



# RONALD McDONALD HOUSE CHARITIES®

Knoxville | 2026

f KnoxRMHC  
@KnoxRMHC  
@KnoxRMHC  
knoxrmhc.org  
865.637.7475



The phrase, "Third time's the charm," most certainly rang true the evening of April 24th as we held our 3rd annual "Hearts of Gold" gala at Cherokee Country Club. After two years of rainy weather on our special night, our 300 guests were able to take advantage of the terraces to mingle while enjoying picture-perfect weather and spectacular views of the Tennessee River.

The lovely Lori Tucker, a WATE TV-6 anchor, once again graciously donated her time & talents as our mistress of ceremonies. While those in attendance loved the bourbon-pull and bidding on the wide

variety of auction items, the star of the show was 14 month-old Justice Clark and his parents, Randy & Mylene, who traveled from Columbia, SC to share their heartfelt testimony that moved many to tears as they chronicled their medical journey. What began as a get-away or "baby-moon" for the couple, ended with the premature birth of their handsome son, necessitating a stay at our House from February 4th until April 18th 2025. We're proud to say that on their return trip to Knoxville to be with us, both father and son were wearing their "Big Orange" attire, obviously having taken a bit of Tennessee pride to heart!

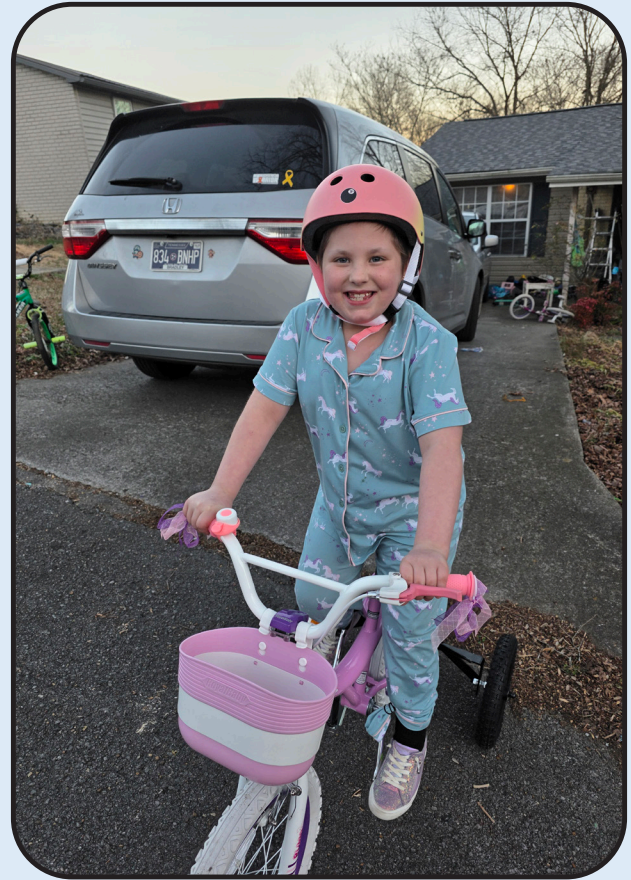


# Focus on a Family

Rebecca Baldwin was familiar with the Ronald McDonald House mission early on as her family had need of the one in Memphis years ago when her younger brother was being treated for a brain tumor. Never did she dream there would be the need to stay at a second House in Knoxville. But such was the case when her 8 year-old daughter, Emory, was diagnosed with leukemia last year.

With home being in Etowah, TN, a 3-hour round trip from the hospital, Rebecca soon realized that daily travel for chemotherapy would simply be too much for Emory, so she asked their social worker to make arrangements for them to stay with us. Our staff was simply charmed by young Emory's impish smile, engaging personality, and the twinkle in her eye from the moment we met her.

Mom's first impression of our House was one of amazement at how nice it was and how kind the people were, from the staff, to the volunteers, and even the other parents in residence. "Having a place to stay during treatment sessions would be an obvious answer as to why the House has been so beneficial to our family, but it's so much more



than that. They make us feel as though we're family and that means so much during such a difficult time. While we are away from our home and family, we never feel as if we're alone here, and that's a comfort. After long weeks of treatment, Emory has fared so much better being able to rest in her room at the RMH instead of all that traveling."

Emory's journey continues and at this time, the Baldwin's don't know if further stays with us will be necessary, but they know where to find us.



P.S. How sweet is Emory? Soooo sweet as she organized a pop-tab collection at school, delivering 100 pounds of them to recycle which will be \$\$\$\$ in the bank for us!



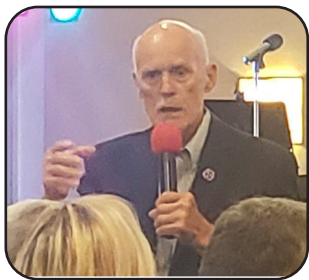
# RMH Golf Tournament

Weather-dependent fundraisers are always a leap of faith, with many anxious moments spent listening to weather reports for days prior to the event. Such was the week of Labor Day, with the 4th of September slated for our annual golf tournament at Egwani Farms. Pre-dawn rain gave way to a lovely morning, raising our hopes for a picture-perfect day. We got off to a good start as 148 golfers were slated to play. Mid-way



through the afternoon rounds, our luck took a turn, and a passing storm had folks scurrying for cover and after a 15-minute downpour, the course was saturated. Logic dictated that we call it a day, with golfers a bit disappointed, but gratified in knowing their support, totaling over \$72,000, would further our cause to help families in need.

