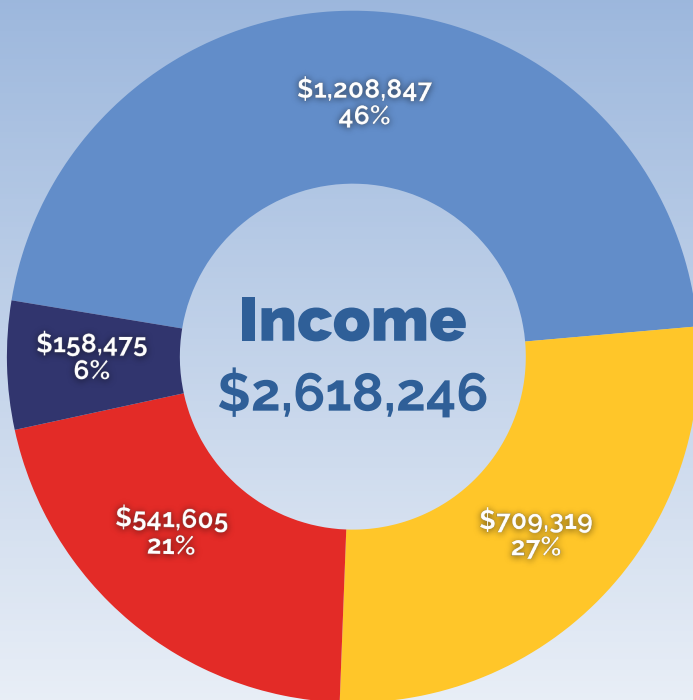


Because of the generosity from donors giving to our HOPE365 campaign, families like the Browns's find comfort and community in Ronald McDonald House Charities. To learn more about how your donation impacts RMHC families, head to [RMHCChattanooga.com](https://www.rmhcchattanooga.com).

# 2024 Financial Summary

**Net Assets December 31, 2024 - \$9,021,425**

**Net Assets December 31, 2025 - \$9,358,381**



Ronald McDonald House Charities of Greater Chattanooga is being audited by Smith + Howard, Certified Public Accountants, and a copy of the audited financial statements will be available upon request and published on the organization's public website [www.rmhcattanooga.com](http://www.rmhcattanooga.com). RMHC of Greater Chattanooga is a BBB Accredited Business.



# 2024 Fundraising Events



Run4Kids  
\$72,374



Golf Classic  
\$102,810



Wine Women and Shoes  
\$385,063



3rd Party Events  
\$77,271

## RMHC of Greater Chattanooga Scholars

Since 2002, RMHC has partnered with the Community Foundation of Greater Chattanooga to award scholarships to graduating high school seniors. These scholarships are generously funded by RMHC supporters and their foundations, including the Williams Family, the Amanda Holekamp Family, and the Mark Brooks Family Charitable Trust. It is a privilege to recognize exceptional students in Greater Chattanooga and the surrounding counties through these awards, honoring the contributions of these families. In 2024, 23 deserving students received scholarships.





# | Mission & Forever Partner

Since its establishment in 1974, the Ronald McDonald House has been McDonald's designated charitable organization. RMHC operates as a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation, with McDonald's serving as its primary corporate benefactor. In the Greater Chattanooga area, a consortium of 56 owner-operators ensures sustained support for families through RMHC of Greater Chattanooga. These operators are affiliated with the Greater Tennessee Valley Owner Operators Association (GTVOA).

In 2024, McDonald's contributed \$661,868.98, a 94% increase from 2023, to RMHC of Greater Chattanooga through initiatives such as Round Up for RMHC and targeted fundraising events. AJ Davis, Chief Engagement and Volunteer Officer, alongside Keshun Gentry, McDonald's Engagement Ambassador, annually visit each McDonald's location, collaborating closely with GTVOA to enhance Round Up participation and foster a strong connection between McDonald's employees and their enduring philanthropic commitment.

