

Heartstrings

Fall/Winter 2018



"Liam needed me by his side as much as I needed to be there."

Photos by Lynn Boutte



Ronald McDonald
House Charities®
of Southern Colorado

Share Your Story!



Families served by Ronald McDonald House Charities of Southern Colorado have often traveled hundreds or thousands of miles to receive the immediate and appropriate care their critically ill child required.

Keeping Families Close is what we do.

Wherever we go, it seems that most everyone has a Ronald McDonald House story.

"You kept my family close when our son was battling cancer."

"Your House is a Godsend for my neighbor who lives three hours from the hospital where her child is being treated."

"We stayed with you when my sister was sick."

"When I was a kid, my family stayed with you for each of my five surgeries."

We are honored when families share what staying at our Ronald McDonald House has meant to them.

If you have history with RMHC, we would love to hear your story!

That's why we have created an online Share Your Story campaign at <https://give.classy.org/YourRMHStory>.

Log on, read some of our families stories, tell us your own, and ... if you're so led, create and share a peer to peer fundraising page with your family and friends.

Doing so will help us finish our Capital Campaign strong as we build and open the new Ronald McDonald House in Colorado Springs, summer of 2019. ♥ The new House will allow us to serve even more families in need.

Have questions? Contact Dan, 719.375.3871.
captaindan@rmhcsoutherncolorado.org

Thanks for considering Sharing YOUR Story!

Liam

His name means strong-willed warrior, and he is.



As a first time Mom, Brandee was unsure as to what she was feeling.

She just knew that she wasn't feeling well.

At 24 weeks pregnant, her doctor ordered a Doppler test. The results were that Brandee's baby wasn't receiving the necessary blood flow from the umbilical cord to the placenta. She was quickly hospitalized at St. Francis Medical Center in Colorado Springs where she was on continuous monitoring.

During that time, *Brandee began experiencing a wide variety of concerning symptoms:* high blood pressure; edema; vomiting; pain in her vital organs and an inability to eat or sleep.

A blood test revealed Brandee was suffering from HELLP Syndrome, a relatively unknown syndrome that affects approximately 0.2 - 0.6 percent of all pregnancies. Medication prescribed hopes to control dangerously high blood pressure and prevent seizures. When Mom's red blood cells and platelets are compromised, a blood transfusion is required. Women with HELLP need to give birth as soon

as possible, even if the baby is born prematurely, as HELLP complications dramatically get worse, harming both mom and baby.

Because of the dire consequences, Brandee was scheduled for an emergency C-Section.

At 26 weeks gestation, Liam Ismael Valdez arrived, 14 weeks before his due date.

Weighing just 1 pound, 4 ounces, this baby boy has fought for his life each and every day of the last three months.

“Staying here has been such a gift. You have given me so much time with Liam.”

- Brandee

Ronald McDonald House Charities of Southern Colorado made sure that Liam's family was always just steps away from his bedside, allowing them to keep a close watch over both Liam and his care.

When Liam's Dad would go back to work, Liam's great grandma came and stayed with Brandee, making sure there was a continuum of care and support for both her granddaughter and great grand baby.

Brandee said, "Staying here has been such a gift. You have given me so much time with Liam."

While Liam's condition has remained fragile she added, "There's no place else I would be than by his side." She continued, "You've made a safe place. The impact of you taking time out of your lives to make sure every family's needs are taken care of... *it's been life changing for me.*"

Liam has continued to grow. He now weighs 4 pounds, 4 ounces. While still looking at another month of being hospitalized, Brandee is feeling hopeful. "Ten days ago, they started him on a steroid to help his lungs. The eye doctor has been here and is watching closely to see if Liam will need corrective surgery. **He is now off of the ventilator.** After Liam is 70 more grams, he will



