

HOUSE HAPPENINGS

A Newsletter for the Ronald McDonald House of Galveston Family



It's looking like it is going to be a wonderful New Year for our House thanks to you, our Ronald McDonald House Family of supporters, staff, volunteers and board. We were gob smacked by the outpouring during the past month. You brought our children and families toys, food, supplies, financial donations, family fun experiences, parties, music, dance, bingo, and lots and lots of love. While it is difficult to be far from home families and friends over the holidays, you did your best to give our families the best possible holidays at their "Home Away from Home". The Mission of Ronald McDonald House is "to provide essential services that remove barriers, strengthen families and promote healing when children need healthcare." We could not do this and everything else we do for our families without your support. 2026 looks very bright for our House. Thank you!

Thanks to the generosity of our community, we collected more than 75 jackets, hoodies, and sweatshirts to help keep families comfortable during an already difficult time. A heartfelt thank you to the many Galvestonians who rallied together to support our families, and to the students from Friendswood High School, who also brought much-needed blankets. Your kindness made a real difference. ❤️



A Royal Visit

Happy Birthday

- January 4 - Esperanza Jones
- January 8 - Swapan Banerjee
- January 13 - Monica Lima-Torres
- January 20 - Kendall Childs
- January 29 - Frances Estrada



December Happenings



Dr. Jochen Reiser, UTMB President, CEO-UTMB Health, feted our Board and Staff members with a delightful holiday luncheon at the Artillery Club. We thoroughly enjoyed your hospitality and are grateful for UTMB's ongoing caring support for the Ronald McDonald House Galveston throughout the years.



Queen Victoria and Prince Albert made a visit to our families before they fulfilled their royal duties at Dickens on the Strand Festival. The kids presented the Queen with one of their amazing art projects that she will cherish for years to come. It was a delight to have the royal treatment.



The month started out with some very chilly temperatures. Many of our families arrive during medical emergencies from warm climates with only the clothes on their backs. When the cold hit, we put out a plea for warm clothing, coats, and luggage—and our families were truly warmed by the incredible response.



❤️❤️ Grinch movie night was a huge blast!! Thanks to Paula Friesner, Laurel Sukel, Lidia Polio and our staff. It was so much fun the Grinch himself couldn't keep away, so he joined in on the fun too! His heart grew to the size of our House. ❤️❤️❤️



The Galveston League of United Latin Citizens (LULAC) hosted a very fun bingo session for our families. LULAC Bingo is always a hit!

Thanks to Doreen Bridges and the GC Continuing Education Dept. for these thoughtful care bags.



The Marathon Galveston Bay employees are wonderful friends to our House. They hold fundraisers, they cook for us, and they support our families in many ways. They came to our House with the proceeds from their kickball tournament. A special shout out to Greg and his team! We gave them a tour of the House and loved having them visit our families. The generosity brought us so many happy tears. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts for the HUGE check and everything else you do! ❤️



The Central Middle School Band visited and played for our families. They had the whole House dancing to their fabulous beats. They played basketball with our families and taught them about their instruments. We love it when kids give their all for our kids. 🎵



Salt and Sugar. When the United Salt Corporation saw that our wish lists always include salt, they came with a huge donation. And Miss Alexis brought us some yummy baked goodies. Thanks!



Shriners Children's Texas Hospital, the UTMB Women's Resource Group, and The Christina Sullivan Foundation filled our House with an event overflowing with fun, love, and holiday magic. This heartwarming celebration honored our families with Christmas goody bags, joyful caroling, and hands-on crafts shared together. We were delighted by a visit from Santa, his elves, and even the Grinch—plus a surprise appearance by Ariel that truly felt like the icing on the cake. Sharing the magic of our House with these incredible partners meant the world to us. Special thanks to Elizabeth Botello and all these teams for such a wonderful blessing. Heartfelt gratitude as well to Nina's Choir of Angels from the Christina Sullivan Foundation—participants with special needs who spread immense joy and festive cheer to patients and families. Guided by Music Therapist Cathy Alexander and joined by the talented Music in Medicine UTMB students, they filled the space with Christmas cheer. Each family was gifted a goody bag filled to the brim, along with a \$50 Walmart gift card to support our weekly field trips. We are deeply thankful for the love, generosity, and joy!



Galveston College students donated 30 gift bags full of wish list items to our families: toiletries, blankets, snacks and more for the long therapies, surgery waiting rooms and extensive flights.



