

Tennessee's First

# Ronald McDonald House™

1705 West Clinch Avenue | Knoxville, Tennessee 37916

[knoxrmhc.org](http://knoxrmhc.org)

Spring 2017

## BEAT THE WINTER BLUES

What could brighten a dreary winter's day more than the promise of spring?! That was the premise behind our idea to host an event at a greenhouse filled with blossoming plants . . . and not just any greenhouse, but Stanley's.

The first Friday in February has been earmarked for this stellar wine and cheese reception that was enjoyed by over 300 guests this year. The capacity crowd enjoyed Anne Jackson's lovely harp music as they nibbled and sipped their way through all the beautiful plants and gifts that Stanley's had to offer. Thanks to our guests and most generous sponsors: Sheila Barnett, John & Kathy Buckingham, Janell Cecil, CTM Financial LLC, Children's Hospital, Generations OB-GYN, Barna & Mary Ann Gibson, Hodges, Doughty & Carson, PLLC, Julie Howard & Ted Flickinger, Pamela Diltz, Bill & Jo Terry, Wells Fargo Advisors, Robert Kelso, DDS, The Pour Guys, Massey Electric, Akima, and B-97.5 Radio, \$16,551 was raised that evening. You will find that winter isn't so bad after all if you have this event on your calendar!



Working hard on decorating



A happy attendee



A touch of whimsy



More gorgeous color

## GOLF 2016

Our longest-running annual fundraiser, the golf tournament, continues to be the most lucrative event out of the forty or so that are on our agenda each and every year.

One hundred thirty-six golfers hit the links last June for a day of fun, fellowship, and the desire to help families, present and future, who turn to our House for comfort and compassion during such a difficult time in their lives.

As the last putt was sunk, we were delighted to learn that our generous participants and sponsors had helped raise an amazing \$76,985!!

You won't want to miss the fun this year as we're all set to go again on June 2 at Egwani Farms with all the details found on our website. Hope to see you there!



Ready to tee-off

Our beloved grill master



## FOCUS ON A FAMILY- THE OWNBYS

For the majority of parents-to-be expecting an addition to the family, there is the anxious rush to the hospital once contractions begin, followed by the delivery of the little "bundle of joy", and then home a day or two later to begin a happy new life together.

That was the case when Patrick and Julie Ownby of LaFollette, TN welcomed their firstborn little Katie into the world six years ago.... And they had no reason to think that the birth of their son would be any different. But last September at only 24 weeks, little Ryker came into this world unexpectedly due to a blood clot. As is often the case with premature births, his little lungs were severely under-developed and he was immediately transferred to Children's Hospital..... a far cry from the beautiful nursery awaiting him at home. Thankfully, it didn't take long for social workers to step in

and suggest that staying at our Ronald McDonald House might be a good fit for them. So many guests who find themselves a resident at our home admit that their knowledge of...who we are and what we do... is limited to seeing our name on canisters at McDonald's, period... and that was true for the Ownbys as they really didn't know what to expect. Their first impression of RMH was how huge the House appeared and how apprehensive they were of "living with strangers". "But the staff did a wonderful job of helping my family feel comfortable and helping us adjust", said Patrick. "The greatest benefit has been the opportunity to be near our son, keeping us all together and the peace of mind financially that we could have a safe place to stay and food to eat."

It's the uncertainty of the situation that can be so unsettling and not being able to plan ahead for instance, like last fall as the holidays were approaching. It was a bitter pill



The Ownbys

to swallow when they realized they would be spending Christmas at our Home and not their own. Patrick recalled, "My heart was so heavy as we came back to the RMH after visiting our son on Christmas Eve. Julie and I were trying to embrace the spirit of the season for the sake of our daughter. But when

we walked into the House, it was magical feeling the love and seeing the decorations, food, gifts and even Santa himself. While strangers might have filled the House, we celebrated as a 'family' sharing special moments when we all needed the cheer."

It's been a long and emotional journey for this family as little Ryker has already endured seven surgeries and there may be even more in his future that could extend their stay with us for several more months. "Being away from home and our support system has been very difficult and we've had many fearful days. But having a supportive staff that shows compassion and lends a listening ear gives us strength and encouragement in some of our darkest hours. I wish more people understood the impact and importance the RMH has in the community. We feel as if we've been blessed to have such an amazing resource at a time of dire need."