Photos by Lynn Boutte

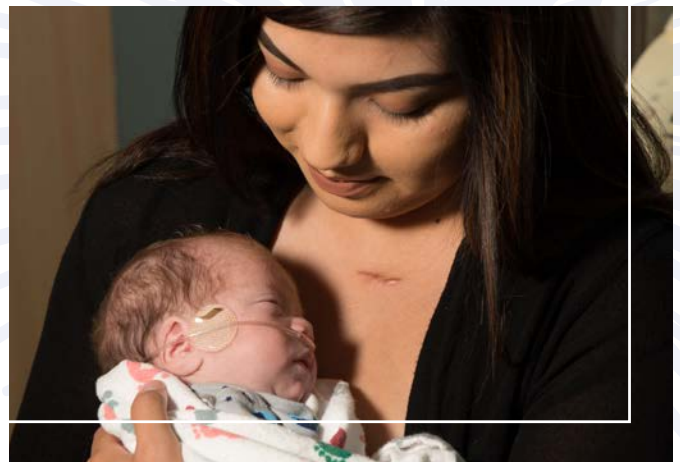
start on formula. Once all of that happens, *I'm ready to take him home.*"

Fully prepared to be a Mom, Brandee is excited for the day when she gets the "OK" on her safe child car seat inspection check and *she can buckle her boy in and leave the hospital.*

"The support and comfort from other people has been so helpful. ***I will never forget the blessings.*** I take time now to notice all of the small things, as they truly are gifts."

Having a baby changes everything.

THANK YOU for your support that helps keep families close --especially when they need it most.



Capital Campaign

We're
so close!



Since opening our doors in 1987, Ronald McDonald House Charities of Southern Colorado has provided thousands of families a "home base" while local medical facilities care for their critically ill or injured child. After 31 years, we've outgrown our existing Ronald McDonald House® and need to expand to accommodate the growing demand for our services.

Last year, 322 families stayed at our House, coming from 2 countries, 7 states, 27 Colorado counties and beyond.

The average length of stay was 8 days. We expect those numbers to significantly rise in the next few years, when the new Children's Hospital Colorado, Colorado Springs opens their doors.

To meet the growing need, RMHCSC is building a new 25,000 square-foot House in northern Colorado Springs, that quadruples our guest room capacity, provides improved amenities to help make our families as comfortable as possible, and adds space for future expansion.

To date, our Capital Campaign has raised more than \$8 million of the \$10 million needed. Thank you for your support!

Helping us finish strong, your donation to our Capital Campaign will keep families near the resources needed to thrive. Keeping families together results in less stress and much more comfort. Donate to our Capital Campaign now, and help us help the families who need us. We can't do it without you. ♥

Building
Hope
Together



Ways to Support



Room Adoptions

Did you know that there is a way to become a permanent, tangible part of our new Ronald McDonald House? When you adopt a room, you make it possible for us to build it.

Choose which room you want to adopt of one of our two kitchens or one of our twenty bedrooms.

The room you adopt will feature a plaque with your name or the name of your business. Room adoption costs start at \$10,000.00

Naming Tiles

You can also purchase a naming tile that features you or your business to be placed in the garden of the new House. Tiles start at \$250.

Other Ways to Give

We gratefully accept cash, pledges, appreciated stock, and trusts.

No matter how you choose to give, you will leave a lasting impression upon the families who stay at our new House. It's a great way to promote your business and leave a permanent legacy-- you were the cornerstone of success for the new Ronald McDonald House of Southern Colorado.

Need More Information?

Visit buildinghopetogether.org or contact Sam at sam@rmhcsoutherncolorado.org.

Cornerstone Programs



Ronald McDonald House®

We believe that when families are together, they are stronger. We believe in keeping families near the care and resources they need to thrive. We believe that seriously ill children should have their parents and families close by.

Our Ronald McDonald House offers a warm, safe, nurturing environment for families of seriously ill and injured children. Many families travel far from home to get specialized care. Our House serves as a home base for families whose children are receiving critical treatment at nearby medical facilities.

By staying at our Ronald McDonald House, parents remain close to their children, providing the support and care their child needs, in addition to better communicating with their child's medical team and keeping up with complicated treatment plans. They can focus on the health of their child, while having a place to stay that is within eyesight and walking distance, at little or no cost.

All guests enjoy private bedrooms, home-cooked meals, play areas for children, gardens, laundry facilities, and friendly, caring staff and volunteers.

