

VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER

FAMILIES RELY ON THE CARE WE PROVIDE



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VOLUME 2 / 2023



Happy National Volunteer Week!

As we kick off National Volunteer Week, we want to say a huge THANK YOU! Here at Ronald McDonald House Charities® Alberta, we are incredibly lucky to work with hundreds of dedicated volunteers who play a crucial role in our organization. We are continually inspired by the kindness and compassion you show to the families with sick and injured children who stay at the Ronald McDonald House.

Whether you have been with us for years or recently joined our team, know that your dedication and commitment have left an impact. Through arts and crafts, driving our shuttle, filling our kitchen with delicious smells of baked goods, doing handy work, and helping at events, your presence touches the children and caregivers who call RMHC Alberta home during some of the toughest times of their lives.

We would also like to take this opportunity to share an exciting update: in 2022, you helped us support 1,213 families across the province! Your generosity has an incredible reach, helping our Houses feel like home for thousands of families every year.

As we celebrate your contributions to RMHC Alberta this National Volunteer Week, we want you to know how much we value your service to our mission. Your work makes a difference in the lives of so many families, and we are honored to have you as part of our team.

- The RMHC Alberta Team

Message From the CEO

RMHC® Alberta relies on volunteers to provide a home away from home to families travelling for medical treatment. Welcoming you back into our Houses as the pandemic slows down has had a tremendous impact on operations, not to mention on our families.

Not everything was back to normal at RMHC® Alberta in 2022. But, thanks to you, we have lots to celebrate! Front desk volunteers are back in droves; Home for Dinner calendars are beginning to fill; our shuttles are busy making trips to and from the hospitals; Helping Hands groups are back at it; our Comfort Cart program is expanding; events are fully staffed; and the list goes on. When I think about our day-to-day work, volunteers touch virtually everything. That's something you should be proud of!

Last year, RMHC® Alberta provided 22,000 nights of comfort to families needing a place to stay close to the hospital. I'm proud to share that this number reflects our pre-COVID occupancy rate. You helped get us there. The depth of our investment in families simply would not be possible without you.

We are so grateful that you choose to volunteer with RMHC® Alberta. On behalf of the families we serve, thank you for everything you do to support our mission and our families.



A handwritten signature in white ink that reads "Jason Evanson".

Jason Evanson
CEO, RMHC® Alberta

Thank You, Volunteers!

"I am so incredibly grateful for all of our dedicated volunteers. Because of you, RMHC Alberta is able to serve more families than ever before. THANK YOU for your gift of time and hard work! We appreciate you!" - [Joshua L.](#)

"Thank you for your time, dedication, and commitment to our mission. Your efforts matter and make all the difference!" - [Kayla L.](#)

"To our amazing volunteers, thank you for all that you do to support our mission. You make a huge difference in the lives of our families when they are going through such a difficult time. You provide much-needed support to them through fundraising and in-House volunteering. We are so lucky and grateful that you choose to support us." - [Sarah P.](#)

"The key to our success rests in caring people just like you who embody the spirit of greatness by saying, 'yes I can, and you can, too!' Thanks for all you do for our families. We could never do it without all of you." - [Sandi F.](#)



"Without volunteers, we couldn't do what we do, from baking treats to making sure the House is clean and enjoyable for families. Volunteers become like family, and we are so fortunate to have the amazing volunteers we do. Thank you is not a big enough word to show our gratitude. Thank you!" - **Kayla S.**

"We are so fortunate to have an array of amazing volunteers. Their generosity and dedication are truly humbling. Thank you to every one of you for your unwavering support." - **Brooklyn F.**

"Our volunteers are the reason our Houses feel like a home. Thank you volunteers for your dedication to our families; none of this would be possible without you!" - **Abbey W.**

"Our volunteers are some of the most generous and caring people I have met. They are always willing to lend a helping hand in so many different capacities, all for the sake of making the families who stay with us feel comfortable and cared for." - **Robin R.**

"Volunteers: supporting their community with love and enriching the world, one act of kindness at a time." - **Dusty F.**



Thank You, Volunteers!

