Joshua McCreary is only 8 years old, but he has already traveled around the world. He is part of a military family—with his mother, Julia, and his father, Andrew—that was recently stationed in Japan. While they were there, he began showing symptoms that concerned his parents, including headaches and vomiting, and he could only read books if he focused with one eye. After trying various prescribed medications, they took him to the ER, where doctors performed a CT scan and found a brain tumor. Julia and Andrew were terrified, and knew that they had to do everything within their power to save Joshua’s life. He underwent surgery in Hawaii, where doctors determined that the best course of action would be in the hands of doctors in Philadelphia. Soon, the McCrearys were on a plane across the country.

Joshua was happy to be greeted with toys and that he got to make new friends at the House. He shares, “I’ve met Ethan, Lorenzo, Eva, and we play a lot with our toy cars, we eat together—we have a lot of fun. And we get to pet the therapy dogs!”

Andrew and Julia were glad to be in a friendly atmosphere, and to be in rooms that were bigger than in the hotel where they stayed. “Here we are treated like family. As soon as you walk up to any staff or volunteer, they are ready to help you. I’ll see the Family Services team working and if I ask them a question, I never get ‘I am busy’ from them, it is always ‘how can I help you?’ It really is almost like home—a home away from home,” shares Julia.

In addition to not having to pay for a hotel, the McCrearys were also relieved that they no longer had to rent a car or pay for food. “Transportation is a big part of our stay. Being able to go back and forth from the hospital in the shuttles is a huge help,” shares Andrew. “The food is great too. Sometimes you get to eat things you haven’t tried in a while or a different variation of a dish that your mother used to make. A home-cooked meal is definitely a comfort.”

The McCrearys are staying optimistic for Joshua’s recovery. During their stay in Philadelphia, doctors were able to remove 95% of his tumor. After 66 nights at the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House, they left for Maryland, where they will stay for about 6 months while Joshua undergoes chemotherapy. They hope that he will eventually be cancer free. “He’s always happy, and hopefully, he’ll keep being happy, because when he’s happy, we are happy.”
A Message from the Board President

I am incredibly proud to write my first message as Board President during such a momentous time for the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House. This year, we not only completed the construction of our new tower, but we also held our 45th Anniversary Celebration gala, which raised $1.1 million dollars with the help of over 1,100 guests. In October, we commemorated our place in history as the first Ronald McDonald House in the world with the unveiling of a historical marker on Chestnut Street.

I am honored to follow in the footsteps of former Board President Peter J. Degnan and all who served before him—their strategic leadership built a solid foundation for us to continue serving our families and prepare for the next 45 years. Our board recently completed a weekend retreat to strategize and improve our support for families. As I walk through our expanded Chestnut Street House, and visit our Front & Erie house, my sense of duty to our mission is reinvigorated by seeing so many families dining together, playing with their children, and feeling comfortable and at home. Each time I visit, I see our incredible volunteers driving our vans, helping at the front desk, and doing other tasks, all intended to make families feel welcome.

Although construction of our new and renovated spaces may be ending, we still need you to be part of this worthwhile project. Please help us with our year end fundraising outreach—Adopt a Room, respond to our holiday mailing, or visit www.PhilaRMH.org/NamingOpportunities for more information on joining our capital campaign. We built it—and now more families are coming. This holiday season, make your gift to help us help our guests!

Thank you to everyone who allows us to fulfill our mission every year—including our volunteers, donors, corporate sponsors, and friends. I hope that you will continue your involvement with the House in 2020 and ensure that families with seriously ill children can find comfort and hope knowing that we will be there for them when they need it most. Author Dr. Lissa Rankin said, “Sometimes we forget when people are sick or hurt that what they most need is to feel connected, to be loved, to be touched.” This holiday season, let’s contribute so we can strengthen those connections.

With gratitude,

Leonard Bernstein, Board President

Round-Up for RMHC

There’s a new way to give when you dine at your local McDonald’s. You now have the convenient option to ask a McDonald’s Crew Member to “Round-Up” your total to the nearest dollar during checkout regardless of payment method. Your donation will directly support the operations of the Ronald McDonald Houses in the Philadelphia Region. You can also still donate your change at the donations boxes at the drive thrus and store counters.
New Name, Same Mission

In 2020, you will start seeing a new logo and name, but that does not mean we have changed our mission to support families of seriously ill children by creating a community of comfort and hope. Recently, the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House® merged with the Ronald McDonald House Charities® of the Philadelphia Region, which oversaw the local Ronald McDonald Care Mobile and handled other responsibilities. Our team will now be legally known as Ronald McDonald House Charities® of the Philadelphia Region to reflect our expanded scope.

