



Ronald McDonald
House Charities®
Alberta

VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER

FAMILIES RELY ON THE CARE WE PROVIDE

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"FAMILIES RELY ON THE CARE WE PROVIDE"



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VOLUME 2 / 2024



To Our Amazing Volunteers Happy National Volunteer Week 2024!

This year's theme is "Every Moment Matters." As we come together to celebrate Volunteer Appreciation Week, we are filled with immense gratitude for each one of you. Your dedication, compassion, and willingness to give your time are the pillars upon which our Ronald McDonald House community stands, and it is with great joy that we honor your invaluable contributions.

In a place where every moment matters, you embody the essence of this sentiment through your selfless acts of kindness. From the simple gestures of opening doors to the fresh brownies and cookies that make the House smell great and bring smiles to faces, and the trips to magic rooms that bond you to caregivers while you bring wonderment to their children. Your presence is a source of joy for both the families we serve and the staff who work alongside you.

It is easy to celebrate you, today and every day, because we know that we wouldn't be Ronald McDonald House without you, as we reflect on the significance of your contributions, please know that you are the heartbeat of our organization. Your dedication enriches the lives of families during their most difficult moments, and your presence brings comfort and delight to all who cross your path.

Thank you for being the embodiment of compassion, generosity, and love. Your commitment to making every moment matter is a gift to us all.

From Team RMHC Alberta



Volunteers are the lifeblood of Ronald McDonald House Charities®. They contribute in a multitude of ways: on Committees, delivering programs, baking & cooking, keeping the Houses tidy and in good working order, supporting events, managing our front desks, interfacing with families on unit at our partner hospitals & shuttling them to-and-fro, and the list goes on and on. We're fortunate to have a stable of skilled and committed people that fulfil critical roles and deliver value to all stakeholders. As far as core programming is concerned, volunteers have a direct impact on our organization day to day, which not only maximizes family experience, but it also generates important cost savings.

Last month a study was led by RMHC Toronto. It analyzed and cross-referenced staff & volunteer numbers with operating plans & budgets across the country. The study demonstrated how important volunteers are as human resource in terms of productivity and economically. Alberta stands out as the chapter which employs more volunteers than any other in Canada. Altogether, 617 volunteers worked more than 25,000 hours in 2023. Think of everything that those volunteers accomplished! And RMHC Alberta's ratio of compensation to total budget is the third lowest from coast to coast. Savings are invested directly in programs and families. That's something to be proud of!

Our Board and staff are truly grateful for everything that volunteers do. We simply wouldn't be the same without you. In the end, it's the families who benefit most from your investment of time and talent. That's arguably your most important contribution.

Jason Evanson
CEO, RMHC® Alberta



THE BIG BUILD

Updates

In 2023, RMHC Alberta served over 1,200 families from 200 communities. Despite this, we are currently meeting only 14% of the total need for our services. We have begun expanding our Calgary House and will do the same in Edmonton soon. The expansion will add approximately 60 family suites to each of the two Houses.

Construction on the Calgary House expansion is moving along at an incredible pace. After breaking ground in June of 2023, we have seen the completion of the concrete pouring (including the elevator shaft and final 3rd floor slab). The exterior wall framing is 90% complete and roof framing is 40% complete. We are thrilled that work is on time, and on budget.

On the volunteer side we are excited to welcome three new Cabinet members: Kevin Lowe, Les Gombik, and David King. If you see them, please give them a big thank you for supporting the expansion of RMHC Alberta.

We have welcomed several major donors to the campaign already and invite you to see who is already supporting The Big Build at rmhcalbertabuild.org.

As a volunteer, you have a unique opportunity to get involved in the initial launch of the Big Build: Brick by Brick Campaign.

Until May 23, as a volunteer with RMHC Alberta, and as part of The Big Build campaign, we invite you to donate \$1,000 to support the expansion of RMHC Alberta.

In recognition of this donation, you will have the opportunity to personalize a brick that will be displayed on the exterior wall of the Calgary House expansion. Each brick can bear your name or a special message (maximum 60 characters), making your contribution uniquely yours.

