



# Ronald McDonald House Charities of the Bluegrass



**Ronald McDonald  
House Charities®  
of the Bluegrass**

**Prepared for: BR Sub Committee on Health  
& Families Services**





## Our Purpose

Caring for families of children who are ill or injured.

## Our Mission

We provide essential services that remove barriers, strengthen families, and promote healing when children need healthcare.



# 50+ Years of RMHC

## 40+ Years in the Bluegrass

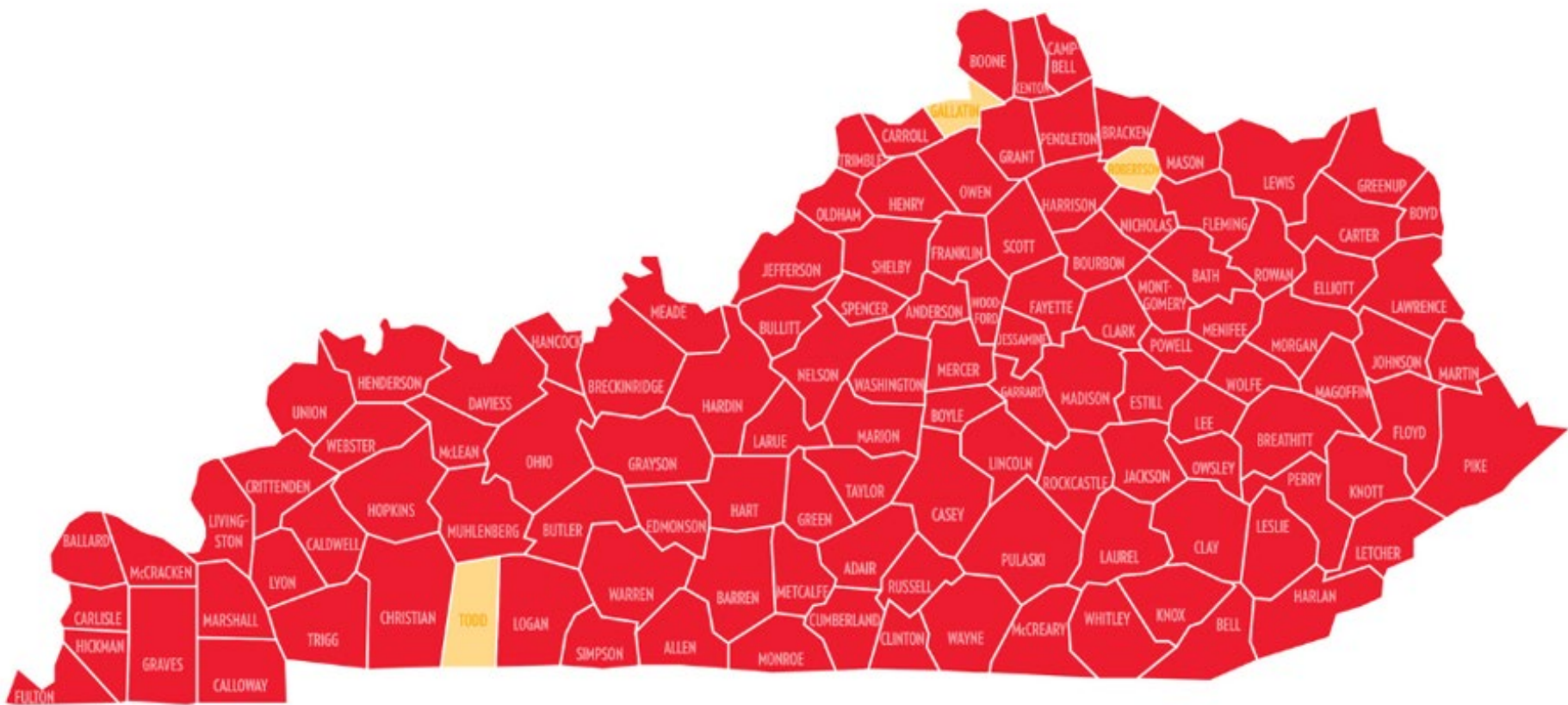
- 1974** First Ronald McDonald House program opens in Philadelphia
- 1984** RMHC of the Bluegrass opens in Lexington, KY as the 73<sup>rd</sup> House
- 2024** RMHC of the Bluegrass launches Just Imagine Capital Campaign



Today, there are **over 695 programs** for families in **62 countries and regions.**



## Kentucky Impact of Both Ronald McDonald Houses in 2023





**Our partnership with University of Kentucky:**  
Together we serve Kentucky's sickest children and their families.



Launched Care Mobile with UK College of Dentistry in 2005 that serves Eastern KY children. Relaunched a second partnership in 2024 that will serve children in Central Kentucky.