With this merger, our Chapter will now oversee the following: two Ronald McDonald House® programs, three Ronald McDonald Family Room® programs, Ronald McDonald Camp, and the Ronald McDonald Care Mobile® (operated by St. Christopher’s Foundation for Children). We are excited about the expansion of our programs and look forward to helping many more families and children in the region.

Marking Our Place in History

Forty-five years ago, our co-founders, Dr. Audrey Evans and Jimmy Murray, could not have guessed that their vision for a home away from home for families with seriously ill children would turn into a worldwide phenomenon. Since the founding of the first Ronald McDonald House here in Philadelphia, numerous chapters and programs have been opened around the globe—including over 370 Ronald McDonald Houses in 45 countries and regions.

To commemorate our unique history and our worldwide impact, the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission approved the placement of a historical marker at our Chestnut Street House. On October 15, Dr. Evans and Jimmy Murray, unveiled the marker with the help of Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission Chair Nancy Moses, friends, supporters, and guest families. The event took place in conjunction with our Show Your Stripes celebration, which takes place every year on the House’s birthday.

Learn more about the global impact of the Ronald McDonald House at PhilaRMH.org/GlobalImpactVideo.

Historical Marker Text:

Founded in 1974 at 4032 Spruce Street, the facility moved here in 1981. Its mission has been to provide lodging and support services to families with hospitalized children. It was conceived by pediatric oncologist Dr. Audrey Evans with support from Phila. Eagles’ GM Jimmy Murray and McDonald’s exec. Ed Rensi. Since then, hundreds of Ronald McDonald House Charities chapters have opened worldwide, providing numerous programs to families.
Drivers Needed

The House provides transportation to and from the hospital for guest families, relieving them of the worry of having to figure out how to get to their appointments. It is a daily, vital service that requires friendly volunteers who understand the importance of their role in helping families stay close to their children during treatment.

Our vans depart from the Chestnut Street House every half hour from 8:30 a.m. until 8:30 p.m. The routes are simple, but they do require attentive drivers who can navigate vans of various sizes. At Front & Erie, our families depend on the availability of drivers to be able to visit stores to pick up essentials they may need.

If you are interested in learning more about this volunteer opportunity, fill out our online application at PhilaRMH.org/Volunteer or call our Volunteer Hotline at (215) 387-8406 x2101. You’ll feel how rewarding it is to transport families from the first ride.

Drivers Needed

Jeremy Goodman is ready to take families to the Hospital in one of the hospitality shuttle vans, provided by Central City and Ardmore Toyota

Volunteer Spotlight: Betty Sloan

Betty Sloan volunteers at the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House at Front & Erie and at the Ronald McDonald Family Room at St. Christopher’s Hospital for Children. She began volunteering in 2014 and has been a welcoming presence for families ever since. She recently shared her thoughts about volunteering:

“I always knew that once I retired, I would like to volunteer at the Ronald McDonald House and do other volunteering a few days a week and have enjoyed every single minute. Volunteering at the House warms my heart in a special way that is hard to put into words. As you walk through the front door and approach the counter, there is a saying on the wall above, ‘This is the house that love built’. This house creates comfort and hope to these families and you see it on a daily basis. I feel that it is a privilege and honor to be a part of this team.

“Volunteering at the Ronald McDonald Family Room brings something different every day. I thoroughly enjoy being able to assist the families, offering them coffee, something to eat, or just to lend an ear while they are waiting for the patient to come back from surgery. On other days, I am able to see these children recover and leave with big smiles on their faces because they are going home.

“When I started volunteering at the Ronald McDonald House, I knew that is where I wanted to be, but never realized the fulfillment that would come from seeing a child reach their goal. In my first week of being at the House, I met this adorable three year old who had approached the desk in a wheelchair. He was being treated at Shriners Hospital for Children, working hard at being able to walk one day. About a year ago, that little boy came through the front door chasing his brother. I cannot explain the feeling that I had that day, but every time I think of him, it brings a smile to my face.”

