



Ronald McDonald
House Charities®
Greater Western Sydney

2023 Impact Report



“Some days I think,
 ‘How are we ever going to get
 through this?’ and then someone at
 the front desk gives me a smile or kind
 words... and I think, ‘Yep, that’s how we’re
 going to get through it.’
 Thank you to all the generous sponsors
 and the wonderful people who make
 it all happen.”

– Leah, Mum of Austin, 14
 (168 nights)



Acknowledgment of Country

Ronald McDonald House Charities Greater Western Sydney (RMHC GWS) acknowledges the Burramatagal people of the Dharug nation as the Traditional Custodians of the lands, skies, and waterways where we work.

RMHC GWS also acknowledges the various Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples amongst the families we care for, our employees, volunteers, and supporters, who form part of the oldest continuous living culture on earth. We pay our respects to them and their cultures and to Elders past, present, and emerging.

Contents

Message from our Chair	4	A safe and joyous haven for kids	11	Eventful days keep our support on course	22
One family's refuge over two generations	5	Education support for students and teachers	12	CEO Walk in My Shoes	23
New support in motion	6	Stability in the midst of chaos	13	Part of a bigger family	24
A whole new range of holistic support	7	The gift of time, a forty-year legacy	14	Incredibly generous in-kind support	25
Sparks of joy in dark times	8	The power of the collective	16	A little bit of cheer goes a long way	26
Alleviating their burden every day	9	It takes a village	18	Our heartfelt thanks to	28
Critical care centred around family	10	Embracing our diverse community	20	Message from our CEO	31

Message from our Chair

I am proud, as every member of our community can be, of the many ways Ronald McDonald House Charities Greater Western Sydney (RMHC GWS) provided unique and critical support to over 2,000 families with sick and injured children in 2023. Thank you to each one of our supporters, staff and volunteers.

As you will read in the pages ahead, last year, we introduced several new programs in addition to our original home-away-from-home, extending support to even more families with sick or injured children.

In 2023, 1,662 families called our House home, often for months at a time. For some families, it was their second consecutive year at the House. On the following page, you can read about Peter's family, who have relied on RMHC GWS for two generations.

Like so many of our programs, there is simply no equivalent service or affordable alternative for families with children near the hospital. As you'll read on page 7, our new Day Pass Program was launched in response to feedback from families and staff from The Children's Hospital at Westmead, which revealed a gap in support for local outpatient families.

You'll also read about our new Hospitality Cart, already running at Nepean Hospital, with another recently launched at Campbelltown Hospital.

Thank you to everyone who supported Meals from the Heart in 2023. The 20,400 meals and treats we provided spared parents the financial and mental burden of buying or preparing food themselves, providing much-needed respite or time together. Our innovative Nutrition Program now complements this.

None of this is possible, without your support.



From the conversations our valued staff and volunteers have with families and the messages we receive, I can tell you that there is no such thing as a small act of support in their eyes.

So, on behalf of the entire RMHC GWS workforce and the families we serve, I extend my sincere thanks and best wishes for the year ahead.

Ken

Ken Basha
Board Chair

One family's refuge over two generations

It's not uncommon for families to return to the House because of ongoing treatment as the years go by, but Peter's story spans four decades of support, for different members of his family.

1980s

Peter is diagnosed with kidney failure as a five-year-old boy growing up in the Southern Highlands. He is sent to The Royal Alexandra Children's Hospital and, fortunately, his mum is a match and able to donate her kidney to Peter in 1983.

While he is recuperating, Peter and his mum stay at the first Ronald McDonald House outside of Philadelphia, USA, the eight-room House in Camperdown near the hospital.



2017

More than 30 years later, Peter's 10-year-old daughter Lorelei is diagnosed with the same renal condition. She has her transplant a year later at The Children's Hospital in Westmead, and their family is one of the first to stay at our current Westmead House, which opened in 2018.

When asked what her favourite thing was, Lorelei says, "I like how Meals from the Heart had all different types of food that everyone liked," and fondly remembers a Mexican meal she particularly enjoyed.



2021

Peter's 15-year-old son Xander is also diagnosed with the same condition. He has a successful transplant two years later, and the family seeks refuge for the third time at the House, staying close to 150 nights. Xander reflects, "I appreciated the fact that it was close to the hospital school, which made me feel like I was not too far away from home."



2023

The whole family is doing well, with Xander slowly being able to live his life as a normal teenager. Because of all our supporters, the House remains a strong and stable refuge for families like Peter's, hopefully for many more decades to come.



1,662
families called
our House a
home in 2023

"Thank you so much for your support over the many decades to families in need."
– Peter

New support in motion



459 families received 1,443 items

"The Hospitality Cart brought lots of joy to my child (and other children on the ward) whilst we were staying there."
- Kirsty

Our volunteer-run Hospitality Cart at Nepean Hospital was launched in May 2023, providing some comfort and relief to children and their families staying at the NICU and Children's Ward.

