Part of our mission at the Ronald McDonald House is to provide a comfortable place to stay for families of seriously ill children receiving treatment at St. Louis area hospitals. To reach this goal, we look to the community of St. Louis to provide help and support. An important part of this mission is to provide our families with every convenience we can. Because many have limited transportation and knowledge of the area, we are fortunate that area groups, organizations and individuals volunteer to prepare meals for our families. Most of our families spend the majority of their time at the hospital with their children. Although all of the families are not always at the House when dinner is served, it is a welcome gift to return to the House and find a meal waiting for them. As a Dinner Program participant, you can help reduce some of the incredible stress experienced by the families with something as fundamental as a home cooked meal.

- Dinner Program volunteers are more than welcome to join the house families for the meal, just account for any extra servings this may require.
- Group Size: We recommend 8 to 10, including chaperones.
- Children must be at least 12 years old to help cook with at least two chaperones per group. Children under 12 years old may accompany the group.
- Family meals should serve approximately 30-40 people at the West Pine House and Park Avenue House, and 50-60 at the West County House.
- Dinner should be served buffet style.
- Groups should arrive between 4:30 p.m. and 5 p.m. for dinners and 7:30 a.m. and 8 a.m. for breakfasts.
- Breakfast is served at 9 a.m. and dinner is served at 6 p.m. Clean-up (dishes, trash, etc.) 7-7:30 p.m.
- House volunteers must be notified if a dinner group must leave before 7:00 or 7:30, so they may put your delicious meal away.
- Leftovers should be stored in our containers or plastic baggies and labeled with contents and date.

**TYPE OF MEALS**

We are often asked for suggested types of meals. Sometimes families can get the same meals a few nights in a row, so to give them a little variety, we recommend: chicken, turkey, pork steaks, soup, salad and rolls, stews, tacos, sloppy joes, casseroles, ham, beef, hamburgers, meat loaf and pizza. We also have outside gas grills for barbecuing at the Houses, as well a charcoal grill at West Pine. For breakfast, a continental breakfast or a hot meal of pancakes and sausage, biscuits and gravy, scrambled eggs, etc. has been welcomed.

Dinners must be prepared in our fully equipped kitchens, or at a licensed food establishment, where the food has been protected from contamination and delivered directly from the licensed establishment in a short period of time. Our House kitchens provide stoves, ovens, dishes, silverware, pots and pans, utensils, refrigerator and ample storage containers for leftovers. When young people are involved, they must be chaperoned by enough adults to ensure behavior that is respectful of our residents.

**INFECTIONIOUS DISEASES**

The Ronald McDonald House staff is very concerned about infectious diseases because so many of our children are immune suppressed. It is imperative that if any member of your group has been exposed to chicken pox (within the last 21 days), shingles, measles, mumps, whooping cough, or any other contagious disease (colds, flu, etc.) they not put our children at risk by coming to the House.
HEALTH & SAFETY INFORMATION

The safety, health and well-being of House guests have always been our highest priority. To ensure that Ronald McDonald Houses around the world are consistent with their food safety provisions, Ronald McDonald House Charities Global Office has updated its food safety standards. Due to these changes Ronald McDonald House Charities of Metro St. Louis will be instituting the following guidelines:

- We will no longer be accepting donations of foods prepared or cooked off site by a volunteer or other groups or individuals (this includes baked goods, casseroles, etc.).
- Food prepared at a licensed retail food establishment can only be accepted for donation if it has been protected from contamination and has been delivered directly from the licensed establishment within a short period of time.
- Only packed foods purchased from retail grocery stores in unopened containers or whole fruits or vegetables can be accepted for donation.

CANCELLATION POLICY

If your group is unable to fulfill its commitment and you have to cancel, please let us know no later than two weeks prior to your volunteer date so that we can find a replacement. If you need to cancel on short notice, you may have food delivered to the House, such as pizza or sandwiches. Numerous cancellations in a row could result in a group’s removal from the Dinner Program calendar.

TOURS

Your group is welcome to take a tour of the House. Just ask one of our House Volunteers or a member of our staff, and we would be happy to accommodate the request. Please note, we keep tours limited because of privacy and health concerns, so family living areas are generally not included in the tour. Last year our groups of volunteers brought our families 892 meals. We also ask that dinner group volunteers remain in the kitchen areas of the House with the exception of a guided tour. We need your help in keeping our families healthy during their stay.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE

Thank you for your support and interest in our special “home-away-from-home”! If you would like to participate in the Family Dinner Program, please visit our website, www.rmhcstl.com, and fill out a Dinner Program Request Date Form. For questions, please call the Dinner Program Hotline at 314-531-6601 ext. 1202 or email dinner@rmhcstl.com.

PLEASE REMEMBER

This is a very popular volunteer program for the Ronald McDonald House, and meal dates are booked quickly, sometimes months in advance. Please remember: this is a volunteer-run program, so please allow up to two weeks for a response. Your e-mails and calls will be answered as quickly as possible.

Groups need to bring food and special beverages. Coffee, tea, and soda are provided. Please do not bring alcoholic beverages with you.

Dinner dates need to be confirmed 2 weeks prior to a scheduled meal. If you do not hear from us, please call to confirm before coming to serve a meal. If you have to cancel, please call the House at which you were to serve your meal directly.

HOUSE LOCATIONS AND CONTACT INFORMATION

4381 West Pine Blvd., St. Louis, MO, 63108   •   314.531.6601
3450 Park Ave., St. Louis, MO, 63104   •   314.773.1100
300 Ronald McDonald House Lane, St. Louis, MO, 63141   •   314.485.0300