

Ronald McDonald House Charities® of Southwest Florida

Partner Packet

Medical Facilities for Children



RMHC®
Southwest Florida

A Letter from our President & CEO

Laura Ragain

Since 1996, the Ronald McDonald House® in Fort Myers has welcomed thousands of families from Lee, Collier, Charlotte, Glades, and Hendry counties while their children received treatment at Golisano Children's Hospital of Southwest Florida or other local medical facilities. Our "home-away-from-home" means a great deal to those we serve. Our family-centered programs effectively improve the clinical outcomes and experience for the children and their families.

Our support efforts were further enhanced with the addition of the Ronald McDonald Family Room®, located on the second floor of Golisano Children's Hospital. There, all families with a child in the hospital can stop by for a sandwich, a quick snack, a cup of coffee, or just close their eyes for a few minutes without having to be far from their child's bedside.

Ronald McDonald House Charities® (RMHC) also serves children far beyond the hospital walls. Through our partnership with Healthcare Network, the Ronald McDonald Care Mobile® brings medical and dental services to over 3,000 children annually in Collier County, right in their neighborhoods. Thanks to grant funding from RMHC Global, our Southwest Florida Chapter added a second Ronald McDonald Care Mobile to provide medical and dental treatment to the unserved and underserved children in Lee, Charlotte, and Hendry counties. Family Health Centers of Southwest Florida is our partner in providing services that include dental screenings and varnishes to children at Title 1 schools, free and reduced lunch schools, and other underserved communities. It is truly an honor to be part of an organization whose mission is to create, find and support programs that directly impact the health and well-being of children and their families.

We are grateful for our thoughtful and tireless volunteers, community partners, unwavering staff, and board members consistently coming together to support our mission of keeping families close.

Keeping Families Close®



Meet the RMHC SWFL Team!



Laura Ragain
President & CEO



Ileny Farese
Director, Volunteer &
Family Services



Leanna Gonzalez
Director, Administrative
Operations



Karen Marshall
Director, House
Operations & Services



Marvin Pierce
Maintenance



Julie Todaro
Director of Development



Amy Velez
Director, Marketing &
Creative Design

Executive Committee

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Vice President – Paul Drucker
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Jeff Miloff
Jennifer Novakovich
Tom O'Reilly
Michael Rubenstein
Shahid Sultan, MD

How We Help

Our Services

A family's life stops overnight when faced with a child's illness. Parents enter a world of fear and worry. There's an added stress for parents who don't live close to the medical care their child requires. Most families must travel hours for treatment. Living expenses quickly add up. Long drives, lost jobs, worried siblings, sleeping in cars, being far from family and friends are extra burdens no family should have to experience. With the generosity of our community the efforts of our volunteers, staff, and local McDonald's restaurant owner-operators, we are meeting our mission through three core programs:

Ronald McDonald House®:



The Ronald McDonald House of Southwest Florida is a "home-away-from-home" for families of seriously ill or injured children receiving medical treatment at Golisano Children's Hospital of Southwest Florida or other local medical facilities.



Ronald McDonald Family Room®:



The Ronald McDonald Family Room offers all patient families a place to rest and regroup at the Golisano Children's Hospital. Paper bag meals, coffee, snacks, etc., are provided free of charge!



Ronald McDonald Care Mobile®:



The Ronald McDonald Care Mobile Program – dental offices on wheels – offer a solution by caring for thousands of Southwest Florida children in underserved communities each year. In addition, medical and autism screenings are offered on a limited basis throughout the year.



The Ronald McDonald House

Who can stay?

The Ronald McDonald House helps loved ones remain together as a family in an environment of comfort, compassion, strength, and support. Serving families who must travel far from home, the House is much more than a room to stay in. It provides support and resources for families with sick children just steps from the hospital or a minimal drive to other local medical facilities.

Criteria for Family Stays:

1. Ronald McDonald House programs offer rooms for families of pediatric patients 21 years old and younger.
2. Up to four immediate family members (mother, father, siblings) and/or legal guardian(s) are eligible to stay at the Ronald McDonald House. Any other family members must be approved by RMHC SWFL staff.
3. Families may stay as long as their child remains in active treatment. Families are required to check out on the day of their child's discharge.
4. Family members/legal guardians must pass a background check, provide a photo ID, complete the registration/orientation process, and agree to Conditions of Stay.
5. We suggest a modest donation of \$10.00 per night to cover a small portion of the actual cost of a family's stay. However, no one is ever turned away due to their inability to pay.