The Hospitality Cart circulates through the wards, providing families with complimentary body boosters such as snacks, beverages, toiletries, and comfort items, as well as boredom busters in the form of toys, puzzles, and activity books. Perhaps more importantly, our volunteers and the small gifts they carry offer moments of distraction for the weary heart.

Our volunteers share how beautiful it is to see the joy on kids' faces when they realise that the Cart doesn't have any medication and instead has fun gifts or activities. The same goes for their carers, who appreciate a mindfulness book and some coloured pencils that give them a break from looking at their phones. The Cart also delivers refreshments to eat or drink, which are gratefully received, particularly after a night going without a meal.

We're so pleased that we can provide this additional support to bedside patients and their families and are proud to offer the same support at Campbelltown Hospital from March 2024.

A whole new range of holistic support

In addition to the Hospitality Cart, in-house pilot programs introduced in 2023 aimed to extend support to families with sick kids not staying at the House, while offering additional services to those in our care.

Day Pass Program

Extending our support to families at the hospital's Middleton Day Surgery Ward who are waiting for their child's surgery to finish, this program launched in September and gave Day Pass families access to communal areas of the House where they can rest, recharge, keep their other kids engaged, and have a cuppa and some light lunch.

Letitia and John, the first couple who signed up for the program, were so grateful when they found out they didn't need to walk the halls of the hospital or around Parramatta Park as their daughter Hanna underwent a 10-hour scoliosis spinal fusion surgery.

Counselling Services

In response to feedback from families, our partnership with Catholic Care began in October, with dedicated counsellors coming into the House twice a week. Families could attend either the group sessions or schedule a private meeting. We're so thankful to Catholic Care for generously funding this pilot and strengthening support for our families' emotional, mental, and psychological well-being.

Nutrition Program

Our Nutrition Program also launched in October. Designed to help families make nutritionally informed choices around mealtime, the program offers educational workshops for kids and cooking classes for adults, as well as a resource library kept updated with recipes and tips on how to support healthy habits.

"The House allowed us to rest in a beautiful setting."
- Letitia, mum of Hanna

22 families signed up for the Day Pass Program



Sparks of joy in dark times

In-house activities provided families the opportunity to enjoy and unwind. From Build-A-Bear workshops to spa days, kids and adults alike made some new happy memories in the midst of the most difficult time of their lives.

33
activities delivered for families to enjoy



"Thank you from two very tired parents, who had a moment of joy in a very dark time."
– Miranda, mum of Libby

Alleviating their burden every day

Many groups of corporate volunteers stepped into our House in 2023, bringing with them lots of enthusiasm, willing hearts, and a genuine desire to make a positive impact on the families staying with us.

Meals from the Heart, running three nights a week, often comes up as one of the things families are most grateful for. With 117 groups preparing and serving dinner throughout the year, families came back from a long day at the hospital without having to think about, worry, or actually cook a meal, instead spending the time to recharge or simply be together as a family.

"Meals from the Heart is such a gift to the RMHC families, especially after hard days at the hospital. It truly means so much to come home to a meal cooked with love."
– Samantha, mum of Archer

Rise & Dine volunteers trooped to the House early to make breakfast while Cook + Connect groups cooked and individually packed meals so families could have the convenience of having them when needed. These were rounded out by Baking a Difference for sweet and savoury on-the-go sustenance.

Out of the kitchen, Working Bee groups rolled up their sleeves to help with chores, such as gardening, vehicle washing, and tidying up storerooms, keeping the House a clean and pleasant place for its residents.

To everyone who participated in these programs, thank you for taking time out of your busy workdays to help alleviate some of the burdens our families carry so they can focus on caring for their sick children.



20,400
meals and treats served

1,920
corporate volunteers came to the House for team-building programs

Critical care centred around family

For a sick child, having family nearby for more hugs, kisses, and I love yous can be as powerful as the best medicine.

In September 2022, six-year-old Oliver was watching TV when mum Naomi noticed he was covering one of his eyes. She took him to an optometrist, who had no immediate available appointments.

The next day, they left for a family holiday. In the car's rearview mirror, Naomi saw that Ollie's eye had turned slightly inwards. After many hours in emergency and a visit to another optometrist, an MRI revealed a tumour. Ollie was airlifted from Lismore to Westmead Children's Hospital, where he was diagnosed with rhabdomyosarcoma, a highly aggressive and rare form of brain cancer.

Over the next 500 days, Ollie's family would call our House home.