Wow, The Trevino Group knows how to spread holiday cheer 🎄🧸🚲🛼! Huge thanks and big hugs to the men and women in this amazing group. They dazzled us with needed supplies and our families' favorite foods, snacks and toys. ❤️



Shout out to Sandra Leon and Friends for putting on an amazing Christmas party at the House!! 🎄✨ The parents and kiddos truly enjoyed the celebration, and it was such a joy to see everyone come together. Seeing the smiles on our families' faces during such a difficult time of medical treatments and recovery means everything to us. Thank you for bringing light, laughter, and holiday cheer when it's needed most. ❤️

Thank you to HCA Clear Lake CVU and Mary Posato and family for the generous donation of 80 stuffed animals! We love welcoming each child with a cuddly stuffy upon admission to help comfort them during treatment and recovery—and the kids absolutely love them. 🧸💕 BIG hugs to all of you for bringing so much comfort, love, and smiles to our kids and families. 🥰❤️



Robert Fong with the Panamerican Golf Association visited the House bearing over 65 toys, bikes, skateboards, and scooters! 🚲🛼📺 Our hearts are absolutely overflowing with love and appreciation for this incredible generosity. THANK YOU for bringing so much joy, fun, and big smiles to our kids and families! ❤️❤️❤️



Have you ever wondered what dinnertime is like at the Ronald McDonald House? 🍲🍔🥗 It's AMAZING!!!! The kitchen fills with the comforting smell of home-cooked food, laughter echoes through the halls, and families gather around the table to create lasting memories with their kids. ❤️💕 Thank you, Perez Corporation, for providing such a delicious meal and for helping make our House feel like home. ❤️



🚂👨‍👩‍👧‍👦 "One thing about trains... It doesn't matter where it's going. What matters is deciding to get on." - Conductor's line in Polar Express 🚂 Galveston County Sheriff's Office came in smoking hot with their very own Polar Express Train. The train was packed with gifts, food, treats, decorations and toys. 🎒 All aboard!!!! Off they went on a ride, shouting Christmas wishes through the neighborhood. 🚂👨‍👩‍👧‍👦 Thank you, Sheriff Jimmy Fullen and the men and women at the Sheriff's office for your amazing gifts and the love you showed the families we serve at the Ronald McDonald House. 🤍



A BIG thank you to Amanda Tolley for her massive pajama delivery today! 🎄🌟 Each child got to choose two cozy sets of PJs, making them all ready for Christmas morning and a visit from Santa. So much comfort, joy, and holiday magic in one delivery—we're incredibly grateful! 🤍👨‍👩‍👧‍👦



A joyful thanks to Dennis and Michelle Bryd and Island Famous' the Spot for the donation of 20% of their proceeds on December 22. We love what you do for Galveston, our tummies, and our House!



A BIG thank you to Seawall Coffee Company for thinking of our families by sponsoring a special breakfast, made possible through the generosity of an anonymous donor who frequents their restaurant. The families were welcomed with warm breakfast

burritos, sandwiches, coffee, cookies, and cocoa—and it was an absolute hit! Full bellies and happy hearts filled the House, and the Christmas spirit was felt by all. 🤍👨‍👩‍👧‍👦 Special thanks to Paula, her sister, and the entire Seawall Coffee Company team for this wonderful gift and for allowing us to place a Ronald McDonald House Galveston donation canister at their location. The thoughtfulness and generosity helped spread holiday cheer throughout the House, and we are incredibly grateful. Thank you, SCC! 🎁🌟



Trey and Colleen Austin, their friends, Liqui Pro Industries and the All-In Bowling Pro Shop made for a very special Christmas Eve for our families. A fun and lively group of local teams hosted a bowling event in our honor. With the proceeds, they shopped for our families and showed up with Santa for a personalized delivery on December 23rd. They sang with our families, handed out gifts (including homemade t-shirts for our mothers) and toured the House. Thanks to the toys and proceeds from their tournament, they donated \$1,000+ worth of toys, helping ensure our beautiful children had the Christmas they truly deserve. 🎁🎄👨‍👩‍👧‍👦 A huge thank you to Jessica and Chris Walters who



helped to make this possible. It was an absolute blast—and seeing the kids' faces light up like Christmas lights when Santa arrived is unforgettable! 🎅🎁



Dickinson ISD donated twenty gingerbread houses for our families. The kids had so much fun decorating them! The Grinch brought gooey slimy green juice to make trash can sundaes while they built their masterpieces. Our volunteer Daisy came to help with the constructions. And a special thanks to the Grinch (AKA Paula Friesner) for always bringing some extra spirit to the party!