# Keys Fillauer Event



The evening of August 2nd was a bittersweet occasion for the multitude of people that have been fans of the annual KFI event for four decades.

This caring group of supporters have made yearly donations to us since we opened the House in

1985, hosting golf tournaments, cocktail parties, dinners, and auctions to raise needed funds.

The "Motowners" wowed the capacity crowd with classic standards that had everyone "movin' & groovin'" to the music... Bear Stephenson had the crowd fired up to buy some treasures at the auction that followed dinner. The \$52,120 that was raised, when added to their previous year's total, has resulted in a \$1,073,465 legacy of love. While this was their final large-scale type event, organizer Keys Fillauer said that we'd not heard

the last of them yet and to stay tuned for more information.... And we can't wait to see what they have in mind!!



# BEAT THE WINTER BLUES



With not one, but TWO snowy weekends that preceded our event at Stanley's Greenhouse, all eyes anxiously watched the weather reports leading up to February 6th. Thankfully, Mother Nature gave us a break by providing a perfect day that inspired nearly 300 people to join us for another magical evening that included a variety of wines, an endless array of food... not to mention shopping! After a dreary winter, no one could resist taking home some spring color

& yard art to enhance their homes. We're so grateful to Anne Jackson for sharing her heavenly music with us, the lovely ladies of Akima for their culinary & hostessing talents, and all of our caring volunteers that created the dazzling tablescapes.

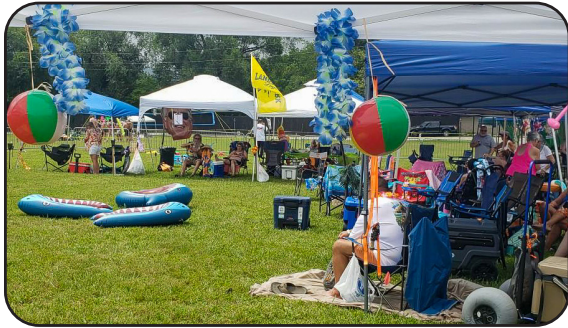


# Parrotheads “Party with a Purpose”



“Party with a Purpose” is the motto of this philanthropic organization whose members strive to help others while having a grand time doing it! The Little River Campground in Townsend, TN has been the site of their annual Luau to benefit our House for years now. Last year, they set a new financial milestone as \$10,250 was raised for us, much to our delight!!

In 2026, the event will be held July 31-August 1 at the campground and they promise “Good tunes, Great friends, & Zero worries!” What more can you ask for? Hope to see you there!!!!



## Knoxville Firefighters Association Local 65

There is nothing we love better than a happy surprise. And last December, Knoxville Firefighters Assoc Local 65 President Larry McAfee, called the House asking if he might stop by. While we’re always happy to see him and his crew, his mission in coming was REALLY exciting as he “surprised” us with a \$10,000 check much to our overwhelming delight. Our gratitude for this organization is two-fold as we’re beyond grateful for their gift of monetary support, and just as important, their gift of bravery and self-sacrifice in keeping our House & others safe from harm in our community.



## Cha-Cha-Cha Changes

The old adage goes that the one constant in life is change, and we’ve certainly found that to be true as we’ve had several staff changes in the last couple months.

Our beloved resident manager, Dodie Rhea, along with husband Steve, retired after 13 years of so compassionately and beautifully serving and ministering to our families. Thankfully, a long-time week-end manager, Teresa Sande, offered to move into the soon-to-be-renovated cottage to take up where Dodie left off and we couldn’t be more thrilled with her decision.

A first for the House was the realization that the time had come to hire a Director of Development.... And, thankfully, we knew exactly who we wanted to add to the family. Neal Drown came to us from UTMHC where he was a major gifts officer. He hit the ground running on December 1st by joining our Hearts of Gold planning committee and has been all over town, meeting & greeting people while garnering support for the event.

# Dillard's

We're so very grateful to Dillard's for their decades of support in a host of ways.... But their sales each fall of the ever-popular Southern Living cookbooks resonates the most with their devoted shoppers. Shawn Ulrich, the store's General Manager, says the calls start in early September asking when the books will be for sale and his staff works tirelessly through the holiday season promoting them. On February 27th, Shawn, along with home department manager, Cody McNabb, came to the House to present a check for \$2,759.48 which was the third highest total of their stores nationwide. The question of "What's for dinner?" should now be quite easy to answer, thanks to all the patrons who supported the sale.



# McDonald's Support



Since opening our doors 41 years ago, McDonald's has been our most ardent & faithful supporter. From the owner/operators, to their caring crews, their incredible support raised over \$345,000 for us last year, and we are well on our way to surpassing that amazing total this year!