As an incredible artist, Ollie's drawings and creative side have helped him navigate the highs and lows of having childhood cancer and undergoing intensive treatment. More importantly, he has his parents and best friends, sisters Gracie and Marley, by his side, ready to cheer him up in hospital or welcome him "home" to the House with big squishy cuddles after staying on the ward.

"Marley and Gracie are just good supports for Ollie. They let him just be a kid, not a kid with cancer. They accept him through everything he's going through and all the changes. They're just there for him. They make him laugh," Naomi shares.



Together, they've spent Christmases and birthdays in the House, Halloweens, school holidays and all the days in between. The kids are regular visitors to the Learning Centre's programs, as well as the many in-house activities throughout the year that bring some light and joy to the whole family. They've also had some unforgettable days out seeing Disney on Ice and Freestyle Kings, in addition to visiting the zoo and the aquarium, thanks to the generosity of our partners.

The whole family is looking forward to ticking off Ollie's "When I'm Better" wishlist, but in the meantime, they make as many new happy memories together as much as they can in between unexpected spikes in temperature.

752
children stayed in-house to support their sick family member

"I can tell you 100% that without Ronald McDonald House Charities Greater Western Sydney, many families like mine would be stuck and lost in their darkest of times."

– Nathan, Ollie's dad



A safe and joyous haven for kids

"Long days at the hospital were met with fun activities for the kids, enabling them to forget even for just a moment that they are unwell. My family will forever be grateful."

– Erica, mum of Ellouise



Through fundraising and grant support, we're able to provide families with more than just supported accommodation. Our Learning Centre is perhaps the most popular area of the House for young children, a safe and joyous haven where sick children and their siblings can leave worries and anxieties at the door and just be kids.

Engaging teenagers was a priority for the House in 2023, and we're proud to have launched our Teen Retreat program in September. Once a week, the Learning Centre transformed into a space exclusively for 13-18-year-olds to hang out in and engage in a range of age-appropriate activities.

In Hideout Heroes, school-aged kids enjoyed a mix of art, music, craft, sciences, sport, and curriculum-based activities six days a week. Pre-schoolers had their turn to have fun during Playschool; we also took them across the road to the hospital library, the Book Bunker, as part of the new Library Learners program. Other programs we introduced included sports days, afternoon tutoring, and parent information sessions.

School holidays are always busier in the House, with activities every day to stimulate minds and creativity, as well as expend some pent-up energy in our spacious oval.

2,245
sign-ins into Learning Centre activities



With the help of our dedicated Education Services team and volunteers, our programs offered both kids and caregivers something priceless: smiles, laughter, friendship, and a much-needed respite from the realities of childhood illness.

Education support for students and teachers

When sick and injured children are discharged from the hospital and leave the House, they need to adjust to a new normal back home and also catch up on missed education.

The Ronald McDonald Learning Program

The Ronald McDonald Learning Program (RMLP) isn't exclusively delivered to children who have stayed at the House, though; it's also available to a wider cohort of children from all over the country who have had an extended absence from school due to physical and mental illness.

RMHC GWS supported a record number of students on the RMLP in 2023, helping 130 young people ease back into schooling post-treatment through 1:1 tutoring in their hometown. The program not only assisted academically but also helped rebuild confidence and self-esteem.

Students also participated in a mentoring program, helping with schoolwork planning, studying skills, exam preparation, time management, and well-being and processing skills. This received enthusiastic feedback from parents and students alike, with many saying they wished they could have participated in similar programs earlier.

EDMed

On the educators' side, EDMed professional development for teachers remained a key priority. This program provided teachers with information about chronic illness and a range of strategies to support students re-integrating into school. This year, participants from across the education system, including schools, universities, and TAFE, completed the training face-to-face or online.



2023 Charlie Bell Scholarship winners Lucas, Ahmed, and Julian all received tutoring through the Ronald McDonald Learning Program.

130
students
accessed the
Ronald McDonald
Learning Program

47
people
attended
face-to-face
EDMed
training

Stability in the midst of chaos

"Right when we didn't know what we needed, Ronald McDonald House was there. Right at the beginning and in the middle of this chaos, RMH has been there."

– Emma, Chloe's mum



Sixteen-year-old Chloe's journey started while her whole family was on a road trip.

In June 2023, Chloe's family went on a seven-week caravan holiday from their Forbes, NSW home to Western Australia. With two weeks left, Chloe started feeling pain in her hip. For an athletic and tough farm girl to wake up at night crying in pain was worrying to mum Emma and dad Jarrod.

They spent two days at a Queensland hospital, where they were told they needed to fly down immediately to Sydney. Chloe was diagnosed with Ewing sarcoma, a tumour in and around her bone.

Being from a 6,000-acre sheep and cropping farm and having never been to a Sydney hospital, the first few days were a blur. Chloe's family grappled with the shock and every other emotion brought about by her devastating diagnosis while trying to navigate a new environment.