Opened Family Room inside Kentucky Children's Hospital in 2009. Launched Care Cart program as subprogram of Family Room that serves children (and their families) who are receiving treatment at the DanceBlue Hematology/Oncology Clinic, Pediatric Specialty Clinic, Diagnostic and Infusion Clinic, Pediatric Overflow Unit, KCH Richmond Road, and 6 East.



Have an agreement in principle with University leadership for a parcel in new South Campus development.



**“It’s not enough to just save the children of these very desperate families. We also need to save the families... a family with a sick child is a sick family”**

- Dr. Audrey Evans  
RMHC Founder



# WHAT WE DO

---



### **Ronald McDonald House**

A welcoming place to stay and supporting services for 21 families whose children tend to be the sickest, have traveled the furthest distances for care and spend the longest time in the hospital.



### **Ronald McDonald Family Room**

Located within UK HealthCare's Kentucky Children's Hospital, just steps away from the child's bedside, the Family Room provides family and caregivers a place to rest and refresh away from the medical environment.



### **Ronald McDonald Care Mobile**

Helping remove the barriers that prevent families from accessing the dental care they need, the Ronald McDonald Care Mobile, headquartered in Hazard, KY, delivers preventive dental care to under- and uninsured EKY children.

**Continuum of Care**





# Ronald McDonald House

The needs of families dealing with a child who is sick go far beyond medical care. By fulfilling those needs through programs at our House, parents are strengthened to care for and support their child's medical team. Services include transportation to and from the hospital, meals, laundry services, and a community of support beyond the walls of the hospital.



Our cost savings to families is **\$175+ per night, per room.**



In 2024, RMHC of the Bluegrass provided **7,278 nights of stay** to **462 distinct families**, saving them over **\$1,273,650.**

# Ronald McDonald Family Room

- The Ronald McDonald Family Room has welcomed guests since 2009 in Kentucky Children's Hospital (KCH).
- The Family Room provides a comforting and quiet area of respite, relaxation and reflection for families and loved ones of children who are being treated at KCH.



In 2024, the Family Room served  
**8,542 families.**

"Thank you for all that you do. That room gave my son a place to hang out and provided us with snacks and coffee we relied on to be able to stay by Emmy's side. We were able to wait there on Thursday while she was in the operating room giving the organs she could no longer use to other babies. Having that space meant the world and I hope you know what a difference you make for those of us living minute to minute in tiny rooms full of big machines and little children." - Diane



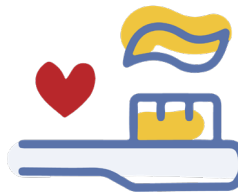


# Ronald McDonald Care Mobile

Since 2005, the Ronald McDonald Care Mobile program has offered Eastern Kentucky children free professional dental services and education in a mobile clinic.



Each school year, the Care Mobile provides services to **over 2,000 children.**



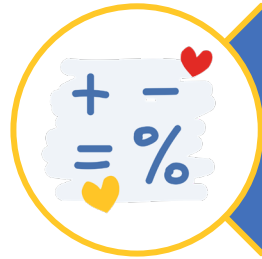
**Untreated decay rates have fallen 23%** since the Care Mobile began providing preventive dental services.

# WHO WE SERVE

---



# We support the sickest of sick children and their families from Kentucky. A handful of details about our Guest Families:



62% of Guest Families have an Average Median Income of <\$30,000 annually.



To date in 2025, 50% of Guest Families have a child in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), 8% have a child receiving orthopedic care, and 5% have a child being treated in the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU).



On average, Guest Families are receiving treatment >100 miles from their home.

# MEET THE LEWIS FAMILY

---



Then



She's Everything Nice!



Now

Then







*Maria*



# Serving Families, Together.

RMHC of the Bluegrass has long enjoyed a strategic partnership with UK HealthCare's Kentucky Children's Hospital (KCH). Over 80% of our Guest Families are referred by KCH and our collaboration ensures that families facing medical crises receive not only top-tier healthcare but also a "home-away-from-home" environment that alleviates the stress of long hospital stays.

