

heartstrings

Spring/Summer 2024



Ronald McDonald
House Charities®
of Southern Colorado

AMADEIA (AKA
"BABY SHARK")
STAFF HIGHLIGHTS
WAYS TO HELP
50 YEARS OF RMHC
UPCOMING EVENTS
LEGACY WALL



"When I heard the word, 'cancer', I froze.", Autumn said.

As mom to a young daughter whose whole life was before her, Autumn recalled the many times in the past when the word 'cancer' uprooted her family and her faith. "I physically felt sick. I was in shock, cold and empty."

And, then she looked into her "Deia's" deep, brown, unwavering eyes. Seeing her own reflection in her two-year-old daughter's gaze, a shared smile broke out.

Autumn took a deep breath, hugged her girl and leaned in to learn more.

Worldwide, a Wilms Tumor Renal Mass affects approximately 1 in 650 kids annually. No one knows how or why some kids are affected while others are not.

Dad, Devin, shared, "We learned that a diagnosis of Wilms is literally drawing the short straw." With no genetic predisposition or markers, they knew they were in for the long haul.

What they didn't know was how long the haul would be, how their Amadeia's body, heart and mind would handle being stage 3 with a regimen of chemotherapy and other treatments. They also didn't know where this unexpected journey would physically take them.

It brought their family from a small town in southern Colorado to our Ronald McDonald House.

Off and on for eight months, the three of them were regular guests, allowing staff, volunteers and other families to get to know them better.

Months later, about to be discharged, Autumn reflected on their time here.

"Staying at your Ronald McDonald House, everyone was so kind. You came to know us as individuals, not just by Deia's diagnosis", Autumn said.

On a night in December, our Ronald McDonald House was holding its annual Holiday Party. Deia delighted in the noisy and bright fire truck that delivered Santa Claus. She also loved the food, the crafts, the games, the hot chocolate bar AND her one-on-one time with Santa and Mrs. Claus. Deia received the very gifts she had asked for, just a few weeks earlier. **The evening was pure magic.**

And, most magical of all – the greatest gift – was Autumn and Devin learning that their Amadeia was CANCER FREE.

Autumn's Mother's Heart is learning to trust Deia's medical team and their predictions, "your daughter will live a long and happy life." Autumn knows that as Deia grows, her health and well-being will be closely followed. "I imagine the follow up testing and screenings will bring both a sense of relief – and, also some anxiety." She and Devin will continue to advocate as Deia's future unfolds.

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In time, Deia will learn of her miraculous story through stories, photos and videos.

Autumn wondered, 'what will become of all of Deia's story?' With so much positive interaction and time spent with heroes in scrubs, Autumn isn't ruling out that perhaps Deia will one day become a great doctor.

Now, back home in southern Colorado, their family is again living a simple and full life. One where there are farm animals and gardens to be tended and adventures to be had.

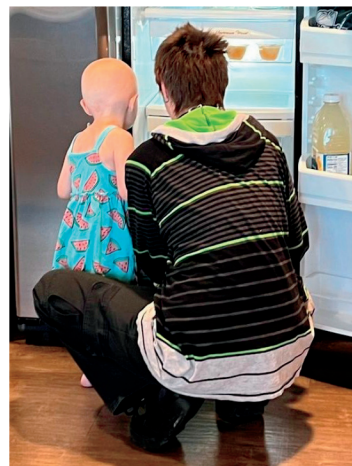
Autumn is thankful for the support they received from their Ronald McDonald House family. *"You provided places and spaces where I could share, 'This is hard. I'm really hurting.'"* knowing she would be met with understanding and care.



"We felt the love and support from everyone we met. I don't know what we would have done without this place." She added, "and, there were never ending pancakes, Deia's favorite!"

Autumn closed her eyes and said, ***"Thank you. From the bottom of my heart... the Ronald McDonald House helped an impossible situation not just seem manageable, but was a place where we could thrive."*** Because of grace and mercy, Deia will not recall the eight months she spent here or her times of treatment and care. Conversely, the rest of us will never forget - Deia, her journey, her friendliness and her curiosity. We are forever changed by the strength of a young girl who won our hearts.

Would you join us and help support families like theirs when they need it most? If so, please indicate your best gift on the inserted envelope or follow the QR code below. Your care means the world to those who find their world has been shaken. THANK YOU.



Postscript: Deia and her family recently came back to Colorado Springs for a check up. Deia was unhappy, knowing she would be going back to the hospital. "When we told her we were staying at the Ronald McDonald House, she jumped up and excitedly pushed us to leave!" Deia is nearly back to her pre-cancer self. With her port out, she is running, jumping, telling LOTS of stories and adventuring. Her appetite is back, with a newfound taste for steaks, chocolate cereal and danishes. And, check out the new hair on Deia's head and her sweet eyebrows!



Everyone CHEERED as she rang the bell! Here's to a long and healthy life for this young girl!

Staff Highlights



Jennifer Hunt first came to RMHCSC as a House volunteer in 2019. Soon she became a weekend manager while still working her FT job at Progressive. In October, 2022, Jennifer made the leap and became our Family Room Manager. Now Jennifer bears the title Family Services Manager, which includes overseeing the Family Room, in addition to managing support services for our families. Jennifer embodies the expression "She is the right person for this job"



Serving as Finance Director for more than seven years, Joanne's commitment to RMHCSC is evident in all she does. A lifelong accountant, Joanne brings balance and clarity to RMHC, our team, her family and more. Joanne first learned of the Ronald McDonald House while attending college in Chicago. She said, "I love seeing families gather, whether for a cup of coffee, a shared breakfast or as they plan their day at the hospital." Families expressed gratitude confirms that this is the right place for her to be.



