



Celebrating 37 years of...  
Keeping Families Close®

# Ronald McDonald House Charities® of Knoxville

1705 West Clinch Avenue Knoxville, Tennessee 37916

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

Spring 2022

## HOUSE UPDATES

Never in a million years would we have dreamed that we'd still be dealing with Covid two years after the pandemic began. Last fall, we were able to begin hosting families at the House, but we purposely kept our census low to allow for even greater social distancing and we owe a huge debt of gratitude to Drury Inn and Suites for giving us greatly discounted rates so that we could offer rooms to our families at no cost to them. Thankfully as the cases continue to drop, we have been able to increase our occupancy and we'll experience even more normalcy in the coming weeks. Our



Annex Kitchen

volunteer program that has been on hiatus since March of 2020 has been reinstated as long as the virus positivity rates remain so low and we are welcoming back those kind-hearted folks with open arms as volunteers truly are the heart of our House!!

But our ever-faithful Board and committee members have been hard at work behind the scenes assisting with everything from social media posts, to repairs, and even redecorating... and you can see examples of the lovely end result of

their efforts pictured. Perhaps the greatest compliment we can ever receive is when one of our guest families remark, "It just feels like home." And we can't help but agree, it DOES feel like home!!



Bedroom #10



Bedroom #7



Bedroom #2



New Sunroom

## BEAT THE WINTER BLUES

Let us just say that "winter blues" were quite rampant at our planning meeting in early January for our signature event as committee members



made the heart-breaking decision to cancel the event for the second year in a row, due to the pervasive Omicron variant. As virus numbers climbed, so did our ongoing concern as to how we could possibly safeguard our potential guests and volunteers. Therefore, with no logical



answer to that query and out of an abundance of caution, we made the only socially responsible choice there was to make....to postpone the festivities until February 3rd, 2023. We're sharing some pictures from past events to help brighten the rainy, dreary weather

we've experienced as of late with the hope it will inspire you to mark the new date on your 2023 calendars!



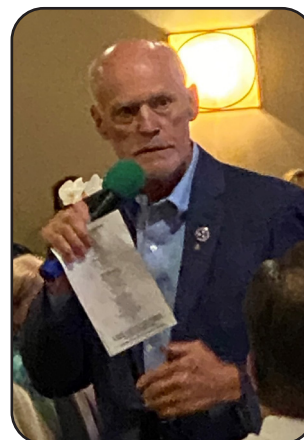
## KEYS FILLAUER EVENT

From concerts to theater productions and fundraisers, hosts of indoor events were canceled last year in a valiant effort to keep Covid at bay as the virus numbers soared. Thankfully, the KFI event to benefit our wonderful House was held just prior to the Delta variant's appearance in late

summer. Levi Kreis, who has a legacy of stellar acting and musical credits to his name, most notably winning a Tony award for his electrifying portrayal of Jerry Lee Lewis in Broadway's "Million Dollar Quartet", was the evening's featured entertainment and he "wowed" the capacity crowd with his high energy performance.

Also on hand was auctioneer extraordinaire, Bear Stephenson, who worked his magic to help ensure the event's financial success. All told, the months of planning and hard work paid off in a big way as \$37,000 was presented to the House. Amazing, isn't

it!!!! There simply are not enough "thank-you's" to properly thank the dedicated KFI Board, chaired by Keys Fillauer, for their decades of devoted service that has resulted in a 36-year total of \$927,000 in loving support for our RMH.



## RMH GOLF TOURNAMENT

\$85,867 was the grand total that our long-standing golf tournament raised for our House... most welcomed news after a host of fundraisers were canceled due to Covid earlier in the year. One-hundred thirty golfers enjoyed picture perfect weather that helped to enhance their game, as did the wonderful food graciously donated by Texas Roadhouse and Brown Bag, with breakfast given by the Burger Family McDonald's and some of our talented volunteer bakers that provided the sweet treats. No one went hungry on our watch!! The true success of the day was due to the host of caring sponsors that have been the

lifeblood of this event for over three decades now and counting. In fact, it's difficult to truly express the depth of our gratitude to these heroes of our hearts: Platinum sponsors were: Scooter Foods, Cochran Family McDonald's, East