## ADPI

We so deeply admire the energy, creativity, and passion that the ladies of ADPI so generously share with us. In addition to sending a group of girls to the House every week to do whatever chores need doing, they all find the time to host "Fall Fest" each November prior to a UT football game, an event that features food, fun, and a silent auction. And coming up the end of April is their "Hoops for the House" event held at the HPER gym on UT's campus. Their hearts are as big as their beautiful smiles and we couldn't appreciate their loving support more!!



Waiting for kick-off

## SPLASH COUNTRY

Once again, our dear "family" at Dollywood's Splash Country hosted a "Ronald McDonald House Day" at the premier water park in the nation on August 13 where a portion of each ticket

sold that day helped our House. An incredible \$15,000 was raised in a matter of hours bringing their fourteen-year total support of our wonderful Home to \$324,063.



Fun begins here!

## KIND FOLKS.... CARING HEARTS

We're always honored and humbled to be remembered in a host of ways... from monetary donations, to receiving needed items collected for us, and the gifts of time and labor... all of which are truly needed to help keep our doors open. Some recent examples of kindnesses shared are:



Enterprise Holdings Foundation

On March 9, Timothy Romero, the Regional Vice-President of Enterprise Holdings Foundation, presented RMH Director Sue Beverly with a \$5,000 check, saying they wanted to "give back" to the community that has supported them.



Team Health cares

On January 30, RMH Director Sue Beverly and Board Vice-President Julie Howard were happily overjoyed with the \$10,000 check they received from Team Health. CEO Leif

Murphy and the company's founder Dr. Lynn Massingale were on hand to make the presentation. We were so incredibly grateful to their employees who voted for us to receive the gift as part of their annual "Team Health Cares" holiday campaign.

On December 3, Sue Beverly, RMH Director, was asked by Kevin Faddis, President of the Knoxville Firefighters Association, to be their guest at the Civic Coliseum for a Neal McCoy concert and a special surprise. The surprise happened when she was asked on stage at intermission and presented with a check for \$10,000!! Four months later and she is still smiling!

Area Key Clubs are continuing their decades-long support of Ronald McDonald Houses everywhere, much to our delight. Take for instance the club from Clinton High School that creates a menu, shops for ingredients, and then drives 30 minutes each month during the school year to prepare a meal for our grateful and hungry families.

Each and every UT football home game in the Fall will find our parking lot full of Bearden High School Key Club members who sell parking spots for \$30 and their dedication translates into wonderful gifts, such as the \$14,415 they raised last season.

We were thrilled recently to meet members of the Black-

man High School Key Club Chapter from Murfreesboro, TN, who stopped by for a tour and to drop off some donations as they were on their way to a regional Key Club convention in Sevier County.



Our K-Town Sam's Friends

We were deeply touched to receive a most generous \$9,075 grant from The Butterfly Fund, an organization that was established in 2008 by two caring couples who lost their daughters to the same rare form of childhood cancer. Their dedication to this initiative is a true labor of love which supports research, treatment, and services dedicated to defeating pediatric cancers.

Another long-time friendship has been with members of the Smoky Mountain Classic Chevy Club whose members work tirelessly to present a car show every May in Pigeon Forge. The \$1,000 we received from them for the 2016 event was another in a long line of generous gifts we've received from these dedicated supporters over the years.

Ever-supportive of our House is WIVK who sponsored a tee-shirt sale last fall and raised \$1,500 for us.

One of the joys of our Home having been in operation for 32 years and counting has been the lovely friendships that have evolved and been sustained during that time with K-Town Sams being a prime example. These dear people host fundraisers throughout the year, often times during their camping excursions, and then share the proceeds with all the Tennessee RMH's. They not only donated \$1,483.50 to us last fall, but also made their annual trek to the House in January and provided a lavish lunch for our families' enjoyment.



K-Town Sam's Cooks

## BOARD UPDATE

We were delighted to welcome some new faces to our RMH family in 2017: Justin Israel, Dr. Malinda Harris, and Blake Valentine came on Board and we were equally as delighted to welcome Keys Fillauer, Marianne Nichols, and John Sheridan back into the fold.

