

Ronald McDonald House Charities Overview

1: What Does Ronald McDonald House Charities Do?

Ronald McDonald House Charities (RMHC) supports Ronald McDonald Houses in Australia and other programs that directly help seriously ill children live happier, healthier lives.

The main project of RMHC is the 12 Ronald McDonald Houses throughout Australia. Ronald McDonald Houses provide affordable accommodation for families of seriously ill children being treated at nearby hospitals.

Since 1981 Australia's 12 Ronald McDonald Houses have provided more than 25,000 families more than 750,000 individual nights of accommodation.



2: Global Charity

RMHC is a global charity, which began in the US in 1974 as Ronald McDonald Children's Charities (RMCC) in memory of Ray Kroc, the pioneer of the McDonald's Corporation. In that year the first Ronald McDonald House was opened.

The House was named Ronald McDonald House because the character of Ronald McDonald represented fun, happiness and trust for children. For seriously ill children, a Ronald McDonald House was a place where they felt safe could be with their families and could not be hurt.

To date, RMHC worldwide has awarded more than US \$440 million in grants to children's programs. RMHC has a network of 181 local charities serving in 49 countries and there are currently 259 Ronald McDonald Houses in 28 countries, 101 Ronald McDonald Family Rooms in ten countries and 29 Ronald McDonald Care Mobiles in three countries throughout the world.

3: History in Australia

The first Ronald McDonald House in Australia was opened at the Royal Alexandra Hospital for Children, Camperdown Sydney in September 1981. Four years later in 1985, McDonald's Australia established Ronald McDonald House Charities - Australia. McDonald's continue to pay all administration and management costs for the Charity, which means that 100% of every donation goes directly to the Charity's programs.

4: What is a Ronald McDonald House

Ronald McDonald House is a low cost home-away-from-home for the families of seriously ill children being treated at nearby hospitals. Rather than spend the night in a hospital waiting room, or even in the car, family members can stay in comfort at a Ronald McDonald House and receive support from staff, volunteers or other families who are sharing similar experiences. Houses contain private family rooms with en-suits and common kitchens, lounges, quiet rooms and play areas. As many as 240 families will be sleeping at a Ronald McDonald House tonight and this year our Houses will provide home away from home for over 3,700 families.

5: Who is eligible to stay at Ronald McDonald Houses?

The Houses are located next to major women's and children's hospitals in each state. Any family with a sick child receiving treatment at the hospital is able to stay at the House, however the House is primarily set-up for families that have to travel long distances for their child to receive treatment.

6: Which hospitals have Ronald McDonald Houses?

The twelve Ronald McDonald Houses are located at the following hospitals;

- Westmead House, NSW – The Children’s Hospital Westmead
- Randwick House, NSW – Sydney Children’s Hospital Randwick
- Hunter House, NSW – The John Hunter Hospital Newcastle
- Mater House, QLD – Mater Children’s Hospital, Brisbane
- Herston House, QLD – Royal Brisbane and Women’s Hospital Brisbane
- Townsville House, QLD – Townsville General Hospital, Townsville
- Parkville House, VIC – Royal Children’s Hospital Melbourne
- Monash House, VIC – Monash Medical Centre, Clayton
- Adelaide House, SA – Women’s and Children’s Hospital, Adelaide
- Perth House, WA – Princess Margaret Hospital for Children, Perth
- Hobart House, TAS – Royal Hobart Hospital, Hobart
- Wagga Wagga, NSW – Wagga Wagga Base Hospital, Wagga Wagga

7: How is RMHC Funded?

We are proud that a significant amount of our funds each year come from donations and fundraising by McDonald’s employees, Franchisees and Suppliers. As well, McDonald’s Australia pays all of RMHC’s administrative expenses. That means every cent donated goes directly to the programs which will benefit children.

RMHC also receives funds from the following:-

- General public donations
- Corporate donations
- General public supporting McHappy Day
- Businesses and schools running fundraising events such as muffin days and BBQ’s
- Businesses supporting fundraising events like our RMHC Charity Balls and making donations
- McDonald’s Customers putting money in money boxes in McDonald’s restaurants.

8: What other projects does RMHC provide?

RMHC supports a number of other programs that help seriously ill children to live happier healthier lives in addition to the Houses. These include:-

- Ronald McDonald Learning Program
- RMHC Cord Blood Bank Program
- Ronald McDonald Family Rooms
- Ronald McDonald Family Retreats
- RMHC Grants & Facilities

The Ronald McDonald Learning Program gives specialist education to children who are recovering from serious illness. The program aims to help children ‘catch up’ on their basic education skills following lengthy hospital stays and absence from school. The Ronald McDonald Learning Program was launched in 1999 and operates in several NSW regional and metropolitan areas including Wollongong, Coffs Harbour, Newcastle and Sydney. It also operates in Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth and Brisbane and is soon to commence an online program to assist students in Tasmania as well as isolated students in Victoria.

This year an additional 110 children will be enrolled in the Learning Program bringing the total enrolment for the year to 330 children. Since 1998 more than 1000 children have received help to catch up with their education from the Learning Program.

The RMHC Cord Blood Bank Program is the major funder for the collection and storage of umbilical cord blood. Cord blood is rich in marrow stem cells and is being used as an alternative to bone marrow in treating childhood leukemia and some cancers.

Ronald McDonald Family Rooms provide comfortable home like rooms within hospitals for families to relax in whilst attending to their sick children. They often contain kitchens, laundries, bathrooms, lounges and quiet nap rooms. RMHC has Family Rooms at the Princess Margaret Hospital, Perth; the John Hunter Hospital, Newcastle; the Canberra Hospital and Rotary House in Ballarat. As many as 500 families per month and 6,000 families per year visit the John Hunter Family Room. RMHC plans to build more Family Rooms over the next few years.

Ronald McDonald Family Retreats provide families with seriously ill children free holiday accommodation. There are now five Family Retreats in Australia: Fiona Lodge and Forster Beach House, NSW; Kessia’s Cottage, Victoria, and Bunbury and Jurien Bay Beach Houses in WA. Together these Houses accommodate over 460 families per year.

Ronald McDonald Grants & Facilities RMHC regularly makes grants to hospitals to enhance the quality of care and support for both children and their families. Our Facilities include children’s wards, children’s treatment clinics, and RMHC Care-By-Parent Units. Care-By-Parent Units provide accommodation within the hospital for parents and their seriously ill children who still need hospital care, but no longer require on-ward treatment.

More information can be obtained from the RMHC website www.rmhc.org.au