Passionate, relational, enthusiastic and driven, Sam Milam is in her 16th year as the Development Director. Sam delights in sharing RMHCSC's mission and the children and families who are served - helping raise both awareness and funds. Through various avenues, Sam and the Development Team invite others to come alongside to help support these families who are experiencing unforeseen medical crises..

Ways You Can Help!

Our Ronald McDonald House and Family Room provide healing and support for the moms, dads, siblings and extended family of hospitalized children. It's hard to imagine how much life can change when you have a seriously ill or injured child - until that child is yours. Some families spend days, weeks or months away from home to be near their child's bedside. They bear the emotional burden of their little one's health, well-being and care.

Our **Family Room**, inside Children's Hospital Colorado, is a peaceful place to catch a moment of solitude, grab something to eat, find time to decompress and accept a caring smile-all within footsteps from their child's hospital room.

The **Ronald McDonald House**, across the parking lot from Children's Hospital Colorado, provides a warm, welcoming environment for up to twenty families each night. With two kitchens, oversized dining and living rooms, laundry facilities and indoor and outdoor play areas for children, our **House helps families feel at home - even when they can't be**. If you'd like to help with our mission, check out the links below.

Make A Meal

Cook With
Your Work Team
Your Family
Your Golf Pals
Friends
Neighbors
Bunco Buddies
Hiking Friends
Church Group
People You
School Friends
Your



Create An Event

A Garage Sale
A Wish List Drive
Bike For Bucks
A House Party
A Tasting With
Friends
A Card Party
A Cooking Class
Somebody Work
Drive for Dollars
Fundraiser With
peoples joy



Donate

Gift Cards
Be A Sustainer
A One Time Donor
Give An Old Car
The Legacy Wall
Food Items
Clothing
Paper Products
Pop Tarts
A Cash
W



Volunteer

Help Clean
Volunteer at events
Organize
Work The Desk
File
Decorate
Man The Family
Room
Shuttle For
Gardening
Arrange For
Move For



MORE IDEAS ARE JUST A CLICK AWAY AT [HTTPS://WWW.RMHCSOUTHERNCOLORADO.ORG](https://www.rmhcsoutherncolorado.org)



Globally, RMHC will celebrate its 50th anniversary on October 15, 2024. For 50 years, Ronald McDonald House Charities has cared for families so they can care for theirs. • In 2024, we're celebrating the global community of support we've built over the past 50 years. • From staff and volunteers who provide unrivaled care each day, to our invaluable donors and partners who make it all possible, RMHC is able to strengthen families during their child's healthcare journey. • Over the past 50 years, our global system has: - Relieved the stress of financial burdens - Provided mental and emotional support - Expanded access and removed barriers to essential healthcare.



In 1974, the first Ronald McDonald House opened to give families a place to stay when they came to Philadelphia, PA (USA) for their child's medical care. Co-founder and pediatric oncologist, Dr. Audrey Evans, knew it was important to care for, and support, the whole family when a child was sick.

Soon, Dr. Evans' idea was replicated around the country. When the second Ronald McDonald House opened in Chicago in 1977, it ignited a global movement to care for families all along their child's healthcare journey.

Today, there are 389 Houses, with our local Ronald McDonald House being among the first 100 to open on February 14th, 1987.



Dr. Audrey Evans



2024 Events

Benefiting Our Ronald McDonald House

JUNE 7TH KIDS & CLAYS SPORTING CLAYS SHOOT



Now in its 6th year, our sporting clays event at the Pikes Peak Gun Club, includes EVERYTHING for the sporting enthusiast. Join us for a day of fun!!

SEPT 13TH WE CELEBRATE RMHC



A fresh twist on a long-time RMHCSC event, our Radiothon. Plan to join us in person at the Ronald McDonald House for this special multimedia day of celebration.

OCT 7TH CAMERON MEMORIAL GOLF TOURNEY



Now in its 32nd year, this award winning annual event sells out quickly. Follow the QR Code to learn more about sponsorship opportunities..



100% of the proceeds from these events go directly towards RMHCSC programs. Through your participation, you are directly supporting families of hospitalized children who stay with us at the Ronald McDonald House or who utilize the Ronald McDonald Family Room in Children's Hospital Colorado, in addition to those that stop by our Hospitality Cart in Children's Outpatient Clinic.

Who knew a day of fun could do so much good?



Ronald McDonald
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of Southern Colorado

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The Legacy Wall



RMHCSC is excited to provide naming opportunities for donors to be acknowledged on a beautiful, custom made Legacy Wall. Created by local artist Amy Spring, this permanent feature of Colorado Aspen trees highlights how "We are all connected, rooted in love."

Gifts to the Legacy Wall will ensure that critically ill children have what they need the very most - their families at their side, every step of the way.

To learn more and to show your support contact Doug Zurek, 719.755.4068 or doug@rmhcsoutherncolorado.org

More about Amy: Having lived in Colorado for more than 40 years, Amy has textured and painted murals throughout the Pikes Peak region and across America, creating beauty, joy and wonder.