Our Brick-by-Brick campaign has a goal to raise \$4 million for more room, comfort, and hope for families in need. Join us in leaving a lasting impression on the House. For more information or to make a donation to Brick-by-Brick visit rmhcalbertabuild.org/brick-by-brick

BRICK
THE BIG BUILD BY
BRICK

**This opportunity is being offered to RMHC Alberta volunteers, families, and other stakeholders until May 23rd when it will launch to the public. Recognition on bricks on May 23rd will be \$2000.



Volunteer Stats for 2023	2023	2022
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In House Volunteer Hours	<p>23,077.05</p> <p>Calgary – 10,726.56 Edmonton – 10,475.49 Red Deer – 1,701.27 Medicine Hat – 173.73</p>	<p>17,548.27</p> <p>Calgary – 7,253.41 Edmonton – 8,316.14 Red Deer – 1,777.43 Medicine Hat – 201.29</p>
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In House Volunteers	<p>367</p> <p>Calgary – 196 Edmonton – 128 Red Deer – 38 Medicine Hat – 5</p>	<p>263</p> <p>Calgary – 130 Edmonton – 98 Red Deer – 31 Medicine Hat – 4</p>
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Number of Home for Dinners	<p>922</p> <p>Calgary – 433 Edmonton – 339 Red Deer – 143 Medicine Hat – 7</p>	<p>651</p> <p>Calgary – 306 Edmonton – 254 Red Deer – 91 Medicine Hat – 0</p>
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"At a time where our lives were thrown into chaos, we hadn't given a second to think about where we would stay. The RMH in Red Deer welcomed us so graciously. We had a safe place to sleep, food to keep us going, and the most amazing support from the staff and volunteers. All we had to worry about was caring for our newborn baby girl in the NICU. I can't imagine what we would have done without this amazing organization."

- The MacLeod family



1000 Hour Society Members



Tom Schmaltz

Front Host

Hours - 1,019.73

"I began as a volunteer about 5 years ago I believe, and began working Monday evenings. I was shocked that at that time, I was the only male volunteer. I'm glad more men have joined our team.

I've seen a lot of changes over the years. I was here for the Covid quarantines, wearing masks, and forever sanitizing everything and anything. So glad those days are done, and hopefully, we never see again. Families coming and going, both staff and volunteers coming and going as well.

I've always thought that our folks who volunteer are a special breed. Giving, caring, sharing, and just being at the House to help but also chat with families and make the House more of a home.

In the time I've been here, I've done many varied tasks. Painting, laundry, cooking, cleaning, planting, watering, moving Christmas decorations, moving furniture, sweeping the parkade, and let's not forget sanitizing, lol. I also do a weekly water run, refilling the water bottles for our dispenser.

I've had the chance to meet all sorts of people, from near and far. I've come from an agricultural background mostly, so I have always enjoyed chatting with families with farm backgrounds.

It's been a great ride, and I've always said after a shift, I always walk away with a smile."



Ted Schenk

Shuttle Driver

Hours - 3,277.04

"Serving others gives me purpose. Shuttling families back and forth to the hospitals makes the lives of the RMH families just a little bit easier. It also makes me appreciate the blessing of good health that I and my family presently enjoy and helps me realized how quickly that all can change. Kindness, like a boomerang always returns. I am paid by S-M-I-L-E-S and thankful words makes for joyful service."



Bill Evans

Shuttle Driver

Hours – 1,618.96

“Hi, my name is Bill, and I am retired. I always planned on volunteering in my retirement, as I like to keep busy. RMH fits into what I was looking for, as the days and hours to volunteer are flexible. I am one of the many shuttle van drivers. The RMH staff are a fun group to be around. I find it rewarding when I can help out in any way, it makes me feel good. “



Ian Bryce

Facilities Support

Hours – 1,804.58

“When you're there, it's that much easier not to think about home. When you're in that situation, the Ronald McDonald House lets you just be there for each other, first and foremost, and then for your child.”