"Volunteers are the heart of the House. We appreciate every minute that you dedicate to our families."
- [Destiny M.](#)

"I have endless gratitude for the ongoing, irreplaceable work of our volunteers! Thank you for all that you do!" - [Makayla W.](#)

"Your spirit and generosity are so valued. Thank you for being a part of the family. We couldn't deliver on the mission of RMHC Alberta without you!" - [Crystal D.](#)

"The love you pour into every interaction with our families and the care you take with every task has more of an impact than words can express. Thank you for being you and helping make our Houses a home away from home." - [Reyanne S.](#)

"Our Houses are a home away from home because of our volunteers. Our volunteers help with meals and baking, shuttle support, programming, and fundraising events, and they're the friendly face when families arrive to the House. We can't do what we do without our incredible volunteers. Thank you!" - [Denise K.](#)



"I don't have the words to fully convey my appreciation for our volunteers. I am blessed to be able to facilitate the kindness of our community and proud to have built so many amazing relationships in the Peace Region. Our volunteers have taken great ownership of our events and have helped grow them into what they are today. No matter what we ask for, our volunteers always give more. It truly takes an army to keep the lights on and doors open. THANK YOU to our army of kindness: our volunteers!" - **Megan D.**

"In every interview when a family discusses their RMHC experience, the love, generosity, and kindness of volunteers comes up. Without fail, families acknowledge and appreciate everything you bring them during some of their hardest times. You may never know your impact, but it is felt deeply by families." - **Suzanne P.**

"We appreciate our volunteers. They are so special!" - **Ruth R.**

"Volunteers truly are the heart of our Houses. Without their unwavering commitment and positivity, the Houses wouldn't feel this much like a home!" - **Juliette E.**

"We are so grateful for your dedication and commitment to RMHC Alberta. You make an impact on the lives of our families every day. Our organization is stronger because of you and we cannot thank you enough for all that you do. THANK YOU!!!" - **Mary S.**



Interview with Andy

(RMHC Alberta Board Member)



■ **How long have you been volunteering with RMHC Alberta?**

I began volunteering with the Ronald McDonald House back in 2009. I grew up in Red Deer and had a large accounting practice here, so I know a lot of people in the area. I learned about the plans to build the Red Deer House, and I decided to join the Cabinet.

■ **What brought you to RMHC Alberta and why do you choose to stay?**

I got involved because some important people in my life were big supporters of the House. After doing my research, I believed in the cause and the work being done. Eventually I was approached to join the Board, and I was excited to bring some Red Deer representation. The Board is made up of some great people with a real interest in the mission, and I serve on it because I want to continue providing some continuity and sharing my knowledge.

I enjoy coming by the House regularly; I find it humbling, heart breaking, and heartwarming. I would come down every Christmas with my daughter to make our donations and to take a tour of the House. I never pass up an opportunity to talk to families and to ask them their story. The front staff and volunteers do a phenomenal job.

■ **Has your experience volunteering at RMHC Alberta matched your expectations?**

I've received much more back than what I've put in. The staff, in-House volunteers, and event volunteers have provided some very memorable experiences.

■ **What is one of your most memorable moments volunteering at RMHC Alberta?**

My best volunteering moments happen when I come to the House and get to chat with the families or volunteers who are making dinner or baking. It keeps me focused and I love sharing my support.

■ **What is one of your proudest accomplishments volunteering at RMHC Alberta?**

The opening of the Red Deer Ronald McDonald House. It looks as good today as it did when we opened it and it was such a credit to the staff and volunteers. I was also proud to be on the committee that ultimately hired our current CEO, Jason Evanson. He did a great job bringing the two chapters together.

■ **What excites you about volunteering at RMHC Alberta?**

The passion of the Board members, staff, and volunteers for the mission is amazing. It's easy to get excited when this is the culture of the organization. Everyone wants to do something good for the families.

