

# Heartstrings

Spring/Summer 2020



Catching Up With The Phillips Family



Ronald McDonald  
House Charities®  
of Southern Colorado

For Morgan, Eddie, Harlan, Camden and Rowen Phillips, they are doing very well, thank you.

It's not that there aren't risks. There are. Twin boys with preemie lungs, a husband and father who is an essential worker for the City of Colorado Springs, working with some of our community's most vulnerable populations, a strong and protective big brother and an undeterred Mom who chooses JOY in the midst, believing this, too, shall pass.

Bare shelves at the market meant they got to experience the kindness of neighbors as baskets filled with fruit, packaged foods and muffins showed up at their doorstep. Transplants to Colorado Springs (having moved here for the best possible medical care their boys required) the Phillips have witnessed the small town kindnesses they grew up with. Morgan shared, "One day, my friend even brought doughnuts – the boys were ecstatic!"



**Embracing what is so seemingly small as some of the greatest gifts is nothing new for Morgan and Eddie.** After an easy pregnancy with their Harlan, they had a desire to grow their family. Learning at a routine appointment that they were carrying twins, Morgan and Eddie each took a deep breath. Later, experiencing contractions that took them to a small town doctor at 27 weeks' gestation revealed that their twin boys' arrival was imminent. They again took a deep breath.

Their son, Camden, was born without a heartbeat. While doctors worked feverishly to revive him they found that his brother, Rowen, was breech and required an emergency C-Section.



Twins born at 27 weeks' gestation are considered "extremely preterm". Being born so soon often comes with complications. And, for these two boys, none of the "complications" have been stoppers.

In a moment's time, the Phillips went from a healthy family of three to a family of five, with two requiring life-saving care. Two back-to-back middle of the night flights delivered their twin boys to UCHHealth, Memorial Central. Mom, Dad and two-year-old Harlan arrived the next day, coming to our Ronald McDonald House.

**"Staying at the House for nearly five months was a GIFT." Eddie said. "We were taken in and taken care of as if we were family." He paused. "For myself, Morgan, Harlan and the twins, we couldn't have asked for anything more in our lifetimes."**