TN Children's Hospital, Martin Brower Co, UT Medical Center, Pilot/Flying J, Tom Cochran, and Eric & Emily Cochran. Silver sponsors were: The Hudson Co, PYA, PC, Pinnacle Financial Partners, Keurig/Dr. Pepper, Burger Family McDonald's, Broadway Carpets/Shaw Floors,



Knoxville Pediatric Assoc, PC. Bronze sponsors were: Hodges, Doughty, & Carson, David Mayfield & sons, The Tool Crib, Will Gibson, Kenneth O'Kelley, Rice Buick GMC, Kirk & Joanne Huddleston, Blaine Construction, Regions Bank, Hailey Management McDonald's,



Morgan Stanley Wealth Management, Wyatt Insurance. Individual sponsors were: Crown Bakeries, Citizens National Bank, Coulter & Justus, PC, Ted Flickinger, Martin & Co, Taylor Farms, Dillard's. Patron sponsors were: Shoffner Kalthoff MES, Inc, Harper Infiniti, Superior Steel, Cherokee Distributing, 3 Rivers Radio, Ole Smoky Moonshine, Enterprise Print Group & Restaurant Technologies.

We're set to go with this year's tournament that will be on Thursday, September 8th at Egwani Farms. Registration information will soon be available on our website. Hope you can join us!!

## A NEW OPPORTUNITY TO HELP THE HOUSE



**Turn Your Used Car Into Cash For Our Station**

Donating is easy, the pick-up is free, and your gift is tax-deductible.

**DONATE TODAY**

To learn more, call or visit us online  
1-855-CarsHelp (227-7435) | carshelp.org

RMHC of Tennessee

into an income stream for us and your gift is tax-deductible, too! It's easy to do.

### Here is how to get started....

1. Call 1-855-CarsHelp (227-7435) or fill out the online donation form at [www.carshelp.org](http://www.carshelp.org)
2. Schedule your free pickup.
3. Receive a donation receipt .



Our House recently joined many other RMHC chapters around the U.S. to partner with Cars Help, a vehicle donation program. Those unwanted cars, motorcycles, and boats can be transformed

## WELCOME TO THE FAMILY.... MEET OUR NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Laura Barnes- Actually, she is simply re-joining the family as she has so beautifully served in years past. She is a native of Johnson City, TN and has been a resident of Knoxville since arriving for nursing school. Having gone to Ft. Sanders Presbyterian School of Nursing, Laura continued her education, receiving a Bachelor of Science in Nursing and a Master's in Pediatric Nursing from UT. She spent the vast majority of her nursing career at East TN Children's Hospital with her position being Vice President of Patient Care Service and Chief Nursing Officer. She retired in 2005. She was married

to the late Dr. Bob Barnes for 33 years. During her retirement, she has been active on our RMH committees, the Executive Women's Assoc, and the Board of Advisors for the UT College of Nursing. She enjoys needlepoint, reading, walking and her cat Sofie. In fact, her love of running/walking inspired her to participate in marathons, most notably in New York and Rome, Italy.

Jeff Allen- Thankfully, Jeff has come back into the fold where his time will once again allow him to serve as a Board member. He joined Pinnacle Financial Partners in May 2020 where he serves as Senior Vice President and Financial Advisor located in Pinnacle's

Northshore office here in town. Jeff was born and raised in Sioux City, Iowa. He graduated from Morningside College in Sioux City where he lettered in baseball for four years. Jeff and his wife, Tracy, have two beautiful daughters, Emily and Sarah. Emily is a junior at the University of Tennessee while Sarah is a sophomore at Knoxville Catholic High School.

Lynn Arnwine- Lynn is a wife, mother, and accomplished artist that has shared her many talents with our House for years now with examples of her creativity being showcased in multiple rooms. For instance, she is the one who painted whimsical clouds on the

ceiling in the playroom. While attending UTK, she met her husband Preston, and soon began her artistic pursuits creating murals, painting furniture, and doing faux finishes. A move to Knoxville from Atlanta seemed like the perfect time to start a family that now includes three children, Eliza, Chloe, and Pep. She's not only a Board member, but also serves on the House committee where her artistic-ness is put to good use!!!



A "heart" is the perfect symbol for the "Give a Little Love" fundraiser that area McDonald's sponsored for our House in early February. It's the owner/operators along with their caring crews with "heart" that make the time and effort to support the two-week event in their restaurants. And then, it's the generous and kind "hearted" customers of theirs that made such good use of McDonald's benevolence. An incredible \$59,084 was raised this year from the initiative that most certainly warmed our "hearts". Our "heart" felt gratitude to all who participated!