## A.J. DAVIS

Chief Community Engagement and Volunteer Officer  
[aj.davis@rmhchattanooga.com](mailto:aj.davis@rmhchattanooga.com)





# children's | Medical Partner

Hospital at Erlanger

RMHC of Greater Chattanooga owes its inception to the invaluable partnership and support provided by Erlanger Hospital. Ground was broken on the Ronald McDonald House location in 1989, followed by the establishment of the Ronald McDonald Family Room within Children's Hospital at Erlanger in 1996.

In collaboration with Erlanger, the Family Room provides a vital space within the hospital premises, ensuring companionship and comfort for guests staying by their ill family member's bedside. Staffed by RMHC personnel and volunteers, the Family Room operates Monday-Friday from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. offering essential amenities to families with immediate relatives in Erlanger, Children's, or Siskin Hospitals.

The Ronald McDonald Family Room exemplifies RMHC's steadfast commitment to supporting families in their time of need, providing a haven where they can rejuvenate while their loved one receives necessary medical care. Additionally, the launch of Hospitality à la Carte in 2017 extends outreach further into Children's Hospital at Erlanger, facilitated by Erlanger volunteers. The Hospitality a la Carte serves inpatient rooms, offering refreshments, snacks, toiletries, and some activity items to help ease stress and bring a touch of hospitality to patients' stays.

Because of this partnership, families of critically ill or injured children at Erlanger's facilities can easily learn how to utilize RMHC's services during their child's stay at Children's Hospital, making the work of Ronald McDonald House Charities possible every single day



The Family Room can be located  
on the 3rd floor of Children's Hospital  
near the "F" elevators.



# Continuum of Care

Ronald McDonald House Charities (RMHC) programs exemplify a seamless continuum of care approach that embodies the RMHC mission and wellness journey across the lifespan. All family-centered, trauma informed programs and services are rooted in compassion, hospitality, respite, case management, and after care received during the stay and, or visits at the House main campus, Family or Mindful Rooms, or the House to Home Program satellite locations. Our philosophy combines advocacy, partnerships, resources, community and social services, and volunteerism that allow families to heal and thrive.

## Wellness Navigation

Wellness Navigators are designed to assist families in improving holistic social determinants of health related to medical, social, emotional, and economic wellbeing. We understand that when a child is sick, the whole family is sick, and that the hard work does not end at hospital/House discharge. The Navigators provide comprehensive prescriptive services including, but not limited to, medical condition education/coordination, case management, therapeutic activities, and community-based resource linkage as needed. The goal is to help families before, during, and after their child's medical crisis for better long-term health and wellness outcomes. Wellness Navigators are embedded across the RMHC program continuum of services. Whether in the House, the Family Room, or the House to Home Program, a Navigator is there to keep families close and connected.



## Keeping Families Together.

We believe when families are together, they cope better. We believe no family should have to deal with their child's medical crisis alone.







Keeping families close®



## Ronald McDonald House

The Ronald McDonald House provides a 'home away from home' for families with critically ill children, ensuring they can stay close during medical treatment without the added financial burden. This 28 bedroom facility across the street from Children's Hospital at Erlanger provides a private room, hot food daily, and laundry services to our families.



## The Family Room

The Ronald McDonald Family Room is a day respite area for those who are providing "around the clock" care for their loved ones at Erlanger. Located on the third floor, the Family Room is a space for families to take a shower, catch up on laundry, or grab a snack without ever leaving the hospital.



## The Mindful Room

While staying at RMHC, it is important family members also take the time to assess and process what they are going through as they have a loved one in the hospital. The Mindful Room is a place for adults to lessen their symptoms of PTSD through both guided and self led sessions of mindfulness, art, and self care therapies.



## House to Home

Part of the RMHC Continuum of Care, our House to Home Program supports families throughout their child's wellness journey. Whether you're a local Bradley County resident or recently discharged from RMHC of Greater Chattanooga, we work with community based agencies to offer comprehensive medical related aftercare navigation services.





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Greater Chattanooga

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