Revenue from special events, like the Shamrock Shake sales, the February Heart promotion, and Round-Up collections, continue to delight and happily amaze us. Equally amazing are McDonald's legion of fans that so generously support these initiatives that, in turn, so beautifully support our House.

# Our Farm Bureau "Family"

After offering lodging, feeding our guests and having food available 24/7 is the second most crucial service we can offer. How very blessed we felt to have members of area Farm Bureaus "adopt" us again this year, continuing their decades long tradition of doing so. On March 26th, several pick-up trucks arrived at the House, fully loaded with a dozen caring souls, AND, \$10,500 in food and gift cards that we'll be able to utilize throughout the year. We tried to thank them with a bountiful breakfast that they appreciated, but before leaving, they offered yet another gift, which was to contact their group should we have any additional needs. They could not give us a gift that could be appreciated more than their ever-present compassion.



# Community Support

With the numerous and most worthy non-profits in the Knoxville area, we're always humbled & honored to be chosen as the recipient receiving funds that represent hard work on the part of the event organizers. We'd love to thank some caring supporters for remembering us....



ORNL

- ORNL that organized a series of food truck events last year, raising an impressive \$3,242 for us.
- Brenz Pizza had the novel idea of asking siblings staying at an RMH to create an original pizza, and then a percentage of each specialty pizza sold came to our House, with their gift being \$2,025.



- The Kraken's Cup Tearoom held a princess-themed tea for our benefit last fall, netting \$250.
- Last June, our friends at Casual Pint partnered with Checkerboard Children's Charities of E TN and their efforts in hosting a "Singo" event complete with a silent auction, featuring live music... Plus selling a Tap4Good specialty beer for the entire month of June, resulted in a \$6,000 gift to the House. How amazing is that??!!



Kraken's Cup Tearoom

- Lincoln Memorial University for hosting a dunking booth that made \$214.
- Tau Beta Pi "Pi" Day that raised \$197.
- Girl Scout Troop #22237 that raised \$1,267.
- Powell Middle School that donated \$800 to us.



Casual Pint

- The Town of Farragut's annual Freaky Friday Halloween event that garnered a van full of needed supplies for us and \$632 in cash donations.
- Second grade classes at First Baptist Church of Concord had a successful holiday market, and recently presented the house with \$3,806! WOW!



Tau Beta Pi  
The Engineering Honor Society



POWELL  
MIDDLE SCHOOL



Town of  
Farragut's  
Freaky Friday

## Calling All Chefs

When a new family checks into our House, after they see their lovely bedroom, their next question is invariably, “What’s to eat?” And that’s where we can use some good cooks. While we have food available 24/7, when we have volunteers here cooking, it makes the House smell like “home” and it means the world to our guests to know they are being remembered which makes them feel extra cared for. We’re not looking for haute cuisine.... Just some good, ole’ comfort food. Cooks can make any meal throughout the day, breakfast, lunch or dinner in one of our beautiful, fully equipped kitchens. It’s a great team builder for businesses, perfect for a church or civic group, or



just friends that enjoy cooking. We guarantee that you’ll never have a more appreciative audience for your meal. Just call the House for available dates... See if you recognize any faces from the Lady Vols Basketball team that came to prepare a meal recently. Their Tex-Mex dinner was a huge & tasty hit.



**DONATE  
YOUR  
VEHICLE  
MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

At some time, we’ve all had old vehicles that we didn’t want to fool with trying to sell, but we didn’t want them sitting in the driveway, either. Well, thankfully, we have an answer to that dilemma. All you need to do is call 855/227-7435 or go to this website: [rmhc.careasy.org/home](http://rmhc.careasy.org/home) to donate that car, truck, motorcycle, or even a boat or travel trailer. It will be towed away for “free”, our House will get the proceeds from the sale, and you’ll receive a tax-receipt for your donation. It couldn’t be easier, could it??!!



website: [rmhc.careasy.org/home](http://rmhc.careasy.org/home)

# Long Time Supporters

Among other things, old friendships offer a shared history that can bring comfort, and a feeling of loyalty and security...Like they have your “back” and are there when you need them. Such is the case with two organizations comprised of caring young people...Key Clubs and the ladies of Alpha Delta Pi. For too many years to remember, regional Key Clubs have adopted Ronald McDonald Houses as their ongoing project. Over time, they’ve had workdays at the House, created soooo many meals for our guests to enjoy, and hosted fundraisers for us as well. We had support last year from several chapters, such as the club in Elizabethton, TN, and our long-time friends from the Bearden HS Club that raised an amazing

\$20,860 for us by selling parking spaces for home UT football games. Big Orange fans were happy to pay to park, knowing the House would receive those funds, and knowing their cars were only about ¼ mile from the stadium.



From the day the first Ronald McDonald House opened in 1974, ADPi has been there for Houses across the United States. Our local chapter, along with the club at TN Tech, raised over \$24,000 for us last year, in addition to volunteering on a weekly basis and donating their time to help execute events such as our Hearts of Gold gala. These two groups have been part of our House for so long now, it’s hard to imagine us without their loving support!!!

## New Cooks

We had some new faces in the kitchen offering up their culinary skills.

