



RMHC[®]
South Central Ontario

2024
Annual Report



Keeping families close[®]



Sansoni Family, Niagara Falls | 129 nights

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Land Acknowledgment

We are privileged to support families from across South Central Ontario on lands that have been stewarded by Indigenous peoples for thousands of years. RMHC SCO is situated on the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe nations, covered under the Between the Lakes Treaty No. 3 and protected by the Dish with One Spoon Wampum agreement. In addition, we operate within the Marotta Family Hospital and Grand River Hospital, and we honour those lands on which we provide care. We acknowledge the enduring presence of Indigenous peoples and their deep, ongoing connection to this land. As guests and stewards of these territories, we give thanks to those who have been here before us, and we commit to honouring their legacy, respecting their stewardship, and understanding our responsibility in fostering reconciliation.



Ronald McDonald
House Charities®
South Central Ontario



A Message from our CEO

Reflecting on 2024, I am filled with immense pride and gratitude for the unwavering dedication of our incredible team and volunteers. Together, we have made the year a resounding success, supporting hundreds of families in ways that matter most.

Our focus has, and always will be, on making a challenging experience easier for our families. This past year, we took great strides in enhancing our programming, accommodations, and overall services offered.

Our purpose is simple, we are here to support families of sick children. We are not just an organization: we are a community – a family - bound by a common purpose. And this year, we've made significant progress in reaching even more families. The opening of our new Family Room in Niagara and new Hospitality Cart in Kitchener are shining examples of how expanding into the communities we support allows us to bring even better services closer to the families who need them most.

Looking ahead, I am incredibly optimistic about the future. While we continue to grow, our growth will be measured by the lasting impact we have on the families we serve. Together, we will keep striving to be a constant source of support, comfort, and care for families during their most challenging times.

None of this is possible without our generous donors and our Founding & Forever Partner, McDonald's, whose support has been a cornerstone of our ability to make a difference. This past year, their commitment to our cause has been truly invaluable, helping us serve families in deeper and more meaningful ways. We are proud to work alongside each and every one of you, and we look forward to many more years of service.

Thank you to all who have made this year so special. Here's to continuing our work, with families at the heart of everything we do.

With gratitude,

Mario De Divitiis

Mario De Divitiis, CEO

Message from the Board Chair

As I reflect on another year of service, I am proud of the incredible progress we have made in supporting families at RMHC SCO. This year we celebrate 32 years of providing comfort and care to families in need. Over the past year alone, we served 727 families and welcomed over 116,000 visits to our Family Rooms - a mere snapshot of the impact of our dedicated team, hundreds of volunteers, and incredible supporters.

My wife, Marcia and I are proud to volunteer regularly, serving meals and engaging with families directly. It is a true privilege to be so closely connected to the mission and experience firsthand the difference we make together. We are lucky to be able to interact with and hear from our families, who, despite their challenges, continue to inspire with their resilience, strength, and gratitude. Their stories inspire me to continue this work and remind me of the profound impact we have on their lives. It is an honour to serve these families, and their courage motivates us to do even more, ensuring that no family faces their challenges alone.

We have also focused on making thoughtful updates to our facilities, ensuring that we continue to offer a warm and supportive environment for the families who depend on us. Our vision for the future is not about expanding larger but about expanding better - enhancing the support we offer, strengthening our programs, and providing even more nutritious meals to the beautiful families we are privileged to serve.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to our continued success. I am deeply grateful to all of my fellow board members for their unwavering commitment and guidance throughout the year. We look forward to continuing to grow and serve our community with compassion, care, and dedication.