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Volunteers Are the Heart of the House

Fran Mulherin and Gabriella Lacherza are ready to welcome families at our Front & Erie House

To volunteer with any of our programs, fill out our online application at PhilaRMH.org/Volunteer or call our Volunteer Hotline at (215) 387-8406 x2101.

Year-End Giving Strategies

As 2019 draws to a close, many friends of the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House (PRMH) are thinking about their charitable giving plans. If you are considering giving options, let us share with you a few interesting ways for you to more easily support our work—many of which can benefit you in the process. While we are always grateful for cash gifts, here are some additional ways that you can make a difference without reaching for your checkbook or credit card:

Securities: A gift of stock or a mutual fund is a very tax-efficient gifting option. A gift of highly-appreciated securities offers you two-fold tax savings by avoiding the capital gains tax you would owe if you sold the stock and then made the gift, and also allows you to take an income tax deduction for the full fair market value of the stock at the time of the gift. This is true regardless of how much you paid for shares when you bought them (please note that stock should be owned for more than one year to qualify for tax advantages).

Retirement Plans/IRA Accounts: IRA, 401(K), 403(B) and other retirement accounts grow tax-deferred and often become quite large over time. Unlike many other investments, withdrawals from these funds can be taxable to you—and eventually to your heirs. Designating PRMH as a beneficiary of your retirement account can be a tax-savvy strategy, since retirement accounts left to PRMH are removed from your estate for federal estate tax purposes. Please note: If you are over 70½ and required to take distributions from your traditional IRA account, please consider making a charitable gift with all—or a portion of—your mandatory withdrawal amount (RMD). As long as the payment is made directly to PRMH from your IRA administrator, this amount will not be counted in your taxable income for the year. The annual limit is $100,000 per person.

Life Insurance Gifts: If you have a life insurance policy you no longer need, donating it to PRMH may allow you to take advantage of a charitable tax deduction. If you have a paid-up insurance policy, you will benefit from an income tax deduction equal to the replacement value of the policy or the tax basis (premiums paid on the policy up until the date of the gift), whichever is less. If policy premiums remain to be paid, any future annual premiums paid to PRMH may qualify as tax-deductible gifts as well.

Questions or comments?
Please call Lawrence Jacobson, Director of Leadership Giving, at (267) 969-6201 or Lawrence@PhilaRMH.org.
On September 28, we celebrated our 45th Anniversary with over 1,100 supporters and friends. With the help of sponsors and donors, we were able to raise $1.1 million to help sustain our programs and continue providing the comfort and hope that our guest families depend on.

Congratulations to this year’s honorees: CHOP CEO Madeline Bell and retired Temple Basketball Head Coach Fran Dunphy. Our sponsors included:

**Stay Strong ($50,000)**
The Emerson Group
Jill & Alan B. Miller

**Rest Easy ($25,000)**
Comcast NBCUniversal
Robert & Penny Fox
Blue Ridge Properties and Rayne Nutrition
Ronald McDonald House Charities

**Find Hope ($10,000)**
AmeriHealth Caritas
CSL Behring
MassMutual
Safeco Insurance
Tri-State Toyota
Caroline & Jim Coleman
Peter J. Degnan
Mike J. Kelly & Alison Saifer
The Montufar Family
Beth & Rich Probinsky
Ed Rensi & The American Amusement Machine Association
Frank Speno
The Turner Family
Marlene Weinberg

Check out our 45th Videos!
PhilaRMH.org/45thVideo
PhilaRMH.org/MadelineBell
PhilaRMH.org/FranDunphy
Get Ready for 2020

We are ready for 2020 and hope that you will join us at one of the events we have lined up. All proceeds from our events support families of seriously ill children who benefit from our programs. To see our full list of events, visit www.PhilaRMH.org/Events. If you have questions about any of our upcoming events, please contact Mariel Barr, Special Events Manager, at (267) 969-6266 or mbarr@philarmh.org.