Santa & the Texas Boilers rolled in with boxes and boxes of toys for our kiddos, and it was pure magic! 🎅🎁 So many happy campers after their arrival—thank you for spreading smiles, joy, and holiday cheer throughout the House! ❤️🎁



McKenna's Annual Christmas Drive made holiday wishes come true! 🎄🎁 Each child was gifted items straight from their wish list, resulting in MANY happy kiddos and even happier hearts. A heartfelt thank you to this incredible family for their generosity and for making Christmas so special for our children. ❤️🎁



Burnet Elementary's Folklórico Dancers treated our families to a beautiful performance filled with energy, culture, and joy! 🎶🎭

It was such a delight for everyone to watch—and even dance along! Thank you for sharing your talent and bringing so many smiles to our House. ❤️🎶



We were honored to host a thank-you luncheon for our UTMB Maintenance supporters—the incredible team that keeps our House running smoothly and in great shape.

From installing a new generator to repairing leaks from a burst water heater, keeping our plumbing, electricity, and air conditioning operational, fixing sheetrock damaged by termites, and repainting much-needed areas—these are just a few of the many ways they supported us throughout 2025.

We are eternally grateful for their hard work and dedication, which helps keep our families comfortable, safe, and cared for every single day. Thank you for all that you do! ❤️





We were treated to something truly special on Christmas Day. 🎄✨ Lucio Nieto (Island ETC performer) and Charita King (Island Idol Season 7 Winner) joined our families to sing beautiful Christmas carols together.

Thank you, Lucio and Charita, for sharing your voices and bringing so much joy, music, and holiday spirit to our House! ❤️🎵



Layers of Love, a nonprofit group that faithfully cooks breakfast for our families one Saturday each month, arrived with an incredible story of compassion, perseverance, and kindness. Sheri, the leader of the Galveston group (bottom row, right), was on her way to the House with donations for our families when she stopped at a Starbucks in Deer Park for a quick pick-me-up. In an unimaginable turn of events, her car burst into flames—and her vehicle along with all the donated items were lost. Understandably shaken and heartbroken over the loss of items meant for our families, Sheri was overwhelmed. The Starbucks owner was notified and immediately came to the scene, writing a check to Layers of Love to fully cover the cost of the lost donations. That generosity didn't stop there—Sheri and her husband stayed up all night shopping to replace every item. Despite getting no sleep, they still arrived, cooked breakfast, and personally handed out gifts to our families the very next morning. ❤️ Adding to this beautiful story, the Starbucks owner has since reached out to become more involved with our House and plans to host a breakfast for our families in January. ANGELS truly are among us.

We cannot thank this incredible team enough. Thank you, Layers of Love (LOL)—your dedication and hearts inspire us all.

And a heartfelt thank you to all the others who donated their time and gifts—we are so incredibly grateful for each and every one of you. ❤️





Christmas Eve SURPRISE for our families! 🎄 ✨

On December 24th, Colin Hartwell and UTMB Business Operations sponsored a truly special Christmas Eve meal for our families. After hearing several families share that they had never experienced dining at a buffet—and hoped to someday—we made it our mission to make that wish come true.

Families were asked to dress in their best and be ready by 5:00 PM. We loaded up the shuttle and headed to Moody Gardens, where Mr. Zendt and Andreas warmly welcomed everyone into a private dining room prepared just for them.

The families were absolutely amazed by the beautiful decorations, twinkling lights, and incredible food. A HUGE thank you to our UTMB and Moody Gardens partners for creating such a fabulous Christmas treat.