- Manuel family

Cliff Gervais

Shuttle Driver

Hours – 1,395.92

“Annual Block Party 2017

This was a BIG event. I was given two assignments:

1. Pickup the keynote speaker from the airport.
 2. Host a VIP couple on an all day tour of Edmonton.
- Here's how it all rolled out:



1, Keynote speaker> Dr. Audrey Evans, former Chief of Oncology at the Philadelphia Children's' Hospital; co-founder of the first RMHC House (1974). It was her idea. Dr. Evans, 92 years young, was amazing; she spoke with intensity, love, and more energy than a six year old! I was floored.

2. VIP couple> Fred and Fran Hill – parent's of 3 year old cancer patient Kim (given 5-6 days to live, but lived to age 44 thanks to Dr. Evans and her team). Extremely thankful, Fred enlisted the aid of his NFL Philadelphia Eagles teammates, management and the owner to raise over a \$100,000 to build our first house.”



Teresa Henry

Front Host

Hours – 1,313.36



Cathi Nelson

Front Host

Hours – 2,021.47

“One of the experiences I have always appreciated at RMH is the diversity of our families. Every night you will see families from different cultures, languages, ages, orientation gathering over meals. The support they give each other through cancer treatments, premature babies, mental health or life altering accidents is something you would not experience anywhere. When there has been no common language I have seen parents and grandparents walk their journeys. There, lifelong connections have been made. Our dining rooms are Community Centres .”



Gil Baldwin

Front Host & Shuttle Driver

Hours – 1,272.56

“My volunteering at Ronald McDonald House Edmonton started really by happenstance. I had moved from Vancouver to Edmonton in 2012 to be with family. I worked for a few months then retired and travelled for a while and realized I didn't want to travel that much so decided I wanted to volunteer some where but didn't know where. Happenstance....I came home from Mexico and was watching the news and saw a “callout” looking for volunteers to start up a full time shuttle program. I paused the TV, wrote down the email address and sent off a response immediately. My time as volunteer shuttle driver began in February of 2015.

I was given one shift, Thursday, 1-5. It was not enough, RMH grabbed my heart and would not let go. Eventually signed up for 2-6 shifts per week.

One particular memory a mom would greet me, at least once per day , at the entrance to the hospital, with her little baby boy to say hi.”



Mike Stern

Shuttle Driver

Hours – 2,033.48

“The shuttle driving job seems so worthwhile when a grateful family thanks you profusely for your time and effort in helping them through their very stressful situation. Also the House has a very warm working atmosphere amongst the staff, volunteers and guests.”



David Lawrence
Shuttle Driver
Hours – 1,238.54

“Do I feel special at the Ronald McDonald House? You bet. I have had so many special moments with the wonderful guests at the home. Volunteering for casinos, gardening, cleaning, golf tourneys, etc. is needed and appreciated by all, but the sharing of popcorn and pizza and conversation with sick children at a wrestling match at Rogers was a highlight. One little girl who could not even walk was seated beside me for the full event of about 2 hours.

The squeals of joy and exclamations of awe from her of the wrestlers moves was absolutely enthralling for both of us. She said to me this was the best time of her life. Sadly, this was the last fun event of her short life and I got to share it with her. She and this experience will never be forgotten.”



Pat Cunningham
Front Host
Hours – 1,564.38



Vicky Blinston St John
Finance Support
Hours – 1,413.93



Rose Gallace
Shuttle Driver
Hours – 1,112.64



Linda Day
Front Host
Hours – 1,044.5



Doug Urichuk
Shuttle Driver
Hours – 2,817.98

“I always say what I do (giving a ride) is so minor compared to the sacrifices of the parents going to the hospital daily and for long hours!

Also visiting with parents has made me appreciate that our kids were not sick enough to require hospitalization!!”



Kwet Teng
Shuttle Driver
Hours – 1,038.72

“We arrived in Red Deer directly from Paris for the early birth of our daughter. Nothing was anticipated and we did not even have a place to stay or know about the House. We felt kindness and happiness from the very first minute we arrived from everyone on the team. One thing we loved was meeting volunteers every day and being able to share our story and hear their advice. It was so good to meet people who care even so far away from home. Being close to the hospital and our daughter allowed us to spend more time with her and it changed everything for our family. The generosity, comfort, and attention for the three of us was very moving.”