Their oncologist and social worker organised for them to stay at the House. "I remember the first night asking, 'How do I arrange to pay for the accommodation?'"

and breaking down when I was told that there would be no cost," Emma recounts.

She is particularly grateful that the House can accommodate their family of eight. "Our whole family can stay together when they come—and that is one of our most important priorities."

With five other children ranging in age from 5 to 14, there are activities in the House to interest them all when they come to visit, from the bike track to the playground. They will also remember watching together, on the big screen in the living room, the Matildas beat the French in that memorable World Cup quarterfinal. Emma also appreciates that there are tables in the dining room large enough so their whole brood can enjoy family dinners together.

Chloe herself says in the Christmas card she thoughtfully sent to the House: "Thank you so much for all that you've done for me and my family this year. You've literally saved our lives with all the beautiful meals, a place to stay, and all the extra activities and support you give."

The gift of time, a forty-year legacy

Dedicated volunteers have been the soul of RMHC in Australia since 1983. Forty years on, they continue to make an indelible mark in the lives of the families we serve.

This year, 123 people contributed over 12,000 hours, fulfilling any of nine different volunteer roles for our charity, each with the common goal of easing the burden on families we care for.

We also celebrated and honoured volunteers who have made a substantial contribution over the past four decades.

For their invaluable service of more than 25 years each, we honoured Board Members Ray Finn OAM and Mark Holton, alongside Jennie Keenan, Carolyn Meadows, and Deborah Carr, as Life Members.

In July, we celebrated the 100th Birthday of Lilian Ries, OAM with a surprise party organised by her family at the House. Lilian started volunteering at our first Westmead House in 1995 and retired only eight years ago.

Soon after, we farewelled the late Alan Overton AM OAM, a Life Member who was instrumental in forging our relationship with the Parramatta Eels and building our first Westmead House, dedicating his heart and personal time to the House over many decades.

On receiving his Life Member award, Ray said, "The most valuable gift you can give anyone is your time." We are heartened to see this legacy carried on today by volunteers of all ages, like Daniel Buffa, 25.

Daniel is pictured (below left) on the left with Volunteer Coordinator Mez Nessi (centre) and Kirsty Kingdom-Bull (right). We first met Kirsty when she was staying in the children's ward for a week, and she is now serving parents who are experiencing similar emotions to her not so long ago.

Guardian angels

Our volunteers were once referred to as Guardian Angels, and today, they are still revered for their selflessness. In 2024, we have another 50 recruits ready to join everyday heroes like Janet Thomas, Trevor Skeen, Anne Grosvenor, and Rose Maythers, who have quietly volunteered for decades, running local market stalls to raise vital funds.

Volunteering is a foundational part of our history that remains integral in delivering programs and compassion for families with sick kids. Thank you to all our past and present volunteers for serving with generosity and finding joy in all they do for the families in our care.



"The kindness of humans is brought to light when we come here. Staying here has allowed us to model to our daughters the kindness of giving and helping others."

– Jarred, dad of Ella

Ray Finn with the late Alan Overton AM OAM.

Below right: Market Stall.

Below left: Our first-ever volunteer, Wendy Purkiss OAM, wishes Lilian a Happy 100th Birthday.



123
volunteers donated
12,858
hours



The power of the collective

When we receive donations, they're sometimes accompanied by an almost apologetic "It's not much." It cannot be further from the truth. It is only because of our incredible community of individual supporters that our major campaigns and appeals in 2023 were successful, ensuring we can continue providing vital programs and services to the families that rely on them.

Plank for Sick Kids

We set a challenge to plank for 60 seconds a day in March in support of our 60-room Westmead House and what a response we received! Over 1,200 participants raised \$101,960, planking at home, in the gym, at the beach—even getting their pets and kids on board!

Dance for Sick Kids

While the 7-day challenge occurred during National Families Week in May, participants danced all the way through the month and beyond to raise an incredible \$442,212, with over 2,000 individuals and 356 teams getting involved.

Gift a Night

Collaborating with RMHC Sydney at Randwick, our 24-hour Giving Day raised \$457,132, exceeding targets for our House. This wouldn't have been possible without the generous donations from the public that were dollar-matched by our equally generous major Gift a Night partner, FDC, as well as CBRE, Sophadopa, Jermyn Family Foundation, ALDUS, Mitsubishi, iPlace Recruitment, and Coles DC. Our families in the House enjoyed lots of

entertainment and fun activities on the day, with Channel 7's Mark Ferguson and GIANTS Netball dropping by to show their support once again.

Santa for Sick Kids

Our joint Christmas appeal with RMHC Sydney and RMHC SEQ will provide support to families throughout the year and not just over the festive season. Surpassing initial targets, the campaign raised \$157,521 for RMHC GWS.

