Meijer Supports Ronald McDonald House in Lansing Year ‘Round

Ethel Richards and her friends come together every fall to celebrate and fundraise for Ronald McDonald House Charities (RMHC) Mid-Michigan. Little did they know the small invitation-only gathering at her Frankenmuth, Mich. home would become a booming event four years later with a growing guest list that has made a significant impact on the charity – all in honor of Ethel’s late son, Jason Richards.

Jason, a McDonald’s owner/operator, was a long-time supporter of RMHC Mid-Michigan, which keeps families close to the critical care their hospitalized children need, providing them comfort, support and resources. Guests staying at the Ronald McDonald House are offered numerous amenities, including a private guest room and bathroom, homemade meals daily and on-site laundry. Guest families are able to stay at the House free of charge while their child receives medical treatment just a few hundred steps from University of Michigan Health at Sparrow Children’s Center in downtown Lansing.

Ethel and her group of friends ask their guests to simply bring a Meijer gift card to donate to RMHC Mid-Michigan.

The 2022 event resulted in more than $6,000 in Meijer gift cards, and in 2023, a resounding $9,600 in Meijer gift cards were donated. The gift cards continue to sustain the House’s grocery budget and household needs to help care for the families who stay there. RMHC Mid-Michigan continues to be a longtime customer of Meijer, shopping at its various Lansing-area stores to help children and families feel at home, away from home.

“At RMHC Mid-Michigan, we do everything we can to provide comfort to families who stay with us,” Executive Director Carolyn Hurst said. “From their go-to hand soap to favorite breakfast cereal, these small things really make a family’s experience. We love shopping at Meijer for the House because it’s not only easy to find all the items on our list, but it’s also affordable and allows us to truly fill our carts.”

The House exclusively shops at Meijer throughout the year with these gift card donations. In 2019, all donated laundry supplies came from Meijer and fully supported the House for two years. In the fundraiser’s first two years, Meijer gift cards supported 100 percent of the House’s grocery budget.

During COVID, the House had to pause all in-person volunteering for the health and safety of immunocompromised patients their guest families were caring for in the hospital. RMHC Mid-Michigan staff filled the volunteer void and continued to offer homemade meals every day, with ingredients purchased at Meijer thanks to Ethel’s fundraiser and the supportive Frankenmuth community that provided the Meijer gift cards.

In 2023, RMHC Mid-Michigan also purchased items from the Meijer Home & Garden department for outdoor projects to provide a warm welcome for families every time they return to the House after long hours at the hospital.

Because of Ethel’s annual event, the staff at RMHC Mid-Michigan consistently offer a haven for more than 200 families that seek relief at the House every year.

We are pleased to be a small part of RMHC Mid-Michigan’s ongoing mission in serving families in need and are grateful to be their go-to one-stop shop.

Additional assets available online: Photos (2)