



**Ronald
McDonald
House®**
Alberta

Volume 3 2026

Volunteer Newsletter

Making our Houses feel like home



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Provide a Warm Meal



Welcome



As summer arrives and the days stretch a little longer, there's a natural invitation to slow down. The season encourages us to step outside, linger over conversations, and make room for the moments that fill our cups. Whether that looks like afternoons spent in the sunshine, adventures close to home, time with family and friends, or simply a chance to rest, we hope this season brings you plenty of opportunities to enjoy it. For many of our volunteers, summer also means dusting off the cowboy boots, putting on a favourite hat, and gathering with friends and family over pancakes as communities across Alberta celebrate the season's traditions. However you choose to spend these warmer months, we hope they bring moments of joy, connection, and well-deserved fun.

As we reflect on the first half of the year, we are struck by the incredible generosity that continues to define our volunteer community. Every day, across Alberta, volunteers show up with compassion, kindness, and a willingness to help others through some of life's most challenging moments. The impact of those small acts is immeasurable, and the care you provide helps create the sense of comfort and belonging that makes our Houses feel like home.

That spirit was on full display during our recent Volunteer Appreciation events. It was such a pleasure to connect with so many of you, share stories, celebrate milestones, and recognize the countless ways you make a difference. Those gatherings served as a wonderful reminder that volunteering is about so much more than the hours contributed. It is about community, relationships, and people coming together in service of something bigger than themselves.

One of the things we appreciate most about our volunteer team is the connections that are formed along the way. Friendships are built over coffee and conversation. Familiar faces become trusted teammates. Simple acts of kindness create ripples that extend far beyond a single shift. The sense of belonging that grows from these connections is something truly special, and it is made possible by each of you.

This edition also marks an exciting milestone for our newsletter team. We are delighted to welcome Trish and Connie as first-time contributors, and we hope you enjoy reading their contributions as much as we enjoyed bringing this issue together.

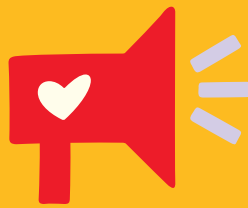
As you make your way through these pages, I hope you feel a sense of pride in all that you have accomplished this year and all that you continue to make possible for families staying at Ronald McDonald House® Alberta. Thank you for the care you share so generously, the time you give so freely, and the heart you bring to everything you do.

Wishing you a summer filled with sunshine, connection, and a little well-deserved fun.

For a fun summer recipe go to page 7



Volunteer Appreciation



Spread the Word!

Our volunteers are the best! During Volunteer Appreciation Month, we were proud to celebrate the incredible individuals who give their time, talents, and hearts to support Ronald McDonald House Alberta. Their kindness, dedication, and generosity make a meaningful difference in the lives of the families we serve every day. Whether they're welcoming guests, preparing meals, supporting events, or helping behind the scenes, our volunteers bring comfort, compassion, and a sense of community to our Houses.



Meeting Corner

Monthly Volunteer Meetings happen **virtually** at 7pm every month. You can find the meeting on the “**Volunteer Meetings**” Calendar.



August 5, September 9

Ronald McDonald House Alberta & McDonalds 101, with CEO Jason Evanson

July 29, August 25, September 23

These interviews were conducted by one of our new volunteer writers, *Connie Slonski*

Kurtis Chick

*Volunteer and
Programs Lead*

Red Deer



Kurtis Chick, Volunteer and Programs Lead in Red Deer, Alberta, is inspired by the opportunity to support families during some of their most challenging moments. His connection to Ronald McDonald House Alberta is deeply personal, shaped by his own experience having a child in the NICU and being introduced to the House through a shared meal. At the time, he didn't fully realize what the experience represented, but looking back, he recognizes how meaningful it was to sit alongside other families, build connections, and feel a sense of community during uncertainty. That perspective continues to drive his passion for ensuring families feel supported, understood, and less alone.

Outside of work, Kurtis finds joy in his family life, especially being a father to his twin boys, as well as spending time with his dogs. He recharges through music and “hype songs” that help him reset after busy days. He is also the founder and organizer of Nerd Expo Red Deer and has led major community events such as Red Deer Comic-Con, which continues to grow significantly year over year. Alongside this, he has a long history of volunteering with a wide range of organizations, including expos, gaming conventions, youth soccer, and child development programs, reflecting his strong commitment to building and supporting community connections.