We are extremely blessed to have so many individuals rallying behind our families. We thank each and every one of you for your kind hearts.

"The House is the most amazing place and we could not have continued to function as a family and support our daughter without this facility and the support of the staff and volunteers."
— Jon



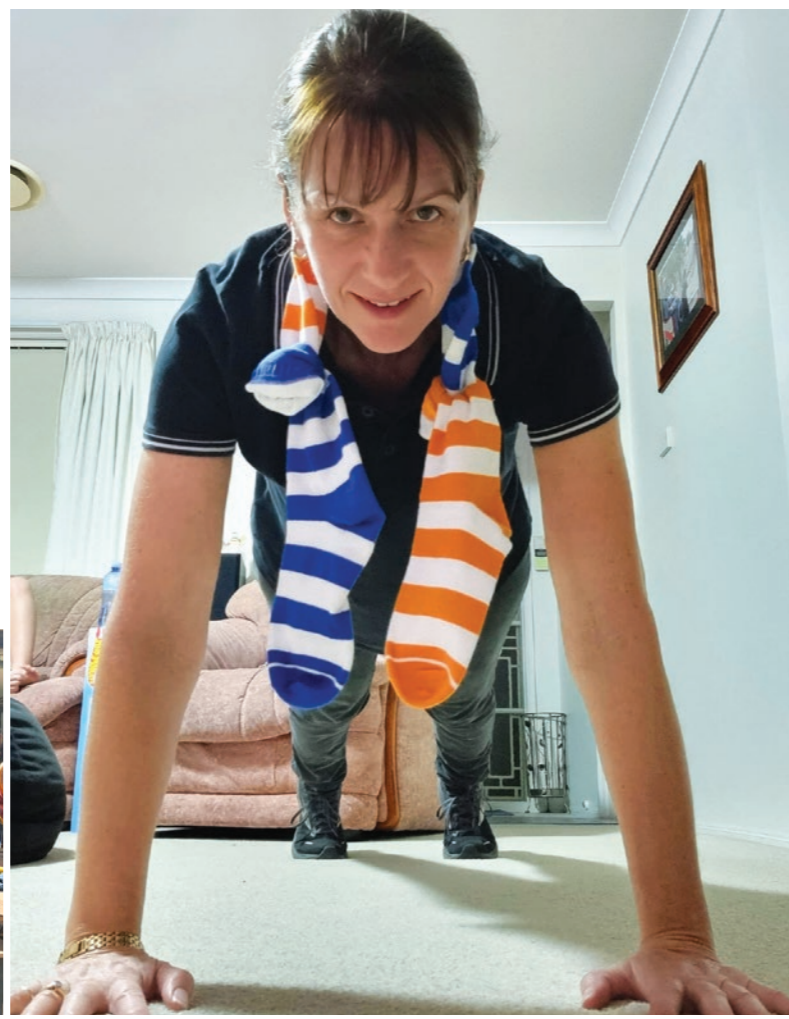
Nights of support raised:

637
Plank for Sick Kids

2,763
Dance for Sick Kids

2,857
Gift a Night

984
Santa for Sick Kids



It takes a village

Because of community support, families can stay together during one of the most intense times of their lives. Below listed are just some of the many groups of people united by a common goal to ease another's burden. Thank you to all the every day heroes who rallied around our families in 2023.

Little Athletics

Our ongoing partnership with Little A's gets stronger year on year. This community shows their support all year round, but we're particularly grateful for the special school holiday workshops they organised for all ages and abilities. In addition, 23 Little Athletics Centres across NSW held a Christmas-themed Santa for Sick Kids fundraiser.

NSW Line Dance Ball

Supporting us for over 17 years now, the NSW Line Dance Ball Committee put on their dancing shoes for the House again in 2023, raising an incredible \$22,000.

Belmonte Italian Cuisine

Passionate advocates of the House, Belmonte's donated Wishlist items and pizza each week, giving families Pizza Night Tuesdays to look forward to. They also regularly fundraised for the House by hosting Make-Your-Own-Pizza events and supporting our campaigns and appeals.

City of Parramatta

The City of Parramatta's Giving Trees, located throughout branch libraries and other facilities as part of their 12 Days of Christmas, helped spread Christmas cheer to our families. They also held a toy collection drive, personally dropped off at the House by the Lord Mayor of Parramatta, Councillor Pierre Esber. Thank you to the Parramatta community for supporting these initiatives.



SportShed TV

Adrian, Josh, and Norman hosted their first SportShed TV Charity Match, with two teams of content creators coming together to support both RMHC GWS and the Mark Hughes Foundation. The grandstand of fans cheered on their respective teams and raised an amazing \$6,245 for the House, as well as an additional \$1,000 from the team captain, Shak TV.

