

Heart Strings

Keeping Families Close®

News

40
years
1985 - 2025



Spring/Summer 2025

Deven Strong Donation Day



"We arrived at C.S. Mott Children's Hospital via the Life Flight with nothing but the clothes on our backs. RMHC Ann Arbor made sure we had a toothbrush, a warm blanket, and hot meal." Deven's mom, Hailee recalls.

DEVEN STRONG

Each spring, a wave of kindness rolls into RMHC Ann Arbor (RMHCAA), thanks to the Deven Strong group—created in loving memory of Deven Free, who passed away at age 14 after a courageous fight that began with a tragic BB gun injury. During his time at the University of Michigan Medicine C.S. Mott Children's Hospital, his mom, Hailee Lockwood, and grandmother found a safe haven at the Mott House from May to July 2021.

"For families going through the worst moments of their lives, RMHCAA gives you something priceless—relief," says Hailee. "Being just steps away from Deven meant everything. My mom and I traded off resting. We could do laundry, grab a coffee, or take a moment to breathe. That comfort meant the world to us."

Now in its third year, the Deven Strong group honors Deven's memory by collecting and donating items that made a difference during their stay—snacks, toiletries, laundry supplies, UNO cards, phone chargers, and more. They launched a "\$2 Tuesday" Cash App campaign that raised nearly \$400 to stock the pantry. Donations pour in from friends, local groups like the VFW, and even a train museum collected pop tabs.

Each May on Deven's birthday, the family gathers to celebrate his life with a special donation drop-off at the RMHCAA House—followed by lunch together. "We want to give other families that little bit of peace," Hailee shares. "We're forever grateful for RMHCAA. And for anyone else who finds themselves staying at the House, we hope through our donations at Deven Strong, we can make their stay a little easier."

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Scan to donate to
RMHCAA today!



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A LETTER FROM OUR CEO



Kim Kelly, CEO

Caring for the Little Victors

At RMHC Ann Arbor, we are proud to care for the Little Victors—children facing medical challenges at University of Michigan Medicine C.S. Mott Children's Hospital, and the families who stay by their side.

Whether families stay with us in one of our 43 guest rooms—31 at our Main House and 12 at our House inside the hospital—grab a Comfort Care Bag at Trinity Health, or are served by one of our Hospitality Carts in the halls of Mott Hospital, our mission is the same: to provide comfort, care, and compassion during some of life's most difficult moments. From a hot meal and a warm shower to fuzzy socks, a cozy blanket, or a much-needed toothbrush, we strive to meet families where they are, with whatever they need.

We are continually looking for ways to serve more families, and to serve them better. With your support, we're expanding our impact and ensuring that no family feels alone on their healthcare journey. Thank you for helping us care for the Little Victors.

Kim Kelly, RMHCAA CEO

HERO OF THE HOUSE RECIPIENTS - 2025

The Hero of the House award is given in appreciation for the dedication and support to the families we serve. Our 2025 recipients are:

Red Shoe Affair Past Chairs and Kim Kelly, CEO

Alan & Angela Harris, Kim Kelly, Sheri Belcher & Todd Tribble, Elissa Gaies, Jenny & Jim Carpenter, Debbie & Mike Tirico, Laura & A.C. Ganger, Betsy & Patrick Cavanaugh, Sara & Bill Atwell, Susie & Todd McDevitt, Leyla Conlan



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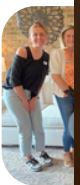
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#KeepingFamiliesClose



RMHC[®]
Ann Arbor

If you would like to contribute your time and/or talent to serve the families at RMHCAA, please contact Mary Moffett at mmoffett@rmhcannarbor.org

MEALS MATTER PROGRAM



SERVE MORE FAMILIES. SERVE THEM BETTER.

As part of an RMHC Global initiative to serve more families—and serve them better—RMHCAA is committed to providing a home-cooked meal every night of the year to the families staying with us.

To meet this important goal, we need the support of our entire community—and that's where YOU come in. Sign up to cook dinner at our House with your family, friends, coworkers, or club. Your time and care will help families feel the warmth and comfort of a home-cooked meal when they need it most.

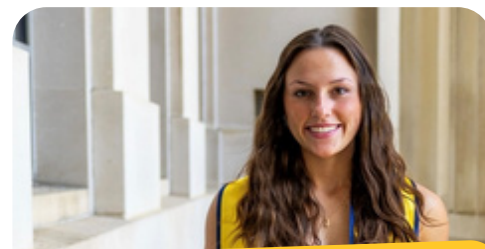
♥ SUPPORT ♥

Scan to learn more about Meals Matter



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT Brynn Kackzofsky

Congratulations to Brynn Kackzofsky, RMHCAA's top volunteer for 2024! Brynn has been volunteering for the Hospitality Cart program since it started in January of 2023. A Research Technician in cancer research at Michigan Medicine, Brynn was looking for a way to give back to the community and interact with patients and their families, and volunteering on the Cart was a perfect match.