## KIND FOLKS.... CARING HEARTS

♥♥ We were delighted to receive a call from the Knoxville Chive organization that works to support charities in our area. Their night with the Knoxville Ice Bears resulted in a donation for \$1,400 given to us for which we were most grateful.

♥♥ Tomato Head restaurant found a unique way to lend their support. They spread the word that they would collect any leftover Halloween candy that wasn't devoured by little ghosts or goblins and deliver it to our House. What a sweet deal for us and our families who benefited from their most thoughtful gesture.

♥♥ With 20,000 square feet of "House" to maintain, we have a perpetual "Honey-Do list". Thankfully, in October we were adopted by the CFC campaign where talented volunteers from agencies such as TVA, the DOE, and Social Security Administration fearlessly took on the page-long list of needs we'd outlined. Then, the following month, equally talented folks representing Medsurant Monitoring spent the day raking, trimming, painting, cooking, and cleaning. In fact, we got tired just watching all these wonderful folks work so hard!

♥♥ Thanks to Talbots offering a special after-hours shopping event last October, the House has an extra

\$314 in the bank and scores of customers who supported the effort are now some of Knoxville's "best-dressed" citizens.



♥♥ One fundraiser that's always near and dear to our hearts is our holiday card sale. What makes it so special is that we ask one of our RMH patients to design it and their creativity never ceases to amaze us. A key component, though, to this event's success is the thousands of dollars we save due to the kindness and generosity of WS Packaging Group, Inc. who donated the paper and printing for this mammoth undertaking once again this year.

♥♥ We were very appreciative to be invited to the opening day festivities at the new Walmart Neighborhood Market on McKamey Road off Western Avenue earlier this year that included a \$700 check presented to Asst. House Manager Leah Darr.



Walmart Neighborhood Market

♥♥ "Kids helping kids" is especially dear and we were delighted to be remembered by the second grade classes at Rocky Hill Elementary School that created a big aluminum

can recycling project with our House being the beneficiary of all their efforts. What could be better than helping us and Mother Earth at the same time?!

♥♥ Another "crafty" group of second graders at Concord Christian School were busy prior to the holidays making gifts for sale at their Christmas Show. Their kind hearts and artistic talents resulted in a \$2,292 gift to us plus a bounty of household items, too!

♥♥ Youngsters in Ms. Gagle's first grade class at Farragut Primary School got a real-life lesson in "counting" as they collected change for the House as a special Valentine's Day project. The RMH Director dropped by the school to explain why their efforts were so important to us and was shown jar after jar filled to the brim with coins. When all was said and done, these enterprising students had collected and counted \$201.93 for us!

♥♥ The 5th graders from Madisonville Intermediate held a "silly hat day" as a fundraiser for our House and even made the 40-mile trip to Knoxville to deliver their proceeds of \$330.43!

♥♥ Thanks to the Town of Farragut for once again including our House in their 'Freaky Friday' festivities. Thousands of costumed partygoers turned out on October 28 to enjoy the family-friendly Halloween event. While admission was free, guests were encouraged to make a donation to the RMH whether it be a monetary gift or item from our wish list. By evening's end, our van was full to overflowing with household needs and our bank account was \$1,182.08 richer.



Freaky Friday

## SAVE THE DATE

- May 6 Healing Bird 5K & Fun Run  
[www.facebook.com/HealingBird5K/](http://www.facebook.com/HealingBird5K/)
- May 20 Smoky Mountain Classic Chevy Car Show in Pigeon Forge
- June 2 RMH Golf Tournament at Egwani Farms  
[www.knoxrmhc.org/events/golf-tournament/](http://www.knoxrmhc.org/events/golf-tournament/)
- July 29 KFI, Inc. presents the "Tams" at the Double Tree in Oak Ridge  
Contact Keys Fillaouer, [kfigolf@comcast.net](mailto:kfigolf@comcast.net) or 865-719-2627 for details

## CHOCOLATEFEST

Just as the sugar rush from the Christmas holidays is wearing off, we thankfully have Chocolate Fest to fill the void!