JT's Run

An incredible runner and fundraiser, JT took on the challenge to run 320 km in one week, to help pay it forward to help families like his, who have been supported by Ronald McDonald House. He says, "RMHC provided so much comfort in an incredibly tough time. I am very passionate about giving back to RMHC GWS so even more families can continue to feel the support I felt."

Not only did he smash through over 300 km; he also raised an incredible \$9,491!



"You all made our days brighter, you saw us at our lowest of lows and our highest of highs. Thank you for all the support during the hardest time of our lives."
- Lisa, mum of Eliza



Over 50
community groups raised funds for the House

Embracing our diverse community

RMHC GWS continued to take conscious and active steps to embrace diversity, equity, and inclusion through working groups, strategies, and policies.

Reconciliation Action Plan

NAIDOC Week 2023 marked 12 months since we launched our first REFLECT Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). We will now embark on planning for our second RAP and continue to strengthen our connection with and advocacy for Aboriginal peoples.

We celebrated with special guests, including representatives from the Aboriginal Health Unit at The Children's Hospital Westmead, Rheanna Lotter from Ngandabaa Art Programs, and Uncle Shane Laws, who delivered a Welcome to Country and Smoking Ceremony.

Over the past 12 months, we have continued to expand our understanding of the issues faced by Aboriginal peoples and actively sought to learn more about their cultures through conversations with our Aboriginal families, Elders, leaders, and businesses such as Gunnedah Hill Pty Ltd, Clontarf Foundation, Ngandabaa Aboriginal Art & Programs, Bilingarra, and KARI.

We have three contracts with Indigenous-owned suppliers that provide essential household products and services for the House.

Sydney Zoo visited to run an Indigenous education school holiday program, sharing with our families some history and teaching the kids about Indigenous music and dance.

Our staff prepared an Aboriginal-themed meal for families and Bilingarra conducted a Connection to Country art workshop for our families, staff, and volunteers.

One of many highlights was meeting families like Kim and Rusty, who perform as a duo known as Ngali Bawili. They stayed at the House with their two children for several months while their daughter Statiera had surgery to remove a tumour. They are passionate about sharing joy and their Aboriginal culture and perform regularly for families and guests, often spontaneously.

While we have taken many positive actions, fulfilling the deliverables we committed to in our first Reflect RAP, we look forward to building on that in 2024.

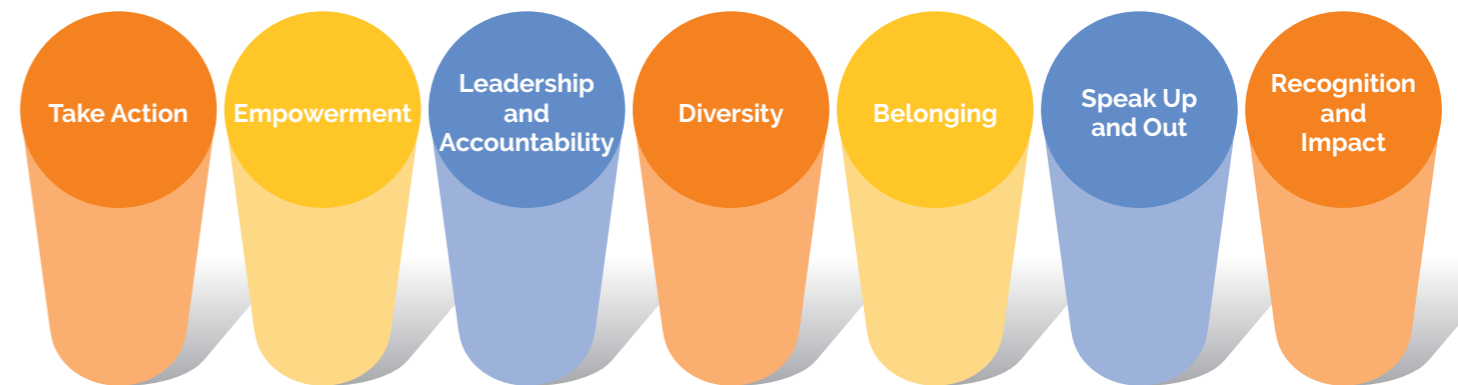


Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Progressing to the second phase of our Reconciliation Action Plan is just one way we are taking conscious and active steps to embrace diversity, equity, and inclusion through working groups, strategies, and policies.

Last year, our team collaborated to identify pillars that will guide our decisions and interactions in the workplace.

We aim to create a workplace where every member of our team/s feels a sense of belonging, safe and excited to come to work. Much of the work in this initial plan was completed as part of bigger pieces of work across the organisation. In 2024, we hope to continue building on these goals and strive to achieve more in this space.