### Ways you can help!



Give Monetarily



Send Wishlist Supplies



Volunteer



Provide Meals That Heal



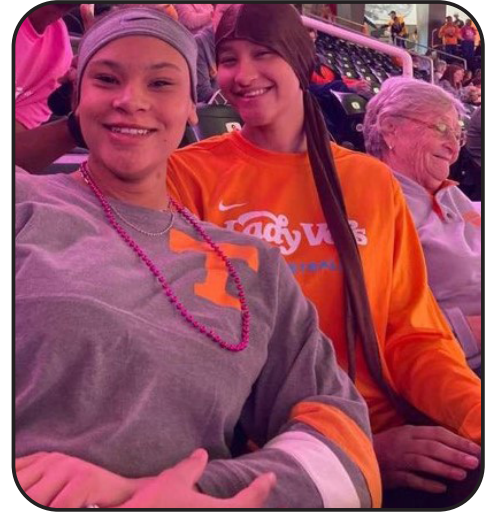
Round Up At McDonald's

## FOCUS ON A FAMILY.

In 2021, Jalyn Hilton Abernathy was a typical 14 year-old teenager from Kingsport, TN, who was enjoying friends, a bustling social life, school, and especially pursuing her passion as a cross-country runner. She never could have dreamed that her world would soon be rocked by the news that she had an osteosarcoma in her right leg. To her guardian, grandmother Lynda Hilton, the unexpected diagnosis came as another cruel blow as she'd lost her beloved husband on Easter Sunday in 2019. Trying to wrap her head around the uncertain future that lay ahead of them, Lynda's first thought was to secure immediate medical assistance for her granddaughter, while wondering where they could possibly stay during the course of her treatment at Children's

Hospital. When a nurse suggested our Ronald McDonald House as a possible option, Lynda jumped on that idea. "Having lost my husband, the family income was immediately lowered," she recalled, "and financially, a hotel stay was out of the question." As with so many people, Lynda had heard the name, RMH, and also had a rough idea of the service they provided, but never dreamed she'd ever be in need of one. "Upon walking into the House for the first time, I was so impressed and felt so fortunate to be able to stay. The House helped us feel safe, and we really liked being so close to the hospital. With other basic needs such as food and laundry being available, I was able to concentrate all my efforts on Jalyn who needed chemotherapy and multiple surgeries. We felt an immediate connection with the

staff." She went on to say, "They made Christmas so special for us. A group contacted the House as they wanted to adopt a family for the holidays and we were chosen to be the fortunate recipient. The gifts that Jalyn and her sister, Judith, received were wonderful. With our finances so tight, I was unable to buy gifts, but the girls were so thrilled when they saw the bounty of personalized gifts that were provided for them." And speaking of Christmas, the ever-talented Jalyn was delighted to be chosen as our holiday card artist in 2021 as she wished to "give back" to the House. Her dedication and fortitude were amazing as she worked diligently on the project as her health allowed, all while undergoing rigorous chemo treatments. Her artistic gifts paid off in a big way as her efforts resulted in a record-breaking total for the



fundraiser!! Eighteen hospital visits later, Jalyn's journey is not quite over and the family continues to need our House... Ever the optimist, Lynda went on to say, "The Ronald McDonald House is a loving, understanding place and the people there are the best to have surrounding you when there is such a need."



## KIND FOLKS.... CARING HEARTS

On one hand, two years of dealing with pandemic-related issues has been life-altering. But on the other hand, the virus did nothing to dampen the philanthropic efforts of our incredibly caring Knoxville Firefighter's Association as they somehow continued to work their magic to raise funds to support area charities. Our wonderful House was remembered once again with a phenomenal \$20,000 gift that represented proceeds from a series of concerts the organization hosted throughout the year. Kevin Faddis, the group's past president, happily overwhelmed us when he came to deliver their donation.



In an effort to adapt to the ever-changing Covid scenario and keep their employees safe at the same time, our new friends & supporters at Car



Max held a virtual Walk-a-thon that raised an amazing \$2,500 for us. They have also offered their time to volunteer with us once the virus numbers cooperate. We simply couldn't be more delighted that they reached out to us with such caring concern for the work we do.