Medical personnel can submit a referral by visiting rmhcswfl.org/request-to-stay.



The Ronald McDonald House

What can families expect?

Once a family is approved and has arrived for their appointment, they will meet with an RMHC SWFL associate to complete the check-in process. During check-in, the family will receive a welcome packet, a House tour, review the House rules and responsibilities, discuss check-out procedures, and become familiar with House staff. Families will also receive a key to their private room. Once the check-in is complete, families can return to the hospital, relax in their room, enjoy a meal in the dining room, or spend time in any common areas within the House.

The Ronald McDonald House offers the following:

- **Private Bedrooms:** Includes two queen-sized Tempur-Pedic® beds, writing desk, armoire, closet, mini-fridge, full private bathroom (handicap accessible available), and a personal telephone line equipped with voicemail.
- **Living Room:** Cable TV and a DVD player are provided in the living room. There is space available for puzzles, reading, and more.
- **Food/Meals:** We have a kitchen and pantry, both well-stocked with donated and purchased food for our families. We also have a large, family-style dining area. We try to provide a hot meal every evening. (On evenings a meal is not prepared, residents are encouraged to use our kitchen facilities).
- **Security:** Cameras monitor the House 24 hours a day. The House is staffed daily from 9:00 am to 9:00 pm. The House/Resident Manager (or Weekend Manager) remains on-site, and on-call from 9:00 pm to 9:00 am, seven days a week.
- **Internet Access:** Wireless internet is available free of charge.
- **Transportation** (only applicable to families with children staying at Golisano Children's Hospital): Weather permitting, Golisano Children's Hospital provides a courtesy shuttle service that runs continuously Monday thru Friday. Evenings and weekends based on availability.
- **Laundry:** Residents have free use of our washers and dryers. There is access to the laundry room from 9:00 am to 9:00 pm. Laundry detergent and dryer sheets are provided.
- **Quiet Room:** A private room to escape and relax, complete with a comfortable seating area, dim lighting, and a tranquil water feature.
- **Lanai:** Get some fresh air and sun in our screened-in lanai, complete with a relaxing seating area.
- **Information Board:** Residents are kept up to date with the daily postings of House activities.
- **Tours:** Available upon request prior to check-in.

The Ronald McDonald House

Why should a family stay?



Research shows that the Ronald McDonald House program:

- ☒ Supports a family's psychological well-being by keeping them close and providing emotional and physical comfort and support.
- ☒ Enhances the hospital experience for the child and the family.
- ☒ Helps alleviate the financial stress of accommodation and travel.
- ☒ Results in better sleep quality for parents, which gives them the rest they need to make critical decisions related to their child's care.
- ☒ Helps families cope better and focus on the needs of their sick child when they have support from family members and other families.

"We live an hour away from home, so it is hard for us to go home every day. Luckily, we can stay at the Ronald McDonald House, which has helped my husband and me tremendously. They give us a place to sleep in a comfortable bed, take a warm shower every day, and have a nice meal at the end of a long day. Thanks to the Ronald McDonald House, we have one less stress." -The Nino Family

The Ronald McDonald House

How to submit a referral

Important to Note:

- Only medical personnel can submit a referral on behalf of a family. Please visit rmhcswfl.org/request-to-stay to complete the referral.
- The Ronald McDonald House will NOT admit any family who is the subject of a DCF investigation. If a family is being investigated by DCF or will be investigated by DCF before the child is discharged, PLEASE DO NOT SEND THE REFERRAL.
- We do not disclose room availability due to frequent changes.
- Rooms are NOT first-come, first-serve but rather by the severity and/or longevity of the child's treatment/hospital stay.
- Submittal of request does not guarantee or hold a room.

The Process:

1. The medical facility identifies an eligible family in need of a room.
2. With the assistance of the eligible family, the medical facility will visit rmhcswfl.org/request-to-stay to complete and submit the referral.
3. Once RMHC SWFL receives the referral, they will begin processing.
4. Once the background check is complete, RMHC SWFL will notify the medical facility.

Medical personnel can submit a referral by visiting rmhcswfl.org/request-to-stay.



All RMCH SWFL Programs

Ways you can support

Volunteer at the House, Family Room, Events, etc.



Write a Positive Note to help encourage families with sick children



Host a Wish List drive to help with supplies for our programs



Donate your spare change at local McDonald's restaurants



Cook dinner or bake goodies for our families



Sponsor or attend one of our fundraising events



Please visit rmhcswfl.org/get-involved if you are interested in any of these opportunities!

Thank You!

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Keeping families close®