- The Loubier family



Murray Hay
Shuttle Driver
Hours – 4,142.58

“When I retired in 2016, I was looking for something to fill my newfound ‘free time” (or rather, my wife, Marian, was looking for something for me).

Luckily for both of us, good friends invited us to join their regular group to prepare a meal for ‘Home for Dinner’. We were taken on a tour and I asked Gil what sort of volunteer opportunities there might be for me and he suggested driving the shuttle van. Well, the rest is happy history!

I remember that during my first few shifts I wanted to be as invisible as possible. I quickly learned that RMHC families are open and receptive to talking about their days – or not. Over the last seven years I have been fortunate to enjoy quiet conversations, share happy stories and make memories with the very special and appreciative families who call RMHC home for a day, a week or many months.

I definitely consider myself to be the lucky one who connects with many amazing staff, fellow volunteers and families with every shift, which has resulted in more than 4,000 McHappy hours (and counting)!”

Teammate and Volunteer Socials!

We have been having a lot of fun at our socials! It has been a great chance to have our volunteers and our staff come together and not have to worry about answering the phone, or even the door. For volunteers it has been wonderful to see friends come together from different shifts that don't normally get to see each other. We have done things in the past like ride a streetcar, go for ice cream, eat a meal and most recently in Edmonton we came together and volunteered at the Food Bank. These events are never mandatory and happen at our own cost. They are an excellent way to get to know your fellow teammates if you are looking for a reason to socialize!



Provincial Volunteer Meeting

These meetings are where our volunteers can come together and learn about the most recent and important happenings in the Houses as well as share in celebrations! These meetings are virtual on teams and you will be emailed a link to join!

**Upcoming volunteer meeting:
May 1 and June 5**

Information Session for Prospective Volunteers

These meetings are for folks who are interested in learning more about volunteering with us. They are informal and give a great overview of opportunities with RMHC Alberta. Feel free to let your friends know! These meetings are virtual and your friends can sign up by heading to the volunteer page of the website.

**Upcoming volunteer meeting:
May 9 and June 6**

Word Search: Gratitude

P T J K N O I T I N G O C E R
R N O I T A I C E R P P A T M
I E Y G A E C R P F N P F N O
D I A R I S I R L S P N A N O
E G I A N D I U A N T P I M E
S H A T P S R P P A H N I A N
D A D I J A T Y H T A P M Y S
N F M T T I L P R H N R Y S H
N F I U T P S S E I K T I S R
E E R D P N D U K P F E G F P
O C A E E O N D I H U A A T T
T T T T I C Y N I I L I O N D
S I I C R S S E N I P P A H A
P O O S A T I S F A C T I O N
K N N P R A I S E A Y R P N D

GRATITUDE
ADMIRATION
AFFECTION
APPRECIATION
HAPPINESS
JOY
PRAISE
PRIDE
RECOGNITION
SATISFACTION
SYMPATHY
THANKFUL

Throughout the year we have two times that are busiest for our event schedules. Those times are always the Holiday season and the summer. As the days get warmer, we have our summer schedule! Below you can find our signature events dates, and as we get closer to summer, we will have many more opportunities for support with third party events popping up in volunteer hub for you to access. Over the year, our signature events and third part events portfolios bring in over a million dollars each, and we couldn't do that without you. Every 50/50 ticket you sell, every golf cart you drive and pancake you flip really helps the House! Thank you so much for helping us get through event season!

McHappy Day: May 8

2024 Golf Event locations and dates:

Grande Prairie: June 3, the Dunes Golf & Winter Club

Red Deer: June 6, Alberta Springs Golf Resort

Cold Lake: June 15, Cold Lake Golf & Winter Club

Canmore: June 17, Silvertip Resort

Medicine Hat: June 20, Desert Blume Golf Club

Edmonton: June 26, The Quarry

Shoot for the House: September 7, Grande Prairie