The lovely ladies of Alpha Delta Pi have so beautifully supported Ronald McDonald Houses nationwide since the first House opened in 1974. And their legacy of love has touched innumerable lives ever since! How they find time to attend classes, study, work, and raise funds for us is a remarkable tribute to their commitment to assist us in serving those in need. From their fundraisers such as Diamond Days to the recent Walk for Ronald at Lakeshore Park in March, to preparing food and collecting needed household supplies for

us, their energy and efforts know no bounds! Joining the UTK chapter in their support are the ADPis from TN Tech that make that long drive from Cookeville to lend their time and talents to us. Congratulations are in order for this remarkable sorority as this year marks their 100th anniversary!!



We've taken liberty with the adage, "Out of the mouths of babes" updating it to say, "Out of the hearts of babes" due to the wonderful \$3,316 gift recently donated to us by the second-grade classes at Concord Christian School. The children worked tirelessly to ensure the success of their annual holiday market and their remarkable donation was the result!



Our long-time friends with the Smoky Mtn Classic Chevy Club gifted us with an incredible donation of \$3,500 that represents a portion of the proceeds raised during their annual Chevrolet Round-up. These caring folks work year-round to present this stellar event that has a faithful following of car enthusiasts from numerous states East of the Mississippi River. They are busy planning their 2022 event for the week-end of May 20-22 at the Inn at Christmas Place in Pigeon Forge, TN. See you there!



Typically, it's our RMH staff, Board, and volunteers that reach out to individuals and companies in the area for every level of support. Imagine our delight when we were contacted by AVANTech, a wastewater treatment solutions provider,

## KIND FOLKS.... CARING HEARTS (CONTINUED)

asking to learn more about our mission. Employees at their Knoxville location were interested in starting a payroll deduction program for our benefit. Since the program's inception in 2019, this compassionate company has gifted us with over \$10,000 and are committed to continuing their support.



♥♥ ORNL's Neutron Science Directorate reached out to our House last fall with the intent of raising funds, supplies, and awareness of our House and the work we do. And they absolutely over-achieved in every way!! Tabatha Burke and Maureen "Mo" Searles spearheaded the endeavor, inspiring their fellow employees to participate... and participate they did! In fact, it took three SUVs filled to capacity to deliver the bounty they had so generously collected. In all, the cash, gift cards,

postage stamps, and household goods totaled \$18,461!! Incredible!!!! Hats off as well to the additional planning committee members for their invaluable support of this "labor of love".... Brent Abercrombie, David Baird, Cyndi Esau, Russell Evans, Valerie Fudurich, Alicia Hall, Michele Knox, Katherine Ragle, Kathy Sellars, Monique Wesh, Seth Wilder, Jesse Williams, and Steven Williams.



♥♥ How do we change the world? One random act of kindness & compassion at a time and DHL Supply Chain employees were the perfect example of that sentiment as they collected \$1,011 for our House, not to mention also collecting a van full of needed household items. A job well done by a group of kind-hearted supporters!



♥♥ If you define the word, "mission" it's said to be an important goal or purpose that is accompanied by strong conviction. A real-life example of that would be the CAK 5th grade mission's group that took our RMH "mission" to heart, working incredibly hard to raise \$505 to benefit our families and for that reason alone, we're eternally grateful. Learning that we're here in this world to help others is just as important a lesson as learning the 3 R's and they certainly have done so!!!



♥♥ We're so grateful to Willow Ridge Nursey that hosted an event recently at their store which raised an impressive \$1,340, and they also gave us generous discounts on some planters and spring planting materials to enhance the entrance to our annex. Flowers are just good for one's soul, don't you think?!!



♥♥ Regional Key Clubs have been a vital part of our volunteer force for decades now and their ongoing support of our House has been simply amazing. Chapters such as the ones at Cocke County and Bearden High Schools have held incredible fundraising events for us; Maryville & Farragut clubs have worked to collect needed supplies from our wish list, and Fulton High School members have initiated and maintained an aluminum can recycling program for our benefit. What a difference these caring teens make to our RMH.