Most Volunteer Hours in 2024 -
Brynn Kackzofsky

Brynn says, "Sometimes, all people need is something small to brighten their day, and this role definitely gives me the opportunity to spread some happiness." Brynn has found meaning in the countless small moments she shares with families — from handing out fuzzy socks to simply being a friendly face. To learn how to get involved, scan the code:



Hospitality Cart Update

In 2024, we launched our second Hospitality Cart. This cart is small but mighty, rolling through Children's Emergency Services and the Short Stay Unit on 4 West at C.S. Mott Children's Hospital. This year to date, with both Hospitality Carts, we have served over 2,500 families!

Top Hospitality Cart items include toothbrushes and toothpaste, fuzzy socks, lip balm, deodorant, lotion, coloring books for adults and card games.



BOARD MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Russ West

Russ West has been a valued member of the RMHC Ann Arbor Board since 2020, and we're honored to welcome him to the Executive Committee this year as Vice President – Community.

Russ is a Controls and Software Engineering Manager at the BorgWarner Propulsion Technical Center, and brings both professional expertise and a deeply personal experience to his role.

RMHC Ann Arbor was "home" for the West family for eight months while their daughter, Adalyn, received care at C.S. Mott Children's Hospital.

"RMHC Ann Arbor gave us time with our daughter, Adalyn, and that is just something you can never put a price tag on," Russ shares. "We got time with her because of how close we were able to be to her, and we are forever grateful for that."

We're grateful for Russ's leadership and heartfelt commitment to our mission.



Russ pictured above with his daughter Oaklyn at Home Run for the House and below far left.



MOTT GOLF CLASSIC Thank You!

The Mott Golf Classic has been a cherished tradition since its inception in 1973. This year will mark its 53rd year of bringing together community members and supporters for a day of golf and philanthropy. Over the decades, the event has played a pivotal role in supporting various initiatives at C.S. Mott Children's Hospital, including significant contributions to RMHCAA. This support has been instrumental in providing a comforting "home away from home" for families with children receiving care at the hospital, ensuring they can stay close during critical times. Thank you!



Become a Corporate Partner

Discover ways to support RMHC Ann Arbor through a corporate gift while your employees engage in fulfilling activities with mission-driven purposes.

As part of our Corporate Champion Program, we will meet with you to discuss your company's community engagement goals. Together, we can craft a personalized corporate plan that specifically targets your goals while making a substantial impact on the lives of the families we serve.

WAYS TO ENGAGE:

- Cook a meal
- Sponsor/attend an event
- Host a wish list drive
- Lead a family activity
- Collect pop tabs



For questions and more details, please contact Kristina Behncke at kbehncke@rmhcannarbor.org or 734.944.4442

Join a dynamic group of young professionals - check out the RED SHOE CREW at RMHC Ann Arbor! We are currently looking to add new members!



13th Annual Red Shoe Affair

Friday, April 25, 2025



Thank you to everyone who made our 13th Annual Red Shoe Affair an unforgettable evening. Because of your incredible generosity, we raised over \$480,000 to provide comfort, care, and a home-away-from-home for families at RMHC Ann Arbor.



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auction bidders,
board members,
Event Chair - Leyla Conlan,
Honorary Co-Chairs - Sheri
Belcher & Todd Tribble,
host committee members,
volunteers, staff, and
Ronald McDonald!





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CONTACT US

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RMHC ANN ARBOR MISSION

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



**DID YOU
KNOW?**

RMHC Ann Arbor is celebrating its 40th anniversary.
Keeping Families Close since 1985!

UPCOMING EVENTS



9.14.25 - Home Run for the House

This family-friendly event is an opportunity for you to join with past families and the community to "hit a home run" for the House.

10.19.25 - Rally for the House

Join us for a fun-filled day of pickleball, laughter, and community spirit—all while supporting families in need!



10.25.25 - Battle for the Houses

Battle for the Houses is a friendly competition to grow awareness and raise funds for RMHC Ann Arbor. Last Year's Battle raised over \$150,000 for the Mid-Michigan (Lansing) and Ann Arbor chapters!



11.14.25 - Forks & Corks

This special evening features a four-course food and wine pairing woven together with mission-rich moments impacting the funding and expansion of our Meals Matter program.

Scan for
more about
our events!

