



Ronald McDonald
House Charities®
Alberta

VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER

FAMILIES RELY ON THE CARE WE PROVIDE

Hello From Team RMHC Alberta	2
The Originals	3
Holiday Cookies With House Baker Mary	4
Light The House	5
Message from Reyanne Spina	6
Check Your Screens For Something Special	6
Santa Sacks Wish List	7
Volunteer Needed: Shuttle Driver	7
Provincial Volunteers Meeting	7
Spot The Difference	8
Winterland Invitational	8
Golf Location and Dates	8

"FAMILIES RELY ON THE CARE WE PROVIDE"



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VOLUME 4 / 2023



Hello from Team RMHC® Alberta

As the holiday season approaches, we find ourselves reflecting on the incredible journey we have embarked upon together this year. It's a time to pause, appreciate, and express our deepest gratitude for the unwavering dedication and boundless compassion that each and every one of you has shown to our families and our mission.

As we look back on the year, we are reminded of the countless stories of resilience, hope, and strength that we've witnessed together. Whether it was preparing delicious meals, providing a listening ear, creating a welcoming atmosphere, organizing fun activities, and getting our families around in the shuttles safely, each of you has played an invaluable role in making our Ronald McDonald Houses feel like home. All our event volunteers have played a vital role in sharing our mission with the public and directly supporting our fundraising.

This holiday season, we want to take a moment to wish you all the warmth, joy, and love that you have brought into the lives of others. Your willingness to give your time, your skills, and your hearts to the families who turn to us in their times of need is nothing short of inspiring. Your hard work has transformed our Houses into havens of love and care, and your dedication has brought smiles to the faces of countless children and their families.

The holiday season is a time for families to come together, and your efforts have made it possible for our families to experience a sense of togetherness, even when they are far from their own homes. Your commitment to our cause has not only eased the burdens they face but has also created lasting memories and moments of joy.

As we bid farewell to another year, we want you to know that your contributions are cherished and your impact immeasurable. You are the heart and soul of Ronald McDonald Houses, and without your hard work and dedication, none of this would be possible.

We are excited about what the future holds, knowing that we have a community of volunteers as dedicated and caring as you. Together, we will continue to make a difference in the lives of families experiencing of life's most difficult times.

May you find time to rest, rejuvenate, and spend precious moments with your loved ones.

**Thank you for being the incredible people that you are.
Here's to a bright and promising new year ahead.**

Warmest wishes,

Team RMHC Alberta





Home for Dinner is synonymous with RMHC Alberta. Thousands of families have been served home-cooked meals, restaurant meals, BBQ Dinners, picnic lunches and more because volunteers have taken the time and effort to bring comfort and sustenance to families at the House.

However, this wasn't always the case.

Delores James is part of 'The Originals'. A group of dedicated women who have been serving meals every month at the Ronald McDonald House in Calgary since 1999.

After an experience with her brother needing medical care, and Delores travelling to Edmonton to support him, she was incredibly touched by a group who brought them a home-cooked meal. When she left to go home after a month of helping her brother, she sat down and decided that she wanted to pay this kindness forward.

At the time she was the outreach chair for her church, and she wrote letters to every single church in Calgary to see what interest there might be in helping make meals. She was met with different responses, many having commitments to other organizations. In fact, even the team at the Ronald McDonald House were a bit hesitant to get the meals going as their previous efforts to bring in meal groups was not sustainable.

Delores persevered and put a group together to go and cook a meal at the House. Delores and Barb were the original "Originals" and soon welcomed Sheila, Mary, Deena, Mary Ann and Marie.

For 24 years they have been feeding families. Delores recounts "A little boy from Fernie said to us, 'THESE ARE THE BEST MASHED POTATOES I'VE EVER HAD'. She continued "We got to a child's heart. We have seen happiness and sadness, and that's life and we just want to be there for the moment, so families don't have to worry about a meal."

The group sticks to meals that are comforting and feel like "home".

Reflecting on the impact the Originals have had over the years, we asked Delores why she and her friends continue to give back every single month for decades. Delores told us "Follow your heart. For me this is very rewarding."

The Originals are truly inspiring in their efforts to sustain and feed families who have spent countless hours bedside at the hospital. They have served OVER 25,000 plates of food in their tenure and continue to show up every single month.

Thank you to the Originals for everything you do!





Holiday Cookies with House Baker Mary!

Gingerbread Men

These are spicy chewy cookies you and the kids can build during the holidays. Decorate the gingerbread men's shirts with family and friends initials and hang them on the tree. Great gift idea!

Ingredients

Gingerbread Men

1 1/2 cups butter
2 cups brown sugar
2 eggs
1/4 cup molasses
4 cups flour
4 teaspoons baking soda
1 teaspoon salt
4 teaspoons ground ginger
4 teaspoons cinnamon
2 teaspoons ground cloves

Cookie Icing

Using an electric mixer, combine:

3 cups icing sugar
1/2 teaspoon vanilla
2 teaspoons corn syrup
5 tablespoons water
Pinch of salt

Directions

In a large bowl, cream butter, and sugar together.

Beat eggs, and molasses together and blend with creamed sugar mixture.

Combine flour, baking soda, salt, ginger, cinnamon and cloves. Add dry ingredients to creamed mixture and blend well.

Divide dough into two large balls, wrap each ball in large sheet of plastic and flatten into a disk shape. Refrigerate overnight. This is important because it will make the dough easier to roll and it won't stick to the surface.