Shannon Tokle

*Family Services, Programs
& Volunteer Coordinator*

Medicine Hat



Shannon Tokle, Family Services, Programs & Volunteer Coordinator in Medicine Hat, Alberta, is inspired by what began as a part-time role that quickly became a deep personal passion. She is driven by connecting with families at Ronald McDonald House Alberta, listening to their stories, and offering comfort during some of their most difficult moments. One especially meaningful experience was supporting a family who stayed for several months, during which a strong bond formed between the family and staff. Their resilience, joy, and presence left a lasting impact on her, reinforcing how powerful compassion, connection, and a sense of home can be.

Outside of work, Shannon values life's simple joys, including time with her family, quiet mornings with coffee, and warm sunny days. She enjoys being outdoors, especially paddle boarding, and finds peace in activities that help her reset, like walking, relaxing baths, or watching a good show. She loves sweet treats, especially gummies and fresh baking, and starts her day with coffee before switching to water. She is most proud of her 13-year-old son, Slade, and the journey of raising him on her own, which she describes as her greatest achievement.

Virginia Pegg

Volunteer Supervisor

Edmonton



Virginia Pegg, Volunteer Supervisor in Edmonton, Alberta, is inspired by the opportunity to work closely with a smaller team of staff and volunteers and build meaningful relationships with families and colleagues. She is motivated by connection and the impact of simply listening and being present. One especially meaningful moment came when a family was leaving the House and gifted her a plant and a handmade memory box as a thank you for listening to their concerns, a gesture that deeply reflected the relationships formed through her role.

Outside of work, Virginia finds joy in her family, especially her two grandchildren and daughter who live nearby, allowing her to be closely involved in their daily lives. She recharges through quiet time, particularly swimming in a women-only pool, and enjoys life's simple comforts like English tea, fruit, and homemade "cheesy chips." She is proud of her long-standing commitment to volunteering, including her early involvement with the Edmonton Indy when she first moved to Edmonton.

Laurel Pridgen

Volunteer Supervisor

Calgary



Laurel Pridgen, Volunteer Supervisor in Calgary, Alberta, is inspired by her personal journey as a parent of three children, including two who are medically complex and diagnosed with a rare disease. When her sons were diagnosed in 2020, her family experienced overwhelming uncertainty, which deepened her understanding of the importance of supporting not just the patient, but the entire family. This experience strengthens her connection to the mission of Ronald McDonald House Alberta, and she is especially inspired by the volunteers who give their time to provide meaningful, hands-on support to families during difficult times.

Outside of work, Laurel finds joy in learning and growing through her hobbies, skills, and interests, as she considers herself a lifelong learner. She recharges by spending time with friends and family, watching movies, or reading, and enjoys simple comforts like ice cream, coffee drinks, and meals such as pasta or a burger and fries.



We are McCain.

Written by Trish Weatherup, Volunteer Writer

Their stories serve as a powerful reminder of the impact Ronald McDonald House Alberta has on families and why supporting this incredible organization continues to resonate so deeply within our team and community.

McCain Food Ltd. has been a major supporter of Ronald McDonald House since 2002.

Joan Masimbira, HR Coordinator at McCain and the staff organizer for their community projects, says that Home for Dinner is one of her favourite volunteer programs. Not only do she and the staff who volunteer enjoy being in the kitchen helping prepare meals, but she also feels incredibly fortunate to be part of such a meaningful initiative.

Joan jokingly says that the first time her group was asked to participate in Home for Dinner, they planned the menu, shopped for all the groceries, and then cooked the meal. This seemed daunting at the time, but Joan says, “After the first one, it was a breeze.” She says that when the group served the wraps they had painstakingly prepared, they were rewarded by seeing how much the families enjoyed them.

Having had family members who have stayed at Ronald McDonald House over the years has given Joan a personal appreciation for the support these programs provide to families during challenging times. It makes her especially proud to be able to contribute in even a small way. Of the staff who volunteer on behalf of McCain, she says, “We have had a number of team members volunteer with the Home for Dinner program because their own families have stayed at Ronald McDonald House during difficult times. For these employees, volunteering is more than simply giving back—it is an opportunity to support an organization that provided comfort, care, and a home-away-from-home when their families needed it most. Their stories serve as a powerful reminder of the impact Ronald McDonald House has on families and why supporting this incredible organization continues to resonate so deeply within our team and community.”



When asked what she would tell other groups that might be interested in participating in the Home for Dinner program, Joan says that it is a very fulfilling experience to be able to do something so small that makes such a big difference. “It’s been beyond my expectations, and I’d encourage them to get involved,” she says.