Our Ronald McDonald House is more than just a House. It provides comfort, support and resources to families facing the stress, fear and hardship of having a seriously ill child.

Ronald McDonald Family Room®

When a family enters a Ronald McDonald Family Room, they forget they're in a medical setting. Moments away from their child's bedside, the rooms are designed as a refuge for families to rest and recharge, keeping them strong for their children. These comfortable spaces provide a variety of homelike amenities, and can be found in UCHHealth Memorial Hospital - Central, St. Francis Medical Center and Children's Colorado Urgent and Specialty Clinic.

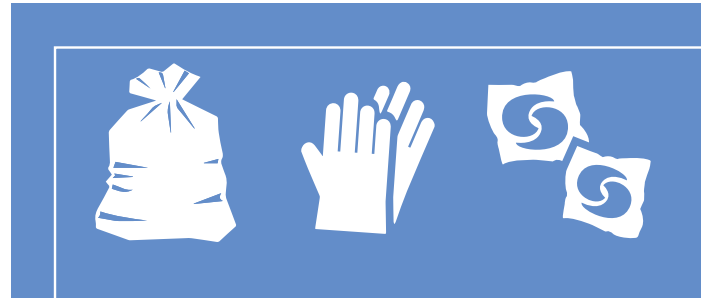


House Wish List



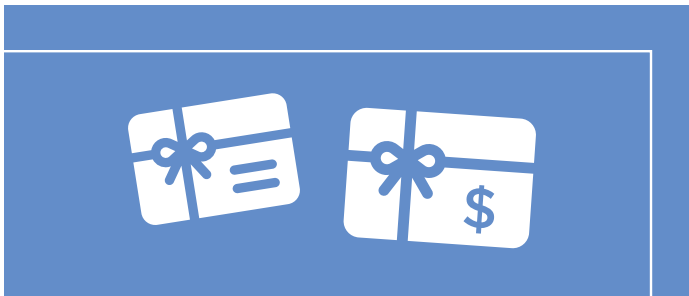
Food

- ✓ Chips - Single Serve
- ✓ Mac & Cheese - Singles
- ✓ Granola Bars
- ✓ Pop Tarts
- ✓ Cereal - Single Serve
- ✓ Fruit Snacks



Household Items

- ✓ Powdered Laundry Detergent
- ✓ Food Handling Gloves
- ✓ Tall Kitchen Trash Bags
- ✓ Dishwasher Tablets
- ✓ Small Trash Bags
- ✓ Clorox Wipes



Gift cards

- ✓ King Soopers
- ✓ Target
- ✓ Walmart
- ✓ Lowe's
- ✓ Home Depot



Linens

- ✓ NEW Queen Flat & Fitted White Sheets
- ✓ NEW Twin Flat & Fitted Gray Sheets
- ✓ ALLEREASE Zippered Pillow Covers



Ronald McDonald
House Charities®

of Southern Colorado

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Colorado Springs, CO 80909

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Volunteer Information

A strong foundation of volunteers support Ronald McDonald House Charities of Southern Colorado. Our volunteers' gifts of love and compassion make our House more than just a place to stay, they make it a home. We offer individual, pair and group volunteer opportunities at the House and at the Family Rooms. Our volunteers help with office work, preparing and setting out snacks and drinks, greeting guests, housekeeping and a host of other activities.

All volunteer positions require a RMHC volunteer application, and most also require a background check. Some, like Children's Hospital Colorado, Colorado Springs, may require additional applications and background checks.

Meals That Mend

You can also help by contributing meals for families staying at our House through our *Meals That Mend* program. There are a variety of ways to participate.

- Provide a meal on a one-time or recurring basis
- "Freezer Edition"- Cook a freezer meal that we can use later
- "Adopt a Meal"- Make a donation and then we will plan the meal, shop for the ingredients and make the meal
- Donate gift cards from local grocery stores
- Pick up a pre-made meal from a grocery store or order a meal from a local restaurant



To volunteer or find out more, please visit our website at rmhcsoutherncolorado.org/volunteer