The proximity of the Ronald McDonald House to Kentucky Children's Hospital means families can focus on their child's recovery without the burden of travel or housing expenses. Together, our two institutions strengthen our collective mission to promote health, healing, and family togetherness, making a lasting impact on the well-being of the entire community.

***While most of the Guest Families have a child who is a patient at KCH, RMHC of the Bluegrass accepts referrals from area hospitals and medical centers including: Baptist Health Lexington, Barnstable Brown Diabetes Center, Cardinal Hill Rehabilitation Hospital, Gill Heart Institute, Kentucky Clinic, Kentucky Eye Clinic, Markey Cancer Center, Ridge Behavioral Health System, Saint Joseph East Hospital, Shriner's Hospital, and local outpatient surgery centers.***

# WHY IT MATTERS

---

# For leaders in hospitals serving children:



Family-Centered care is a priority.



Key family centered care trends are declining.



Partnership with RMHC improves family experience and outcomes.



# NEED FOR GROWTH

---

## THE PROJECT

Among the 187 houses in the nation, RMHC of the Bluegrass is one of the lowest capacity Houses, at just 21 rooms. UK HealthCare's Kentucky Children's Hospital (KCH) remains our biggest feeder facility. While pediatric capacity at KCH has grown over 200%, the House has grown only 24% in 40 years. That space deficit led to 1,160 Kentucky families being turned away in the past 5 years—a turn-away rate that will continue if nothing changes.

We have an agreement in principle with University leadership for a parcel in the new South Campus development, which will allow us to implement our phased expansion plan. This plan is designed to address the urgent and unmet needs of families traveling for pediatric treatment in Lexington from all over the Commonwealth.

- **A phased plan to build an 85,000 sq. ft. Ronald McDonald House with 85 guest rooms**
- **Phase One: 60,000–65,000 sq. ft. and 60–65 rooms**
- **Phase Two: Family Room and Sleep Rooms in the new UK Healthcare KCH expansion for families that need to be steps away rather than minutes away.**
- **Estimated cost: \$32M\***

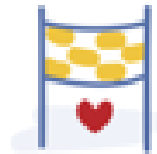
*\*Phase One is designed to be scalable and accommodate a future Phase Three shell build-out of 20,000 sq. ft.*

## JOB CREATION



In addition, the growth of the Lexington Ronald McDonald House is expected to create 25 FTE jobs. All employees would receive a full benefits package including medical and dental insurance, paid time off, fully covered long term disability, short-term disability, AD&D, and life insurance, and unlimited access to RMHC-U online development and learning.

## PROGRESS



To date, ~20% of the funding for the project has been secured in cash or pledges with an additional 25% out for consideration. The quiet phase of the campaign was launched in June 2024, and the Community phase will begin when 80% of funding has been secured. To date, 42% of the funds secured have been contributed by individuals and 58% by corporations.

RMHC expects the campaign will be concluded in 2027 and the building to be completed in 2029. We are extremely proud of the work that we are able to accomplish here in Lexington, and we look forward to making an even larger impact through this expansion.



## OUR FAMILIES



Over the past three years:

- **4,126 unique individuals were served at the House**
- **80% had a child at Kentucky Children's Hospital**
- **62% had a median income below \$30,000**
- **Average distance from home: 100 miles**
- **The longest stay: 267 nights—saving that family \$46,725 in food, lodging, and transportation**

Meanwhile, thousands of families had no room at the House, turning to costly hotels or delaying care.

## PROJECT IMPACT



- **Families:** 40-60+ additional units for families of pediatric patients, serving over 4-5K additional individuals with services, and providing over 21,000 meals annually.
- **Economy:** Save Kentuckians \$4.2M+ annually in accommodation, meals, and transportation costs.
- **Community:** Create a compassionate space for families during challenging times.



“The House is an incredible home environment. It's not just food and beds and clothing; it's an atmosphere of care and support. So, it's ... the **epitome of care.**”



# Thank You!

## **Nate Graham**

Chief Executive Officer  
ngraham@rmhclexington.org

## **Chelsi McDonald**

Chief Philanthropy Officer  
cmcdonald@rmhclexington.org

## **Melissa Moore Lewis**

Lewis & Lewis Attorneys at Law  
Former RMHC Guest Family

## **Madeline Lewis**

Second-year Medical Student, University of KY College of  
Medicine  
RMHC of the Bluegrass Committee Member  
2022 UK Student of Philanthropy  
Alpha Delta Pi, Beta Psi