Preheat oven to 350°.

Roll the dough to 1/4 inch thickness.

Cut out each gingerbread man and place on cookie sheets leaving enough space between each cookie. Bake 8 to 9 minutes. Makes about 5 dozen spicy chewy gingerbread men.

Spoon icing into an icing pen or piping bag and decorate cookies.





Light the House

Each year RMHC Alberta kicks off the holiday season with a countdown to lighting the Christmas lights and providing snacks and fun filled activities for families to enjoy!

“The rewards are many with many kids bringing letters and good wishes. Most kids let Santa know what gifts they would like to receive however some are very poignant. When asked what the child wanted for Christmas, he said, “I want my sister’s replacement heart to work”. We all started to weep and tried to finish the conversation without breaking down.
This, in my opinion, is what Christmas is really about.
 – David Lawrence, Aka Edmonton House Santa



“Our stay at RMHC Alberta carried us right through the holiday season, and for all of it, the Ronald McDonald House was our refuge. The relief of having a place to stay and meals to eat was **everything** to a pair of exhausted, utterly overwhelmed parents.”
 - Renee Labriola



Message from Reyanne Spina

Without a doubt, our volunteers make our Houses feel like home. When you walk into any of our Houses on any given day you will likely be lucky enough to smell delicious baked goodies cooking in the kitchen, you will see volunteers buzzing around ensuring our families are supported, comfortable, and have a smile on their face. You will see shuttle drivers eager to keep families close. Our Comfort Cart volunteers are busy wrapping our families in support and filling their bellies even outside of the Ronald McDonald House walls. We could not provide the experience we do, keeping families close, without the support of our volunteers.

On top of the everyday magic that the volunteers bring to our Houses; Christmas is around the corner. With that comes the delicious smells, the beautiful lights, the decorations, the North Pole being stocked and filled with magic. Our volunteers help bring the Christmas Spirit to life. Whether it be decorating the trees, wrapping presents, stocking the North Pole, baking delicious goodies, among all the other little things that make the season special; the magic lives in every check-in, every interaction, every ornament hung, every present wrapped, & every smile offered.

Thank you, from the bottom of our hearts for the impact, that truly cannot be measured – but can be felt, every day.

Reyanne Spina
RMHC Alberta Associate Director, Guest Services

Check your screens for something special...

In September we had the opportunity to film with some of the volunteers in Edmonton to put together our 2023 RMHC Alberta video. This year the storytelling focuses on seeing the journey of an RMHC family through the eyes of a volunteer. From meals to shuttle rides, and of course our incredible front desk volunteers.

The video will launch at the galas in Calgary and Edmonton, and then become the centerpiece for our #GivingTuesday campaign, which also has a MATCHING DONOR, the Crist Family Foundation.

We will be giving volunteers a preview of the video on November 8th at the volunteer meeting – and once it is on our social media channels, we encourage you to share it with your networks!

Thank you to our wonderful volunteers, Murray, Charlene and Vandy for filming with us!

Sincerely,

Suzanne Pescod
RMHC Alberta Marketing & Communications Director



SANTA SACKS WISH LIST



With the holiday season around the corner, we are thinking of the many families staying with us at Ronald McDonald House Charities® Alberta. Christmas will not be the same this year having to be away from family and friends during a time when family means the most. We know that families staying at the House are dealing with one of life's most difficult challenges when their children are ill. The financial impact on those families is taxing and can feel even more unfeasible during the holiday season. With your help and contribution to the Santa Sacks campaign, Santa will find children at the House and our families will feel the magic of the season and the generosity of our community.

If you would like more information please contact Sandi Ferchau, Stewardship Manager at sferchau@rmhcalberta.org, to learn more on how you can participate and support this 2023 holiday season campaign. The Santa Sacks campaign will run November 13 to December 15 2023.

Volunteers Needed: Shuttle Driver

Did you know RMHC Alberta offers a shuttle program for families staying at the Edmonton and Calgary locations? Through the Shuttle program, volunteer drivers safely and conveniently transport families to and from hospitals 7 days a week. In 2022 alone, our dedicated Shuttle Drivers provided over 9,800 shuttle trips to families!

All Shuttle Driver applicants are required to submit a 10-year driver's abstract, 6-year letter of experience, and insurance form (provided by RMHC).

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

Provincial Volunteer Meeting

These meetings are where our volunteers can come together and learn about the most recent and important happenings in the Houses as well as share in celebrations! These meetings are virtual on teams and you will be emailed a link to join!

Upcoming volunteer meeting: Wednesday November 8 at 7pm Virtually

Information Session for Prospective Volunteers

These meetings are for folks who are interested in learning more about volunteering with us. They are informal and give a great overview of opportunities with RMHC Alberta. Feel free to let your friends know! These meetings are virtual and your friends can sign up by heading to the volunteer page of the website.

Upcoming volunteer meeting: Thursday November 16 at 7pm Virtually

Spot the 7 Differences

1



2



2024 Winterland Invitational:

February 16, 17, and 18 Cold Lake and Bonnyville Alberta

2024 Golf Event Locations and Dates:

Grande Prairie: June 3, the Dunes Golf & Winter Club

Red Deer: June 6, Alberta Springs Golf Resort

Cold Lake: June 15, Cold Lake Golf & Winter Club

Canmore: June 17, Silvertip Resort

Medicine Hat: June 20, Desert Blume Golf Club

Edmonton: June 26, The Quarry

SAVE
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DATE