Once again, Jennifer Johnsey and her dedicated Board of caring souls imagined and executed a "sweet" event to benefit our House. Folks who were eager for some sugary confections to appease their sweet tooth braved the sell-out crowd and weren't disappointed by the treats awaiting them, from ice cream to white chocolate popcorn.

The silent auction and live music also added greatly to the day's festivities, but our House received the biggest treat of all, \$9,679!!



Goodies galore



Our 40-item auction



Banner crowds

## KFI

Sometimes what appears to be a chance encounter can turn into an unexpected, yet life changing, "legacy of love" which is how we describe our relationship with the KFI Board.

From the \$400 they donated somewhat as an afterthought following a casual golf game among friends the year the House opened, the bond has now evolved into a mutual admiration society. Their gifts to us over the past 32 years now total over \$762,000 and that number continues to grow.

After years of hosting a golf tournament and dinner auction for our benefit, they turned to a "Dueling Pianos" event two years ago and now, on July 29, they will host the ultimate beach band, "The Tams" at the Doubletree in Oak Ridge. We'd love to have you join us, so dust off your dancing shoes!



Let the music begin



Lucky auction winners

Our wonderful Board supporters



The event movers and shakers

## PATTERSONS

Good food and fellowship is a combination that's hard to beat especially when it benefits our wonderful House.

Several years ago, Steve Patterson of Pattersons Home Appliances, approached one of his vendors, Jenn-Air, to help underwrite a unique fundraising idea of his. He wondered if people would pay \$10 to attend a cooking demo at his store conducted by area chefs who in addition to preparing a 3-course meal, would also offer cooking tips and recipes.

Eager to help support our cause, he launched the monthly event in the Fall of 2013 and its success speaks for itself as proceeds total \$26,490 and counting. In fact, the promotion has been so incredibly successful, that our caring benefactors have added an additional night to the schedule so that the second and third Monday of every month is now devoted to raising funds for us! So, do yourself and our RMH a favor and join us soon! Your tummy will thank you.



## FARM BUREAU

We look forward to spring each and every year and not only for the warmer temperatures and seeing the first flowers of the season emerge, but especially because we know we'll have a visit from Farm Bureau members. These most faithful friends have been coming to our House for more years than we can remember with cars and trucks filled to the brim with food needed to replenish our pantry and freezers.

On March 15, they blessed us with their presence once again by bestowing us with \$3,870 in food and gift cards to a grocery store, so we can purchase needed items throughout the year. There

aren't enough thank you's to properly thank these caring folks for all they've done for us and our families.

But we did our best to say thanks and perhaps spoil them a bit by hosting a reception. After all that work unloading the bounty of goods, they needed a chance to relax and enjoy a nibble or two and we enjoyed the extra time that was spent visiting with these special people.

One full freezer



Ready, set, unload



Our Farm Bureau friends



Time to nibble



Time to relax

## MCDONALD'S

We could never ever, in a million lifetimes, thank McDonald's for their unwavering support of our House. One of many examples of that support was the overwhelmingly successful heart campaign they hosted at their restaurants for several weeks prior to Valentine's Day. Their caring customers responded "whole-heartedly" to the promotion that raised an astounding \$57,607.

Another example would be the revenue raised with the canister program. Anyone ordering at their counters or drive-thru's will notice collection canisters bearing our logo. We were astonished and incredibly grateful to learn that in 2016, a whopping \$156,315 was realized by this initiative. It just goes to show you the power of a penny! And with our golf tournament on the near horizon, many of the area owner-operators are major sponsors of the event and are encouraging their suppliers to get involved, too. See why there aren't enough lifetimes to truly thank them?



## DILLARD'S

When most folks think of Dillard's, they envision an upscale shopping experience. But those of us in the RMH family see that and so much more, such as the kind-hearted employees who work tirelessly to help us every fall.

For years now, Dillard's has sold Southern Living cookbooks for our benefit during the holiday season, beginning in late October. But they found yet another way to help us by hosting an Ecco Shoe Fashion Show also in October that was a smashing success.

Geoff Johnson, the store manager, was more than happy to present us with checks totaling \$4,700 much to our delight. We're so grateful to his amazing staff for their dedication to our cause and to Dillard's equally amazing customers for their support.



Happily accepting the gift