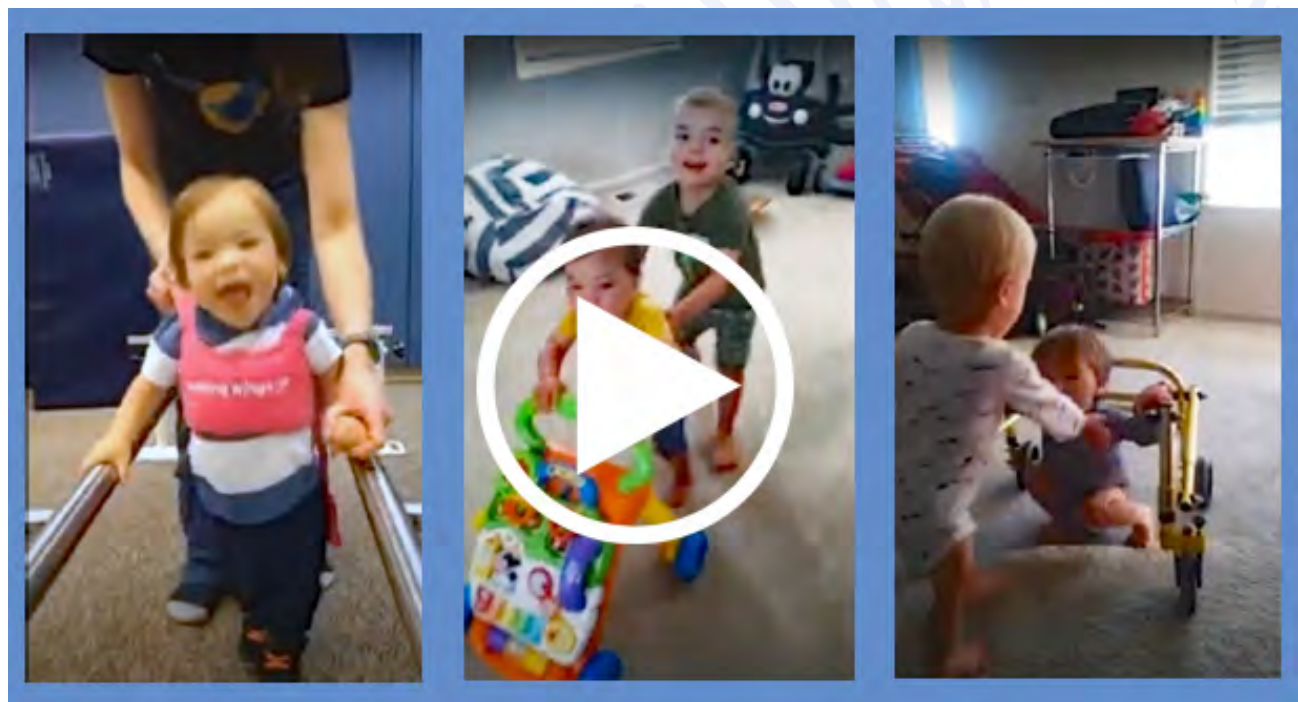
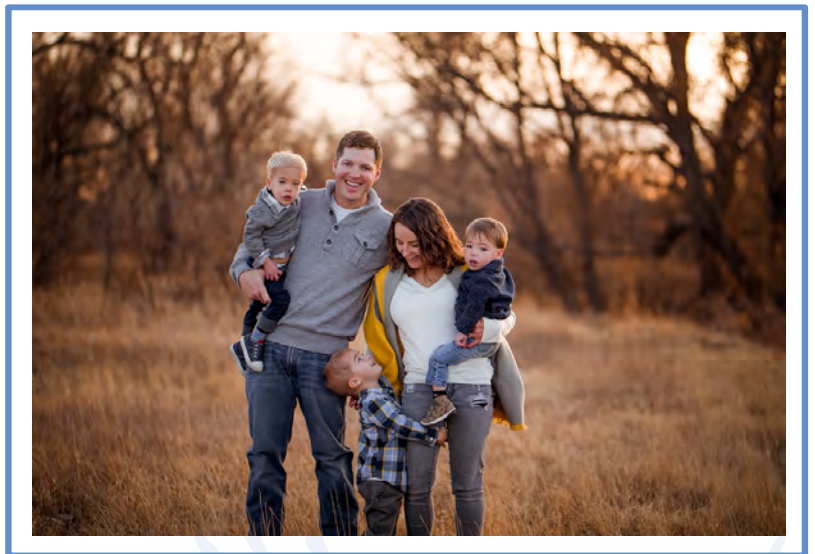
And, it DID seem like a "lifetime" - especially for Harlan. Morgan said, "Harlan learned to count while we were staying at the Ronald McDonald House. As he got close to the top of the stairs, he would excitedly exclaim, '...13, 14, 15! We're HOME!' And, he was right. We WERE 'at HOME'." She said.

Morgan said, "Early on, there were times when it felt really scary. Sometimes, we didn't have much hope. We could watch as Rowen's chest would collapse every time he tried to take a breath." She finished with, "Seeing him NOW takes MY breath away. He's doing amazing!"

**The Phillips family does life together well.**

Cheering one another on from a place of belief, verve and passion, they radically support one another. Morgan said, "We ALL cheer through therapies!" adding, "The boys are doing awesome. Rowen is defying all odds and meeting milestones." Eddie said, "When I get home and we're wrestling or running around, everyone is involved. It is motivational and inspirational to see our strong and smart boys taking steps to overcome."

**Please take a moment to watch the video below as the Phillips family encourages and supports Rowen as he finds his feet.**





Taking challenges in stride, Morgan said, "I choose not to let the 'what if's' or let fear consume me. Instead, I remain optimistic and positive, living well the day that is before us." It has now been 1 ½ years since Rowen had his last brain surgery (one of three in 9 months' time).

"Over the winter, the boys battled Influenza A, RSV and ear infections. While remaining cautious, we are trusting we will make it through COVID, too" Morgan said.