■ **What advice would you give to encourage prospective volunteers to get started?**

You can donate and you can volunteer your time. If you're thinking about getting involved in events, Home for Dinner, or the Houses, just do it; the experience will be wonderful. We have a phenomenal volunteer community in central Alberta. You might not feel like your contribution is big, but what we do makes a difference for the families and the kids.

Stephen Collins (Shuttle Driver, Calgary) From Grandfather to Grateful Volunteer

If you ever get the privilege of hearing our volunteer shuttle driver, Stephen, tell his family's story, you'll see how he swells with pride at the mention of his grandson Andrew, a former RMHC Alberta baby.

After Andrew was born prematurely at 24 weeks, he was airlifted from Lethbridge to Calgary where he spent the next five months in the NICU. During that time, Andrew and his mom Aimee—Stephen's daughter—stayed at the Ronald McDonald House in Calgary.



"Having the support of the House and being able to return to the House after a stressful or traumatic day at the hospital was heartwarming. We look back at that and we're so thankful," Stephen says.

Today, Andrew is a healthy six-year-old boy, and Stephen continues to give back with gratitude for the care his grandson received at RMHC Alberta. As a shuttle driver at the Calgary Ronald McDonald House, Stephen takes families to and from the hospital two days a week. He has also given his time to RMHC Alberta's Thank-A-Thon and golf tournaments, and his family enjoys preparing Home for Dinner meals for everyone at the House. Whether lending a compassionate ear to overwhelmed families arriving in the city for the first time or providing a comforting meal after caregivers' long day at the hospital, Stephen cherishes every opportunity he gets to experience "the gift of giving" as an RMHC Alberta volunteer.

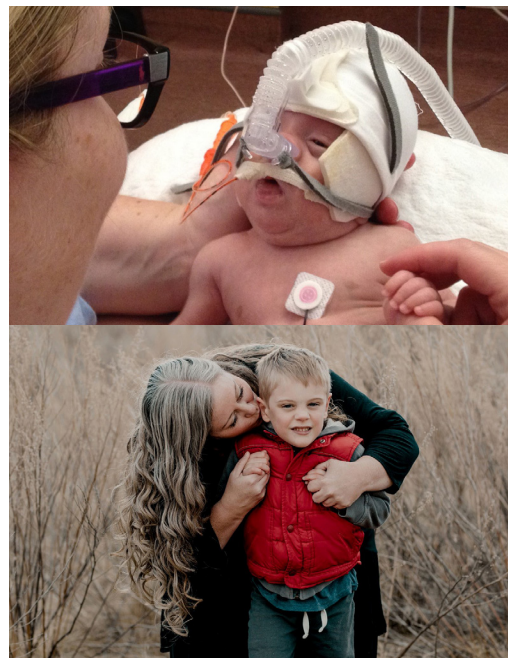
Aimee Collins (Stephen's Daughter) A House Mom's Perspective on Our Volunteers

Aimee has a special connection to the Ronald McDonald House. Her dad, Stephen, has made a massive impact as a shuttle driver at the Calgary House where the Collins family stayed six years ago.

The volunteers are heroes: they're the soft-landing place for families, a companion, a safe ride, a joke in the hallway. They're heroes without knowing it," says Aimee.

Stephen and all the volunteers at the Ronald McDonald House are humble recipients of these compliments. Aimee wants all the volunteers to know the huge role they play in families' medical journeys.

"I keep telling my dad: you don't know just how important you are to RMHC families."



RMHC® Alberta's Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Medal Recipients

RMHC® Alberta recently presented the Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Medal to 10 Albertans in recognition of their outstanding dedication to our organization. This presentation was part of a province-wide initiative recognizing the significant contributions of 7,000 individuals to Alberta.