### CBS 3/CW Philly
**“Change the Luck of a Child” Telethon**

March 24, 2020

The Telethon airs on CBS 3/CW Philly and gives sponsors an opportunity to show their support for Ronald McDonald Houses in Delaware, Philadelphia, and Southern New Jersey. Learn more at [RMHtelethon.org](http://RMHtelethon.org).

### Hit ‘Em for the House and Audi quattro Cup

June 1 and July 3, 2020

The Hit ‘EM for the House and Audi quattro Cup golf outings are held at prestigious golf courses and include lunch, cocktails, and dinner. Learn more at [PhilaRMH.org/Golf](http://PhilaRMH.org/Golf) and [PhilaRMH.org/Audi](http://PhilaRMH.org/Audi).

### 2020 Plane Pull
**presented by Allstate**

May 2, 2020

Plane Pull gives groups of 20 individuals a fun and unique opportunity to pull an airplane and see which team can do it in the fastest time. Learn more at [PhilaRMH.org/PlanePull](http://PhilaRMH.org/PlanePull).

### 2020 Philalympics

Summer 2020

The Philalympics is an annual corporate challenge where local companies compete in fun games and events to be crowned the “phunnest” in all of Philadelphia! Learn more at [PhilaRMH.org/Philalympics](http://PhilaRMH.org/Philalympics).
Gritty Surprises Biggest Fan

Jack Callahan may be in Philadelphia temporarily while he receives oncology treatment, but he has already fallen in love with one of the city’s most famous residents, Gritty. He even wrote him a letter, letting him know that he wanted to dress up as Gritty for Halloween and that he wanted a Gritty cake for his birthday.

The Philadelphia Flyers—our friends and Premier Corporate Partners—did not hesitate to reach out to Gritty to let him know, and soon a surprise for Jack was in the works. The folks at Whipped Bakeshop and Delice et Chocolat joined in to provide delicious cakes.

When the big day came, Jack was ecstatic to see Gritty, who arrived with a ton of presents for him. They played, shared stories, and hung out with family and friends.

A huge thank you to Gritty, the Philadelphia Flyers, Whipped Bakeshop, and Delice et Chocolat for making Jack’s birthday extra-special! Their actions are a great example of how the community can support our families.

If you are interested in getting involved, contact Mariel Barr at mbarr@philarmh.org or (267) 969-6266.

A Week of Fun & Friendship at RMC

Campers were able to enjoy another great year at Ronald McDonald Camp (RMC) in August thanks to all the financial supporters and our dedicated volunteer counselors. RMC provides a week of fun, friendship, and support to children who have been treated and are being treated for cancer as well as their siblings.

Activities at RMC—which is held in the Poconos every year—include zip-lining, archery, canoeing, arts & crafts workshops, science and cooking lessons, sports, and much more. Once again, we had photography workshops thanks to our friends at Canon, and music workshops led by volunteers from Rotation Records.

Visit PhilaRMH.org /Camp for information on how you can support RMC. Applications for campers and volunteer counselors will go live on that page on January 15, 2020.
Meet our Family Services Team

The Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House is so much more than beds, food, and transportation—it’s an atmosphere of care and support. A family with a sick child is a sick family, and our Family Services team works day in and day out to bring wellness to the whole family. The team addresses family needs beginning with room requests and the family stay and continuing through after care services.

Meet our Family Services Team

Susan Torres-Franqui
Bilingual Support

Nancy Hutchinson
Social Work Supervisor

Erin Sullivan
Social Worker

Liz Thul
Social Worker

With our recent expansion, we now serve over 115 guest families each night between our two locations. To better meet the needs of all of our guest families, our Family Services team has also grown and programming has been expanded. The services offered by the team—like those listed below—create an atmosphere of care and support when families need it most:

- Welcome meetings at time of check-in
- Weekly family meetings with a Social Worker throughout a family’s stay
- Translation services to make sure that non-English speaking families are not lost in the larger community and can access the resources available to them
- Facilitated mindfulness and creative expression workshops led by professionals
- Connections between families experiencing similar diagnoses to create a wider community of care through support groups
- Resources for caregivers to manage their own health and stress so that they may better care for their family
- Financial support for families struggling with expenses during extended stays
- Scheduled evening and weekend programming for adults and children

Make Your Donation Count Double!

An anonymous friend of the House will be matching every donation up to $50,000 for our Family Services programming. Help us reach our goal of $100,000!