As a family, this is how the Phillips operate. "We take each day as it comes. We find the blessings

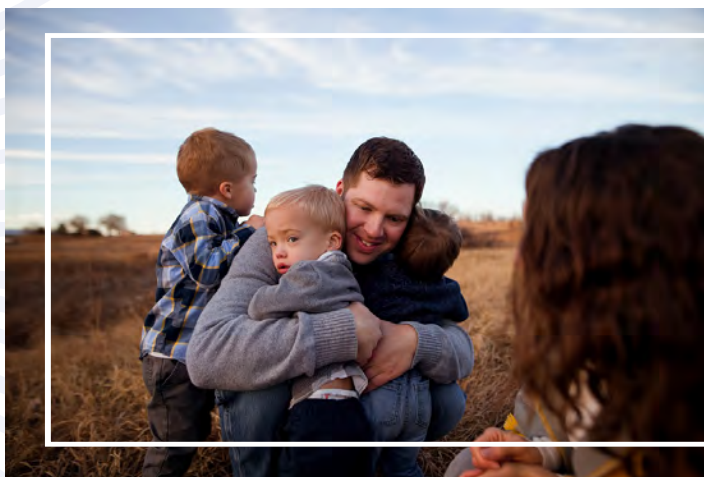
in small things. We take steps where we can. **And, if we fall down, we get back up again – usually to thunderous applause.**"

**That mindset very much paints the picture of our Ronald McDonald House and Family Rooms.**

We're remaining optimistic and positive. We find blessings in the small things (and in the small people who are our super heroes). We look forward to the day when our House and Family Rooms are again filled. When children and families find support, love, hope and care from our charity and from one another. When volunteers and staff are gathered, supporting the needs of those facing medical crisis. Of a time when kitchen aromas fill the space with delectable, inviting smells. Morgan said, "I remember your House as being safe and warm and a place we could rest. When almost every decision was hard and we were so exhausted, your staff and your House took care of everything else."

**We hope you will join us with thunderous applause when we can all gather again.**

In the meantime, please know that even when we can't be physically together, we're all still in this together, pulling for one another. That's what we do.



Our Ronald McDonald House is a safe place that provides comfort, support and resources for critically ill children and their families.

With your help, families like the Phillips can have the best gift of all - each other. To make a secure, on-line donation, please click the donate button and choose HeartStrings, Spring/Summer in the drop down menu.



To make a donation by check, please put HeartStrings, Spring/Summer in the memo line and mail to:  
Ronald McDonald House Charities of Southern Colorado,  
4223 Royal Pine Drive, Colorado Springs, CO 80920.





# A Message From Beth

Beth Alessio, Executive Director, RMHCSC



Hello, Friends.

I hope this message finds you all safe and healthy, that you and your families are experiencing moments of joy and peace – and that you're finding silver linings during such uncertain times.

Just two months ago, we celebrated the 6-month anniversary of opening the new Ronald McDonald House, as well as the new Ronald McDonald Family Room inside Children's Hospital, Colorado, Colorado Springs. *Truly, we had a lot to celebrate!*

- **716** adults and children called our House their home
- **190** families have stayed in our guest rooms
- **150** local families with hospitalized children were supported by the House during the day to do laundry, grab a bite and have a moment to rest
- **275** meals were provided
- **234** volunteers have helped make our new House a home

Our Family Rooms were filled with families in need of respite in the hospitals. St Francis Medical Center's Family Room had families utilizing the overnight rooms on a nightly basis, and families at Children's Hospital found respite within the hospital walls with our newest Family Room. **Our operations were in full speed!**



And then came COVID-19. What a difference a pandemic can make!

Medical crisis knows nothing about pandemics – and our families found themselves faced not only with a critical ill, hospitalized child, but now a fear of contracting a serious and sometimes deadly virus. Times for our families are already tough, and they became much tougher.



It's of note that while the world reluctantly shut down, many needing to close their doors, I am happy to share that the doors to our Ronald McDonald House remain open to families in need.

We have adapted how we operate, with a commitment to reduce risks of exposure to COVID-19 with a key focus on the safety of our families, our staff and our volunteers.