With thanks,

Paul Matteis
RMHC SCO Board Chair



Paul is pictured with a Guelph McDonald's employee on McHappy Day

Board of Directors

Paul Matteis
President

Michael Kemp
Past President

Mary-Anne Drummond
Vice President

Gillian White CA, CPA
Treasurer

David Millen

Ryan Sgro

Bruce Squires

Steve Tanner

Kathie Gilmour

Julie Dell'Aniello

Val Jedras

Meet the Michalski Family





Keeping Families Close®

Soon after Magdalena was born - at just 25 weeks and 3 days - she was rushed to McMaster Children's Hospital NICU. The family was overwhelmed with worry given her extreme prematurity and knew little Magdalena had a long journey ahead. Fortunately, they were able to stay at RMHC SCO, just steps from the hospital, which made a world of difference during those difficult months.

Being able to stay so close to the hospital allowed Elise and Peter to visit Magdalena multiple times a day and be actively involved in her care, something that would have been impossible if they had to make the 55-minute commute from home each way. Being cared for at RMHC meant the Michalski's were able to focus entirely on their daughter without worrying about anything else.

For their 18-month-old daughter, Zosia, RMHC was a place where she not only found stability but also grew and thrived. She celebrated many "firsts" at the House, from new milestones to simple joys like playing in the playroom. Zosia quickly became part of the RMHC family, making friends with staff and volunteers too. This sense of community made all the difference, giving Zosia the normalcy she needed while her parents focused on Magdalena's care.

The staff and volunteers at RMHC became an essential support system, offering kindness and emotional comfort when the family needed it most. They also connected with other NICU families, which helped them feel less isolated and more supported. As Elise and Peter navigated their way through the NICU journey, RMHC gave them the strength to cope with the emotional and physical challenges of having a critically ill child.

"Being at a hospital for days, weeks, or even months at a time can wear families down mentally, physically, spiritually, and emotionally. RMHC helps parents meet their basic needs when they're giving so much of themselves to their child. Keeping families close and together truly impacts the prognosis and recovery of a child, making a difficult situation better for everyone." - Elise Michalski

RMHC was able to be a home away from home, giving the family the ability to stay close to Magdalena while maintaining a sense of routine and stability for Zosia. Without RMHC, the months in the NICU would have been so much harder to manage.



Our Founding & Forever Partner McDonald's Restaurants

Since the day we opened our doors in 1993, McDonald's Restaurants across South Central Ontario have stood by RMHC SCO, supporting thousands of families through this powerful partnership.

In 2024, over 90 McDonald's Restaurants, independently owned and operated, along with their dedicated restaurant teams came together to raise more than \$1.2 million in support of families with sick children. And get this – these McDonald's teams set a national record during their November Fundraising Challenge, raising the most funds through Round-Up ever in a one-month period for any RMHC!

This achievement is a direct reflection of the commitment, hard work, and compassion of our local owner-operators and their teams. Their tireless efforts continue to make a lasting impact on the lives of families in our community. As our Founding & Forever Partner, McDonald's generous support is a steadfast foundation in ensuring that families can stay together during challenging times.

Thank you for your incredible support of
RMHC SCO!

\$1,232,286
raised by McDonald's
teams across South
Central Ontario
in 2024

Includes funds raised from all McDonald's giving programs;
Happy Meal, Coinbox, Cashless Giving, RMHC Cookie,
McHappy Day and other Special Programs.



Ethan Kennedy, Guelph
The Kennedy Family | 9 nights

Our Impact

At our House



727
Families
served



13,140
Nights of
Comfort



60,000
Home-cooked
meals



94,910
Loads of
laundry



1,874,072^{km}
Commute
saved

In Hospital



116,740+
Family
Room visits



6,000+
Snacks and
meals



3
Hospitality
Carts

RMHC SCO
saved families
\$4,125,960
in out-of-pocket
expenses in
2024

**The Middel Family
Welland | 61 nights**



Grand River Hospital
Kitchener
Hospitality Cart



Marotta Family Hospital
St. Catharines
Ronald McDonald Family Room
Hospitality Cart



McMaster Children's Hospital
Hamilton
Ronald McDonald Family Room (2)
Hospitality Cart

Expanding into new communities

Ronald McDonald Family Rooms are a critical extension of the RMHC mission. They provide respite areas directly inside the hospital to ensure that families in need can take care of themselves while close to their hospitalized children. The opening of a new Ronald McDonald Family Room at the Marotta Family Hospital in Niagara was an important next step, supporting more families and enhancing the patient/family experience at Niagara Health.