Visit PhilaRMH.org/Match to donate now!
Our Wish List—All Year Round

With the opening of the new tower, many more families than ever before are finding comfort and hope at the House. With your help, we can continue providing items that help these families feel at home as they balance their medical appointment schedules and taking care of their wellbeing. If you’d like to donate items, please view our wish list below.

To view an up-to-date list of our immediate needs, visit our Amazon Wish List at PhilaRMH.org/Amazon or our Target Wish List at PhilaRMH.org/Target. If you have questions about our Wish List or are interested in purchasing larger items for our gym, kitchen, or tower, please contact Linda Pusatere at Lpusatere@philarmh.org. For the safety of our immunocompromised guests, all items must be new and in original packaging.

**GUEST ROOM ITEMS**

- Laundry pods
- Swiffer dry cloths
- Swiffer wet cloths
- Clorox toilet bowl wands & refills
- Paper towels

Some of our families spend extended periods of time at the House. Purchasing cleaning supplies will help these families keep their clothes clean and fresh and their rooms tidy and cozy.

**TOYS**

We always need toys for kids under 5 and teenagers

Visit our Toy Wish List for ideas: PhilaRMH.org/Toys

Help our families take a break from the hospital by purchasing tickets to local attractions that they can use when not scheduled for appointments. If you are part of an institution interested in providing complimentary tickets to our families, please contact Mariel Barr at mbarr@philarmh.org.

Help every child who stays with us has the opportunity to choose a toy from our Welcome Wagon at check-in. Help bring joy to these kids and get their minds off of their or their siblings’ treatment by purchasing a toy and helping us stock up our Welcome Wagon.

**TICKETS**

Please Touch Museum
Adventure Aquarium
Franklin Institute
Philadelphia Zoo

Purchase tickets online at PhilaRMH.org/FamilyTickets
**GIFT CARD**

Wawa  
Amazon  
CVS  
Target  
Visa/Mastercard  
Walmart  

**Purchase gift cards for our families online at PhilaRMH.org/GiftCards**

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Our Family Services team provides gift cards for families to use in urgent situations for various needs such as gas, clothing, copays, and much more. Families staying at the House come from all over Pennsylvania, the United States, and around the world. Many of these families had to leave their homes at a moment’s notice to get their seriously ill children to one of their local hospitals for urgent treatment, and many stay for very long periods of time. With these gift cards, families can stop worrying about how to pay for needed items and focus on their children’s health.

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**SNACKS**

*All snacks must be individually wrapped*

Salty snacks  
Fruit snacks  
Juice boxes  
Cookies

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Keep families fueled between appointments by purchasing snacks. These treats are perfect for on-the-go days when there is no time to stop.

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**ARTWORK**

Help us make our new tower feel warm and comforting for our families by purchasing artwork for our walls.  
Visit PhilaRMH.org/Art to view the artwork we love

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**Your Workplace May Match Your Gift**

Did you know that some companies and organizations match their employees’ donations? Matching gifts could double or even triple the impact of your donation. Some companies may also match individual employee’s volunteer service with a financial contribution to the organization.

Visit PhilaRMH.org/MatchingGifts to find out if your employer provides matched gifts.

A number of generous friends also choose to support the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House by making their annual donations via payroll deductions. Please contact your Human Resources Department or Payroll Office to inquire about your employer’s workplace giving options.

If you are interested in learning more, contact Laura Van Tassell at (267) 969-6271 or Lvantassell@PhilaRMH.org.

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**AmazonSmile**

Did you know that all your purchases at Amazon can benefit our families? Visit Smile.Amazon.com and choose the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House as your charity.
Are you looking for an educational way to teach your child the importance of helping others? Look no further than the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House’s Read for the House program. Through this program, your child will ask family and friends to sponsor them for every minute they read during the month of February. Since the funds raised are not based on the number of pages read, children can focus on understanding what they are reading.

Your child can be proud of the time spent reading, knowing that proceeds from the Read for the House program will help families with seriously ill children staying at the Ronald McDonald House.

To register your child or learn more, please visit PhilaRMH.org/Read or contact Alyssa Tritschler at alyssa@philarmh.org or (267) 969-6264. When registering, please select “Individual Readers Team,” unless your child’s school is participating in the program.