With the purpose of distancing the space between families and reducing the number of families staying in one place, our charity made tough decisions.

**While we continue to host families at the Ronald McDonald House, we are also hosting families at a nearby area hotel.**

I am so proud of our team - staff and volunteers – who have found creative ways to come alongside our families in both places.

All of the families supported by Ronald McDonald House Charities of Southern Colorado, (whether staying at the House or in the hotel), receive breakfast and dinner daily, delivered to their room. Our RMHCSC families also receive care packages filled with snacks, puzzles, books, toys and more that provide mental breaks for those who have a sick child in the hospital.



Providing for hospital staff who are working tirelessly on behalf of us all, we have temporarily repurposed our Family Room at Children’s Hospital – providing a respite for their hospital staff who are facing challenges. We are happy to support these brave medical personnel.

Unforeseen, our organization didn’t budget for this pandemic. Our team has fervently been seeking support for the unplanned COVID-19 expenses our charity has incurred.



We are so appreciative of each and every gift that has come in, supporting the families we serve and our organization during this critical time. Please know that all donations are directly supporting the families we serve who are in need.

Should you want to help, there are many ways to do so. You can click the donate button and choose to share in a way that is meaningful for you. Truly, every little bit helps, as it all adds up to something amazing.

Thank you friends, for making sure our Ronald McDonald House continues to serve families in need during extremely difficult times. Your belief in our mission and understanding the power of families of critically ill children being together during their greatest time of need helps us greatly as we continue our operations.

We wish you health and happiness while also hoping you’re finding moments of joy in every day!

*Beth*

Help us continue our mission to Keep Families Close during this difficult time, make your thoughtful donation [here!](#)

*Thank You!*



# Wanna Get Out?

Join RMHCSC for one or all of these GREAT 2020 events!



## Air It Out!

at the *Cameron Memorial Golf Tourney* August 3rd,  
Eisenhower Golf Club, USAFA!

Join us for this GREAT annual event! Play in morning or afternoon flights on the Academy's scenic Blue Course, breakfast & lunch or lunch & cocktail party included. Packages range from \$300-\$10,000. Come as a single or as a group and enjoy the day! Sponsored in part by Children's Hospital Colorado, Colorado Springs!

[Click HERE for golf packages & registration](#)

## Feel Trapped!

Join us for the *Kids & Clays Sporting Clays Shoot!*  
September 18th, Pikes Peak Gun Club!

This exciting day with fellow sportsmen and women includes EVERYTHING! Lunch, an afternoon shoot, targets, ammo, gift bag, hearing & eye protection, silent and live auction, awards and snacks & beverages after the shoot. A four person team is \$800 with discounts offered for Active Military and First Responders! Sponsored in part by Cheyenne Mountain Roofing.



[Click HERE for sponsor packages & registration](#)



## Enjoy Food Out Again!

at our fun foodie event *Forks With Friends!*  
September 19th, Ronald McDonald House!

This affordable, fun family food event features tastings from some of the areas most popular restaurants served in the comfort of the Ronald McDonald House! Keep watching for more details.

Your participation helps support our mission to keep families close to their sick or injured children who are receiving care at area hospitals. Please join us for a day of fun and give some help!

Questions? Call Sam, Kelley or Dan at 719-471-1814

# 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. Parents 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 St. Francis Medical Center and Children's Hospital Colorado, Colorado Springs



## Ways To Help!

- Host a "Wish List" House Party or conduct a "Wish List Drive" at your school, church or with your civic organization. See the full list below or go to: <https://rmhcsoutherncolorado.org/get-involved/wish-list>:
- While being Safer At Home, make a difference by Reading-Walking-Working. Get started here: <https://rmhcsoutherncolorado.org/read-walk-work-around-the-house>
- A new program will let you give some or all of your state income tax refund to support Ronald McDonald House Charities of Southern Colorado. Find all the details at: <https://rmhcsoutherncolorado.org/refund-co-donate-to-rmhsc/>
- Volunteer! House volunteers provide opportunities for individuals, pairs and groups, while the Family Rooms are supported by individual and paired volunteers. Learn more below (page 10) or go to: <https://rmhcsoutherncolorado.org/volunteer/>

THANK YOU for your generosity!