But the fun didn't stop there! Mr. Zendt extended his generosity even further by gifting tickets for each guest to experience the Festival of Lights. With Christmas antlers on, full bellies, and joyful hearts, our families set off to make unforgettable memories together. 🦌 🎄

This was truly a Christmas Eve to remember. Thank you to every single person who played a role in making this night so magical and meaningful for our families. ❤️



One of the requirements for Ronald McDonald Houses is to provide one healthy meal each day. While we are grateful for the meals supplied by "guest chefs", there are some days when our meal calendar is empty. Luckily, we have a fully trained chef on staff, Lonnie! Lonnie serves as the executive chef at Our Daily Bread in Galveston and currently functions as our Assistant Family Service Coordinator in the evenings. Lonnie has agreed to prepare breakfast for our families. He also prepared a delicious and festive feast on Christmas Day. Our families love Lonnie and love his cooking. Lonnie considers it an honor to serve the families, saying he loves to use his talent to make people happy. We surprised him

with a RMHG chef's coat on December 23rd. It was a touching, full-circle moment for both Lonnie and the House. Thanks to Lonnie, for stepping up in this big way!

And as always, HUGE thanks to our loyal meal providers who continuously pour so much love into caring for our families: Broadway Church of Christ, the Moore Sisters, Maryellen LeDuc, Drs. Pat Lanier and Bill Posnick, Cosmic Cookers, First Baptist Church, Bayside Lions Club, Temple Emmanuel Christian Church, Galveston Rotary Club, The Galveston Education Foundation, United We Stand, Layers of Love, Moody Mansion, McDonald's McKinney, McDonald's Lucero, McDonald's COOP, Southwest Airlines, Ruth and Marshall Yost, Vera Carmona, Helen and Gayle King, Amanda NCL, and all the others who provide such generous, loving care for our families throughout the year. ❤️

We are deeply grateful for each of you and the comfort you bring to our House and the families we serve.

If you'd like to supply a healthy meal for our families, contact Monica at monica@rmhg.org to schedule. All meals are to be cooked in a commercial kitchen or at our House; they can be delivered from a restaurant, you (and/or your group) can cook them at the House (which is a great opportunity for fellowship), or you can donate the funds and we'll take care of it.



2025 ended on the highest of notes. We had an amazing visit on the last day of the year, as we were presented with a generous gift from the Flores-Perez charity. We are truly blessed to have the support of Robert and his family here at the House. Over the years, they have graciously donated, provided home-cooked meals (see above) and supported the families here. It is a blessing having them walk alongside us in this journey to keep our families close together during their time of healing. ❤️

Staff and Volunteer News



A big welcome to Ana San Andres, our newest House staff member. Ana previously served as a substitute teacher and caregiver, and she is fluent in both Spanish and sign language. Ana will be an alternate Assistant Family Service Coordinator to





substitute when needed on the Sunday-Thursday overnight shift. Ana and her family has a history with Ronald McDonald House, staying at one in her youngest years. She is an advocate for equal work opportunities for disabled persons and has previously spoken at the Capitol on the cause's behalf. Ana relocated to Galveston in 2025 with her parents, to be closer to her sister, who is a pediatrician on the island. Ana adores her niece and nephew, loves island time and looks forward to creating new memories with our families. Welcome, Ana!

The Best Gifts of All



Shriners was so impressed with Franc's progress with walking that he was able to avoid surgery altogether. Even more special, he was cleared to return home to Panama just in time to celebrate his birthday and Christmas with his family.

We celebrated Franc at the House and were able to gift him everything from his wish list. After more than two months with us, Franc and Sonia will be deeply missed—but this is

exactly what it's all about.

The joy on Franc's face says everything. 🎁👉❤️



Baby Hannah has officially graduated from UTMB's NICU!



It is always such a joy when our families can return to their normal lives.

This sweet family has touched so many hearts and will truly be missed. We wish them nothing but love, health, and happiness as they head home together. ❤️

Happy New Year to our Staff & Volunteers



THANK YOU to all our staff and volunteers for the HEART, help, time, and dedication you pour into our House every single day. ❤️ Each of you plays a vital role in the lives you touch daily, and we are so incredibly grateful for all that you do. We appreciate YOU! #theHousethatlovebuilt

Welcome 2026!

Happy New Year 2026! 🎉 Wishing our families a year filled with hope, healing, and happy moments ahead. May this new year bring comfort, strength, and brighter days for our families and little ones. ❤️

We are so grateful for the love, kindness, and support that continue to surround our House—here's to another year of caring for families.

And to you—our amazing supporters—and your loved ones, we wish a happy, healthy, and joy-filled 2026. ✨



Happy Employee Anniversary

Lidia Polio – 13 years
Lonnie Harris – 1 year

Happy Volunteer Anniversary

Terri Prescott – 6 years