McCain’s generosity and involvement have been varied, and we would be remiss if we did not recognize their incredible donation of \$1.5 million from The McCain Foundation that supported the creation of the commercial kitchen during the expansion of the Calgary House. McCain was also a hole sponsor at the Golf Tournament held recently in Lethbridge, where, to the delight of golfers, they served freshly made French fries on the 15th hole. They have also been involved in McHappy Day and in the Christmas galas in both Lethbridge and Calgary.

Speaking on behalf of everyone at McCain, Joan says, “The team at Ronald McDonald House consistently creates a welcoming and positive experience for volunteers. Their kindness, organization, and dedication make every visit enjoyable and rewarding. I have been privileged to work closely with both the Chef and the Volunteer Coordinator, and their passion for the program is truly inspiring.”

*Thank you to McCain Food Ltd.
for your generous spirit and ongoing
show of support.*

Strawberry Sheet Pan Pancakes

Yield: 1 Half-Sheet Pan (approx. 12 squares, 3X4)

Prep time: 10 minutes

Bake time: 12-15 minutes



Dry Instructions

3 cups all-purpose flour

¼ cup granulated sugar

2 tbsp baking powder

½ tsp baking soda

1 tsp kosher salt

Wet Instructions

2 ½ cups buttermilk (room temperature)

3 large eggs

½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, melted and slightly cooled

2 tsp vanilla extract

Topping

1 cup fresh strawberries, hulled and sliced crosswise OR choose your own topping like blueberries, blackberries, mix berries, chocolate chips, sliced bananas, go crazy!

Instructions

Prep the Equipment: Preheat your oven to 400°F. Heavily butter the half-sheet pan, or coat it with a high-heat pan release spray.

Mix the Dry: In a large mixing bowl, whisk together the flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda, and kosher salt.

Mix the Wet: In a separate bowl whisk the buttermilk, eggs, and vanilla extract until smooth. Slowly drizzle in the melted butter while whisking to temper the mixture and prevent the butter from clumping.

Combine: Pour the wet ingredients into the dry ingredients. Fold gently with a rubber spatula just until combined. Note: Do not overmix. Leaving some lumps ensures a tender crumb.

Pour and Spread: Pour the batter directly into the prepared pan. Use an offset spatula to spread it evenly into the corners. Tap the pan once firmly on your prep table to release any large trapped air bubbles.

Place the Fruit: Arrange your strawberry slices flat on top of the batter in an even grid. Do not press them down; the batter will rise around them during the bake.

Bake: Bake on the middle rack for 12 to 15 minutes. You are aiming for a uniform golden-brown top with the edges just starting to pull away from the sides of the pan. A toothpick or cake tester inserted into the center should come out clean.

Serve: Let the pan cool for about 5 minutes before portioning it into squares.

Garnish: Now it's time to go crazy again, you can garnish with any/mix of the following: whipped cream, shaved chocolate, pancake syrup, chocolate/strawberry syrup!



Virtual: Sept 19-26
Run Day: Sept 27



Each year, the events team at Ronald McDonald House Alberta organizes a walk/run event called Hustle for the House. This is a family-friendly athletic adventure where anyone can participate and have a blast, all while raising funds and awareness for our mission! The in-person event takes place in Calgary and includes a festival component with food, entertainment, and other activities. Participation, however, is not limited to those in Calgary, as we also offer a virtual option that allows you to join from wherever you are!

We would love to see you out there, hustling with us, so we are pleased to offer our volunteers a discount for registration. The fun doesn't stop there! Because Hustle is such a great opportunity to include your friends and family in our mission, we are extending the discount to them as well! The first 100 people to use **CODE: VOLUNTEER2026** will receive 10% off their registration. This code works for in-person and virtual Hustlers.

For those who can't attend the in-person event in Calgary on September 27th, we are excited to share that the Edmonton, Calgary, and Red Deer Houses will each be hosting a "Mini Hustle" between the week of September 19 and 26. You, your team, staff, and other volunteers will meet at your local House to go for a walk in the neighbourhood. Teams are encouraged to dress up, bring signs, and make some commotion!

We hope you will consider getting involved with this important and fun event. If you are interested in volunteering for the in-person event in Calgary, please contact Ashley at awalsh@ronaldmcdonaldhousealberta.org.

For any other Hustle related questions, please reach out to events@ronaldmcdonaldhousealberta.org. We can't wait to hustle together!



Scan this
QR code
to register