# House Wish List



Ronald McDonald  
House Charities®  
of Southern Colorado



## Food

- ✓ Applesauce-Single
- ✓ Fruit Cups & Fruit Snacks
- ✓ Bagels/English Muffins
- ✓ Stevia/Sweet n' Low
- ✓ Single Cup Of Noodles
- ✓ Granola Bars
- ✓ Chips - Single
- ✓ Mac & Cheese - Single
- ✓ Cookies - Single
- ✓ Pudding Cups
- ✓ Crackers - Single
- ✓ Trail Mix - Single
- ✓ Cheez Its-Single
- ✓ Peanut Butter Crackers
- ✓ Peanut Butter-Single
- ✓ Pop Tarts



## Gift Cards

- ✓ Costco
- ✓ Walmart
- ✓ Home Depot
- ✓ Safeway
- ✓ King Soopers
- ✓ Sam's Club
- ✓ Lowe's
- ✓ Target



## Office

- ✓ Postage Stamps: First Class
- ✓ 20# Copy Paper 8.5X11
- ✓ Postage Stamps: Postcard



## Household Items

- ✓ Disinfectant Spray
- ✓ Hand Sanitizer - Trial Size
- ✓ Clorox Wipes
- ✓ Indiv. Wrapped Toothbrushes
- ✓ Dish Soap
- ✓ Large Drawstring Trash Bags
- ✓ Laundry Pods
- ✓ Paper Towels
- ✓ Dishwasher Tablets
- ✓ Tall Kitchen Trash Bags
- ✓ Dryer Sheets
- ✓ Small Trash Bags
- ✓ Food Handling Gloves
- ✓ Furniture Polish
- ✓ Hand Soap
- ✓ Toiletries-Trial Size



## Welcome Bag Items

- ✓ Deck of Cards
- ✓ Adult Coloring Books
- ✓ 12 Colored Pencils
- ✓ Sudoku/Crossword Puzzles
- ✓ Single Subject Note Books
- ✓ Reusable Waterbottles
- ✓ Coffee Tumblers
- ✓ Single Use Toys



## Family Lodging

- ✓ One Night Lodging (our cost) For a Family - \$50
- ✓ One Weeks Lodging (our cost) For A Family - \$350

# 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.* The House provides volunteer opportunities for individuals, pairs and groups, while the Family Rooms are supported by individual and paired volunteers. 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.

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

To volunteer or find out more, please visit our website at [rmhcsoutherncolorado.org/volunteer](http://rmhcsoutherncolorado.org/volunteer)

## Planned Giving, A True Gift of Love!

Appreciative of every gift, RMHCSC is so thankful for each of you who have helped support the important work of keeping families close when they needed it most.

Recently, a generous donor chose our Ronald McDonald House Charities of Southern Colorado as the recipient of a legacy gift. This planned gift designates part of her estate as a donation for the children and families we serve. Through legacy gifts, individuals can create a powerful philanthropic legacy that makes a direct impact on causes important to them.

Sharing that which brings hope to her life, this strong, independent and passionate woman said, "Every day, there is beauty to be found - whether it's the blessing of living in Colorado, with majestic mountains and sweeping vistas, playing outside with my pups, or creating and sharing art to bring joy to others - there's always something to be thankful for." She remains most thankful for the gift of the years she had with her beloved son.

When her son passed unexpectedly, there was a void. Knowing, first hand, how important it is to keep families close during times of medical crisis, she chose to make decisions that reflected both her and her son's desires while she was able to make them. After spending time at our Ronald McDonald House and meeting some of the families we serve, she said, "I am overwhelmed with all you do for sick children and their families." With tears, she added, "My son would have loved this decision."

Should you be interested in learning more about legacy gifts, please reach Sam Milam, [sam@rmhcsoutherncolorado.org](mailto:sam@rmhcsoutherncolorado.org)/, or by calling 719.755.4066.

Thank you for your consideration.