Our seven DEI pillars



CEO Walk in My Shoes

715
nights of support raised



Eventful days keep our support on course

Our four events in 2023 were the perfect opportunity to connect with new friends and catch up with old ones while raising funds for the programs and services we provide to families of sick and injured kids.

Golf Days

We kicked the year off with Twilight Golf & BBQ in March, a more casual affair with a sunset BBQ at the always picturesque Castle Hill Country Club. We were then back in August, this time for our annual Golf Day. Blessed with glorious weather, we had a fantastic time out on the green as our guests dug deep to support families like Erin's, who stayed with us for 250 nights last year when son Beau underwent treatment for leukaemia.

Race Days

May saw us hosting a Charity Race Day in Gosford, supporting local suppliers and engaging with the local Central Coast community. Our generous guests set a new record for our "Pick Up the Tab" activation, raising 185 nights in 12 minutes with the help of our good friend Fred Frangi, who led the pledge segment.

September brought on our annual Spring Carnival Race Day held at Rosehill Gardens. Sixteen-year-old Chloe, who finished a round of chemo the day before, attended the event with her mum, Emma. There wasn't a dry eye in the room as Emma spoke about their journey and Chloe personally thanked those who support the House and families like theirs. A donor so moved by their story bid on the Monster Jam experience auction prize, which he then gifted to Chloe's family to enjoy.

Our sincerest thanks to everyone who supported our events in 2023 and our good friends from AiIMS for capturing all the action. We look forward to seeing you again in 2024!

"During our darkest days, this House quickly became our sanctuary. Thank you all so much for showing us love and kindness during the hardest time of our lives."
– Erin, Beau's mum

Corporate partnerships provide critical support that is felt for a lifetime, not only by our families but also by the people behind the corporations.

In 2023 we introduced CEO Walk in My Shoes (CWIMS), a 24-hour immersive experience, to CEOs and high-level management, bringing them closer to the families at the heart of our mission. It was a positive experience for all involved, including the two families who volunteered to share their own personal stories with CWIMS participants.

Twenty-one incredible individuals took part in two campaigns in March and October, stepping into the shoes of caregivers of seriously ill and injured kids. CWIMS surpassed expectations and raised over \$114,000, demonstrating the power of empathy and shared experiences. More importantly, participants fostered a deeper connection to our cause, witnessing with their own eyes the resilience and strength of our families and the impact our collective support makes.

"The House is so much more than just somewhere to stay. It's comfort, friendship, understanding, and love."
– Ros Pullen, Raging Waters Sydney General Manager

Our most heartfelt thanks go to our participants for being powerful advocates, sharing their first-hand experiences with their networks and amplifying our mission.

- Emily Billiau – McInnes Wilson Lawyers
- Gareth Bryant – Scendar
- Debbie Burgess – Bright Print Group
- Cher Campbell – iPlace Recruitment
- Fiona Curdie – Mend Services
- Sonja Duncan – SD Strategies Pty Ltd
- Antony Dutton – Provender
- Andrew El-Haddad – Enzos Cucina Northmead
- Rick Hastie – Archery Australia
- Kellie Knight – Metallum Fabrication
- Ben Mathers – MJH Multi
- John Philipsz – Lockton Advisory
- Ros Pullen – Raging Waters Sydney
- Jarrod Rice – Cook's Plumbing Supplies
- Sam Russo – Enzos Cucina Dural
- Rebecca Shaw – Gymnastics NSW
- Jai Singh – Urbanity Enterprise
- John Spender – William Buck
- Tanya Stafa – Belmonte Italian Cuisine
- Tim Underwood – GIANTS Netball
- Ian Whitfield – NorthWestern Roads Group



A little bit of cheer goes a long way



Pictures tell a thousand words, and pictured here are just some of the many kind people who have raised awareness, funds, or spirits for families in our care.

We're so grateful once again to the Parramatta Eels and Parramatta Leagues Club, GIANTS Netball and GIANTS GWS, Western Sydney Wanderers, Sarah Weston, Rachel Raez, Simon Wiggle and Tsehay Hawkins, Marko Panzic and Channel 7, particularly Mark Ferguson, Mel McLaughlin, and Angie Assimus for their support throughout the year.

Your kindness in many forms, including tickets to events for our families and memorable moments, makes an impact that is beyond measure. Thank you!

