

Date

Addressee

Address 1

Address 2

Address 3

City, St Zip

Dear Salutation,

At two feet three inches, with wispy blond hair and china blue eyes, the little girl in the pink dress may not look like a warrior. A talkative toddler, she ambles about the Ronald McDonald House®, chatting up visitors and urging Daddy to hurry so she can go outside. She's like every other child, eager for playground time. Yet, at two years old, she has endured so much. She's among one-third of children arriving at Ronald McDonald House Charities Jacksonville (RMHCJ), because they have cancer. During and after treatment, RMHCJ will be her family's home away from home.

For 33 years, I served as president and CEO of Methodist Medical Center and Foundation. My community involvement includes establishing the Marcus E. Drewa Health Administration Distinguished Professorship at the University of North Florida; serving as director of the Nielsen Organ Transplant Foundation; and membership in the Rotary Club of South Jacksonville. There are many causes to which I could devote my time and resources, but Ronald McDonald House Charities Jacksonville holds a special place in my heart and has for the last 25 years.

The first time I visited the House, I wasn't sure what to expect. What I discovered was a place of hope and joy. ***In the face of a tremendous emotional, physical, and financial burdens, families were given the gift of normalcy.*** Children frolicked and laughed on the playground. Anita the therapy dog distracted a weary mother from her concerns, bringing a smile to her face. Art and natural lighting filled the cheerful rooms. Families from around the country and around the world shared meals and conversation in the spacious dining room.

RMHCJ Fast Facts

Those families were among the 30,500-plus families the Jacksonville House has served since opening in 1988. Currently, our 30-bedroom facility accommodates 1,100 families annually. They travel to Jacksonville for the specialized pediatric medical care available at Wolfson Children's Hospital, Nemours Children's Hospital, and The University of Florida Proton Therapy Institute. (Proton therapy can require up to eight weeks of daily outpatient treatment.)

Meeting a Critical Need

Without Ronald McDonald House Charities Jacksonville, families would face significant hotel expenses. Some would drive long distances back home each night, after exhausting days filled with exams, tests, and procedures. Others would camp out in doctor's offices or in their cars between appointments. The House keeps families together, allowing them to spend precious time with their sick child. In fact, 73 percent of our families are able to have their child stay with them in the house.

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The Jacksonville Ronald McDonald House, its small, devoted staff, volunteers, and especially its children and families, inspire me every day. I am a member of the RMHCJ Advisory Board. Each year, I renew my financial commitment to RMHC and encourage friends, family, and business contacts to follow my lead. One year, I held a "Birthday Campaign", asking friends and family to write checks to RMHCJ in lieu of gifts. Together, we raised more than \$25,000.

All fundraising for RMHCJ is done in the community and funds raised go directly to the House. RMHCJ House provides comfortable accommodations, support, and evening meals for thousands of financially-eligible families at little or no cost. We do it all on a \$1.5 million budget.

The Challenge

Many families still need our help. ***RMHCJ's occupancy rate has reached full capacity for most of the last three years.*** Due to lack of space, we must refer some families to our three local partner hotels. As a parent myself, I cannot imagine shouldering the responsibility of a critically ill child in a city far from home. This is where the Jacksonville House fills a crucial need and why we're launching a House expansion campaign in 2013 to accommodate 15-18 additional families.

Request for Support

Addressee, I appreciate your patience as I shared the Ronald McDonald House Charities Jacksonville story. By now, I'm certain that my passion for this program is apparent. It is my hope that you will share my desire to improve life for critically ill children by supporting Ronald McDonald House Charities Jacksonville. Your generosity will make a difference in the lives of children like little girl at the beginning of this letter, and their families, now and in the future.

I invite you to experience the impact of donor generosity by reviewing the enclosed RMHCJ Introduction Packet. RMHCJ is a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization. All gifts are tax deductible. If you have any questions, please contact me at *Telephone or Email*.

On behalf of the Ronald McDonald House Charities Jacksonville staff, volunteers, Advisory Board, children and families, thank you for considering my request.

Sincerely,

Name

Title

Enclosures: RMHCJ Introduction Packet