The Impact

Since opening in September 2024, **each month...**



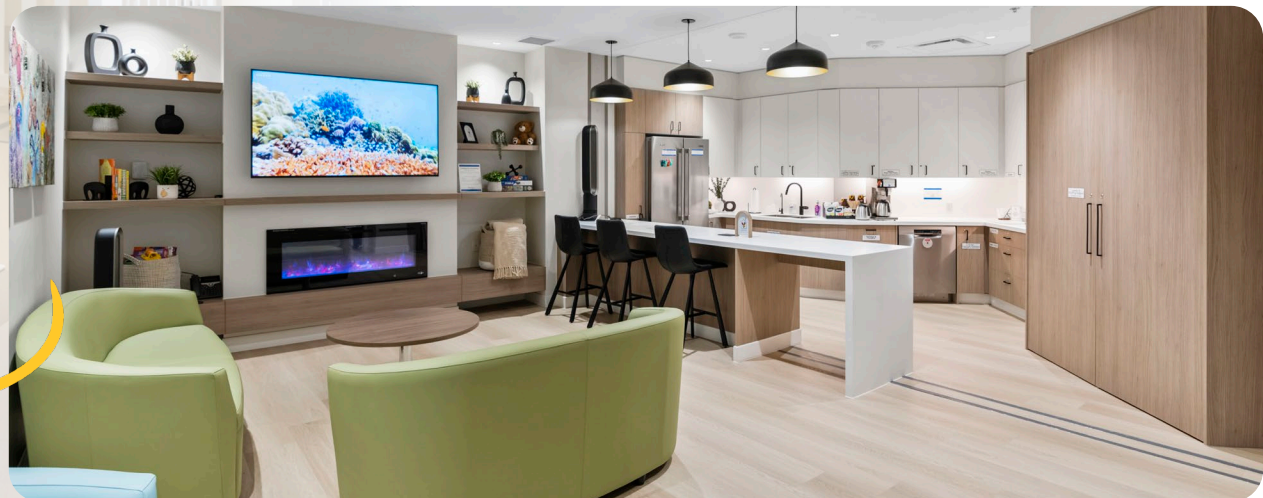
2,600+
visits



3,000+
drinks & snacks



120+
loads of laundry



 **Ronald
McDonald
Family
Room®**

Thank you

National Mission Partners

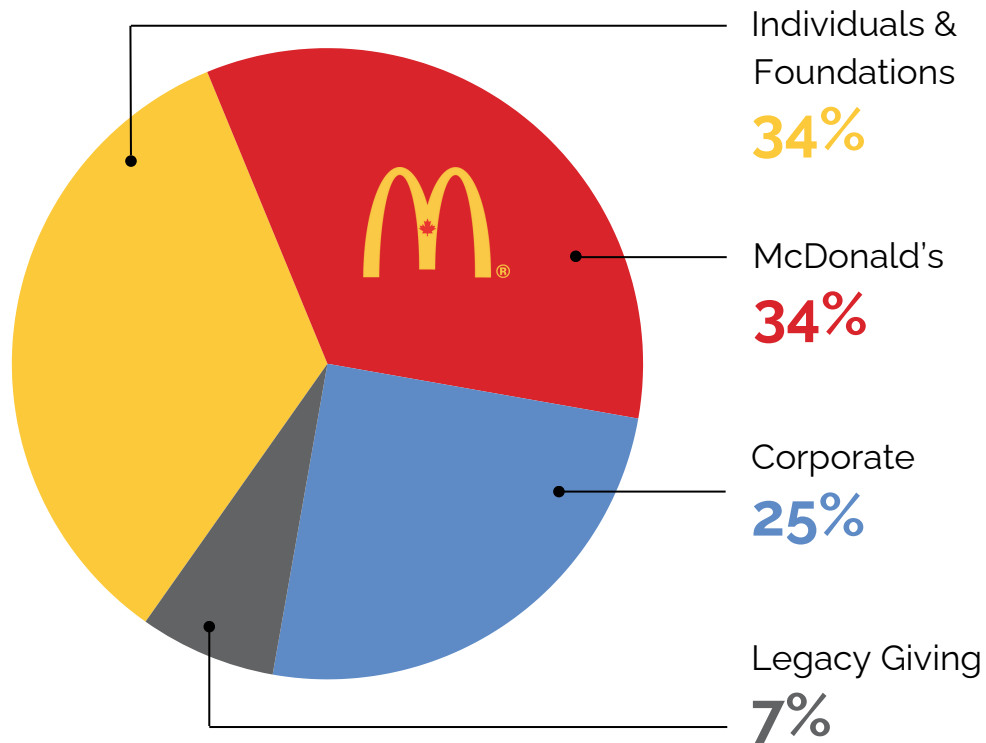


Chapter Partners & Sponsors

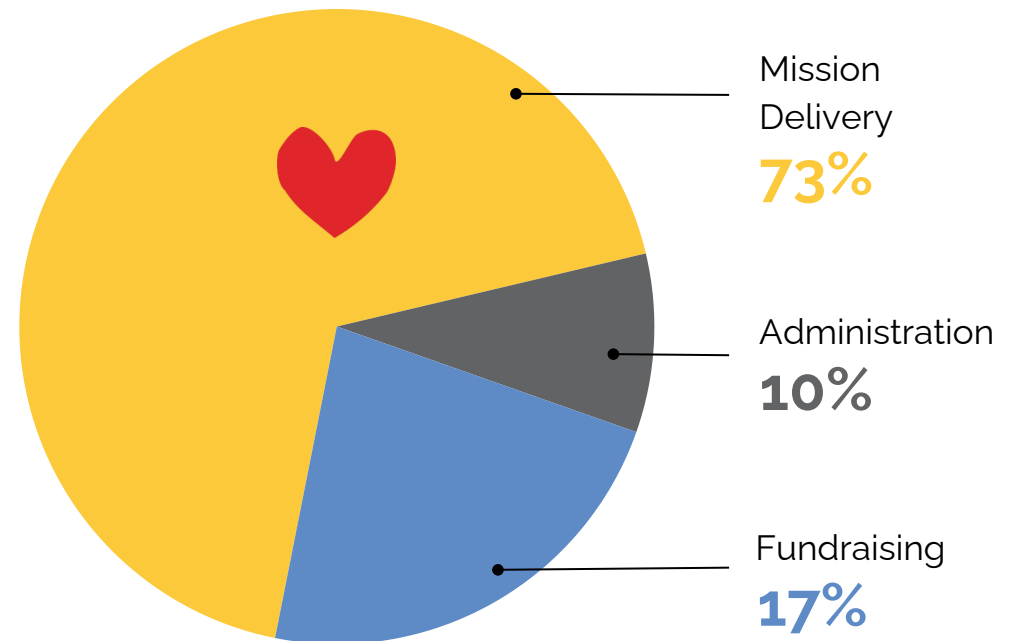


By the numbers

\$5,453,065
raised in 2024!



Your support at work



Thank you for supporting RMHC SCO



Free family photo shoots
Perry Family '24



Family experiences
Brown family, Woodfield Camp



Free family photo shoots
Nisay Family '24



Special treats for families
Fine Dining for Families '24



Family events for current and alumni families
Light up the House '24



Holidays in Family Rooms
Cookie decorating '24



Keeping families close in 2024