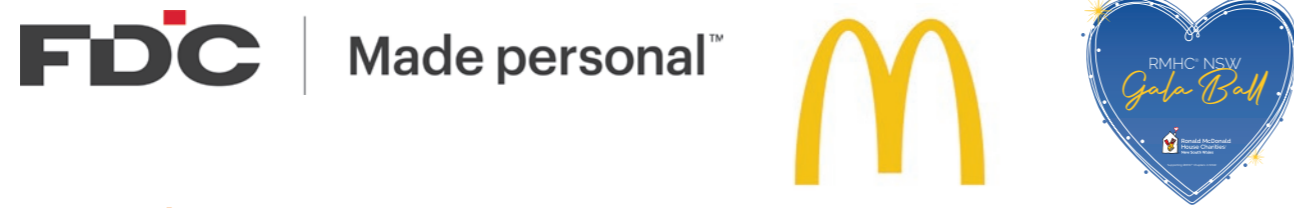


"For Finn, the Eels visit was extra special. Ryan Matterson gifted him one of his signed training jerseys, and James and Adam must have spent more than an hour just talking to him. Such a little bit of kindness has gone such a long way."

– Rachelle, Finn's mum

Our heartfelt thanks to

Major Partners



Supporting Partners



Grant & Foundation Partners



Cooper Tuxen Foundation The Corio Foundation The Jermyn Family Foundation The Vertex Foundation

Room Sponsors



Our heartfelt thanks to

Major Donors

Ern Bickford Sophia Begg Ben Cottle

Corporate & Community Supporters

AiiMS	InfraBuild	Pepe Saya
Al-Faisal College	iPlace Recruitment	Provender
All Wheel Drive Club	JB Metropolitan Distributors	Raging Waters Sydney
Alpha Catering	JCDecaux	RMHC GWS Volunteer Market Stall
Andrew Peace Wines	John Turner	Saputo
Australian Radio Network	La Frutteria Northmead	Service Heroes
Baked & Co.	Lindt & Sprungli	SportShedTV
Belmonte Italian Cuisine	Little Athletics NSW	Steggles Poultry
Bright Print Group	Lockton Australia	TBS Bawley Surf Classic
Charter Hall	Matrix Norwest	The Bryant Family
CAFAT	Mayers Fine Food	The Seven Network
Catholic Care	Mitsubishi Electric	The Sports Corp
Coca-Cola	Momento Hospitality	The Yoga Foundation
Colgate-Palmolive	Moove Media	Two Blokes No Brains
Franky & Co	Narellan Pools Hills District	Venues Live
Godolphin	Newscorp Australia	Waste Options
GWS Giants	NSW Line Dance Ball Committee	WEM Civil
GWS Netball	OMD	Western Sydney Wanderers
Harman Group	Parramatta Eels	William Buck
Independent Locksmiths	Penrith Gaels Cultural and Sporting Club	Zammit Ham

Our 2023 Board Members

Ken Basha - Chair	Jeremy Bryden - Chair Risk Committee (outgoing)	Bobbi Henao Urrego
Gavin Walker - Vice Chair	Michael Dickinson - Chair Risk Committee (incoming)	Peter Meadows
Kathleen Donohoe - Assistant Vice Chair	Terese Jermyn OAM - Emeritus Board Member	Domenic Meduri
Mark Holton - Treasurer	Gillian Davie	Sandra Pengilly
Ray Finn OAM - Chair Building Committee		Ida Twist

Message from our CEO

Thank you to everyone who has helped advance RMHC GWS's services and support in 2023. Together we have impacted the lives of over 2,000 families with sick or injured children, but the demand for our support is far greater.

The sad reality is that most people will know a family whose lives are or have been impacted by a child's serious physical or mental illness or injury. The need for our unique services amongst families receiving treatment on Children's Wards in hospitals within Greater Western Sydney alone is huge.

It's for this reason that we have strategic plans in place to increase the impact of existing services, like the Learning Program, and introduce additional programs over the coming years.

Research shows that family members who stay close to their child's hospital care have better psychological wellbeing, a better perceived quality of life and coping skills. We also know that 38% of parents of hospitalised children still experience clinical levels of anxiety three months after their child leaves hospital.

It is studies like these, combined with feedback from families, that motivate our team every day. They also inform the development of new programs like Families on the Move, which now delivers fresh local produce to families after they return home.

RMHC GWS is excited about the plans we have in place to build on programs introduced in 2023.

Construction of our new 10-room "House in the Hospital" within The Children's Hospital at Westmead is well underway and due to be completed and operational in mid-2025.

Ongoing corporate and community support will be particularly vital to bring these plans to life over the coming years.



For now, though, as RMHC Global celebrates 50 years since the very first House opened in Philadelphia, it is important to celebrate all that our community has helped us achieve to date.

The quality and range of support RMHC GWS has delivered to families with sick and injured children is something to be proud of.

Every day, we see firsthand how your support helps families get through the day, week, month, or year and from all the messages we've received over the past 42 years, we know the impact of this lasts for a lifetime.

Claire

Claire Barber
Chief Executive Officer



Ronald McDonald
House Charities®
Greater Western Sydney



"You have made life a
little easier for us so
we can be by our little
Warrior's side throughout
this journey."

– Jo,
Dallas's mum