RMHC Alberta's medal recipients included Board members, fundraisers, shuttle drivers, and advocates. Our Platinum Jubilee Medal recipients are:

Ravi Bhargava (Edmonton)	Murray Hay (Edmonton)
Richard Gil (Edmonton)	Greg Durda (Grande Prairie)
Cassie Campbell-Pascall (Calgary)	Thomas Lui (Calgary)
Gerald Freedman (Medicine Hat)	Curtis Glencross (Red Deer)
Dan Brown (Lethbridge)	Douglas Alexander Baron (Edmonton)

Thank you to all our recipients for your tireless dedication to RMHC Alberta's mission!



Volunteer Need: Comfort Cart

We are excited to announce that the Comfort Cart is now offered at two hospitals: Calgary's Foothills Medical Centre and the Red Deer Regional Hospital Centre!

In partnership with Alberta Health Services, RMHC Alberta's Comfort Cart brings the comforts of the Ronald McDonald House to families in hospital. This volunteer-led initiative serves snacks, beverages, hygiene items, comfort items, and more to families with seriously sick and injured children.

If you are interested in joining our Comfort Cart team, please go to rmhcalberta.org/volunteer/ to create an account and apply through the VolunteerHub portal, or email us at volunteers@rmhcalberta.org.

Information Sessions for Prospective Volunteers

We now offer a monthly virtual information session for anyone interested in volunteering with us! If you know someone who would like to hear more about partnering with RMHC Alberta and what our volunteer opportunities look like, please have them connect with **Ashley at awalsh@rmhcalberta.org**.

Upcoming prospective volunteer meetings:

Thursday, April 13: 7–8pm

Thursday, May 11: 7–8pm

Thursday, June 15: 7–8pm

Information Sessions for Established Volunteers

We also host casual monthly virtual meetings for established volunteers. These meetings are a fun way to meet other RMHC Alberta volunteers from across the province, learn more about the impact you have on families, and receive updates about the organization. These meetings are not mandatory, but they're a great opportunity to learn more about RMHC Alberta and we would love to see you there! If you can't make it, don't worry; we will send out a recording after the meeting.

Upcoming established volunteer meetings:

Tuesday, April 25: 7–8pm

Tuesday, May 30: 7–8pm

Tuesday, July 4: 7–8pm

Safety Corner

Welcome to our very first Safety Corner! The safety of all of our stakeholders is of utmost importance. Through this quarterly announcement, we hope to share the most recent and relevant information to keep our facilities safe for everyone.

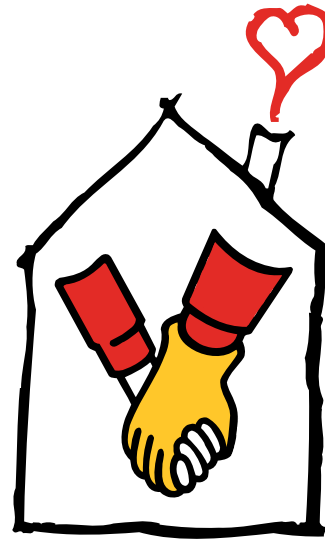
Did you know: If you are injured during any of your RMHC® Alberta volunteer shifts, you must notify your House lead and the People & Culture Department within 24 hours of your injury. The sooner the better! While volunteering with us, you are covered under our WCB policy, and proper reporting is key to a successful claim. If you have any questions or suggestions on safety in our Houses, please see **Sarah Clunes, Director of People & Culture, sclunes@rmhcalberta.org**.

What's the Difference?



RMHC®

Alberta



RMHC®

Alberta

Can you spot all five differences in these images?

Upcoming Events

Summer is a busy event season at RMHC Alberta. If you are interested in volunteering at one of our events, go to rmhcalberta.org/volunteer/ for more information or sign up on VolunteerHub.

McHappy Day: May 10

Charity Golf Classic: Locations and Dates Below

Grande Prairie: June 5 Red Deer: June 8 Cold Lake: June 17 Canmore: June 19

Medicine Hat: June 22 Edmonton: June 28

Shoot for the House – Grande Prairie: September 9

Starlight Casino – Edmonton: September 16–17

To learn more about any of our events visit rmhcalberta.org.

Follow us on social media:

@RMHCAAlberta