♥♥ What can we say about our phenomenal friends and loving supporters at Farm Bureau?!!! These kind-hearted folks from many surrounding counties have made happily overwhelming donations to us of food, grocery gift cards, and monetary offering for more years

## KIND FOLKS.... CARING HEARTS (CONTINUED)



that we can remember. Case in point, last year, several Farm Bureau chapters, such as those from Morgan and Monroe County sent us generous donation, while earlier this year, the Union County Farm Bureau made a \$500 gift to us which will allow us to purchase food needs we have throughout the year. And, in mid-March, some mighty members of the Knox County office had a marathon shopping extravaganza at the Bearden Food City that required the use of SIXTEEN shopping carts that were filled to the brim with \$3,000 in groceries! In fact, it took four vehicles to deliver all of it. They also donated gift cards to the store and a \$500 check, resulting in an overall \$4,000 contribution. It's difficult to truly express the depth of our gratitude and heartfelt appreciation to these dear people!

♥♥ Our long-time well-wishers, members of K-Town Sam's RV Club, remembered us with a \$700 gift that was the result of fundraising events they hosted during their many camping excursions together. Great times, great friends that help a great cause and we couldn't be more appreciative.



♥♥ Native Instinct is a company founded in 2017 to provide support and services to all levels of government agencies. Every year, the NI team selects multiple non-profit causes to support and we were one of the fortunate recipients of their generosity once again this year as their representative, Jace Pennington, presented us with a most generous check for \$10,144.



♥♥ We're so very grateful to the First Horizon Foundation for their generosity in funding

our grant requests for years now. The \$1,950 we received from them in 2021 was used to help renovate a bedroom and the end result was a lovely, comfortable space for families to enjoy for years to come.



♥♥ Thanks to the talent of our holiday card artist, Jalyn Hilton Abernathy and the continuing generosity of Multi-Color Corporation, which donates all the labor and materials to create the cards, that fundraiser was an amazing success, with an incredible \$90,000 being raised! That most certainly put the "Happy" in our holidays and then some!!

♥♥ Debbie Snyder, owner of Child Creations Day Care, was looking for a way her young clientele could make a difference at their tender age and support a worthy cause. Thankfully, she reached out to us and for several years now, those youngsters in her charge take part in a Trike-a-Thon, pedaling



### TRIKE-A-THON

their hearts out to raise money as they make laps around their playground. Those little ones raised big bucks as Debbie proudly presented the House with \$5,745.



♥♥ The Town of Farragut has taken the "scary" out of Halloween, for us at least, replacing it with philanthropy as they make our RMH the recipient of support from their Freaky Friday event, held annually on the Friday before the holiday. Typically, thousands of folks of all ages turn out for this family-friendly event where area businesses dole out candy by the bushel to costumed children that savor every piece! Admission is always free, but a donation to the House, either monetary or a needed item from our wish list is suggested. Happily, the ghosts and goblins were quite generous as \$1,200 was collected along with



## KIND FOLKS.... CARING HEARTS (CONTINUED)

a van full of supplies. There's nothing spooky about that, is there??!!



♥ Jorge Reyna, a Field Service Manager with one of our long-time supporters, Martin Brower, a supply chain management company, brightened our day recently by coming by with a check for \$4,206! This

gracious and generous donation was made possible by the kindness of the employees at their Dickson, TN location that have taken up collections for years now with the proceeds being divided among the RMHs within their service area. This remarkable company has long made us the benefactor of their benevolence in a host of ways as they have also been a major sponsor of our golf tournament for decades now!!

♥ Not only is Dillard's a leading retailer in the nation, they also have a heart for Ronald McDonald Houses as they proved once again by selling a special Christmas edition of a Southern Living Cookbook, complete with decorating ideas as well last fall. For 27 years now, Dillard's has supported Houses throughout the country, raising an astounding \$15.3 million along the way. General Manager Shawn Ulrich presented House Director, Sue

Beverly, with a check for \$1,446, representing proceeds from the 2021 holiday season. We couldn't be more grateful for their ongoing support!

**Dillard's**  
The Style of Your Life.

## Walmart's Day of Caring

Walmart employees representing Market 121 from nine stores as far away as Jacksboro and Madisonville graced us with their presence recently and accomplished a Herculean array of tasks from our "Honey-Do" list. These talented and compassionate folks distinguished themselves as being the first volunteer group to return to the House after the 2-year hiatus

due to Covid. From landscaping, to cooking, painting, cleaning, and even carpentry, this fearless bunch tackled it all and the end result brought smiles all around along with our heartfelt gratitude!!

