

CIRCLE CONVERSATIONS

Ronald McDonald House Charities of the Four States has served our communities since 1996 through its mission to create, find, and support programs that directly support the health and well-being of children and their families. That mission is executed through its cornerstone program, Ronald McDonald House, and the Ronald McDonald Family Room program. The House provides temporary lodging for families of seriously ill children (ages 0-21) and ill expectant mothers, while the Family Room serves as a small oasis for families of pediatric patients just steps away from their child's hospital room. Over 1,083 families from the nine counties that make up Southeast Kansas have called RMH home for over 11,200 nights.

When the COVID-19 pandemic reached our communities, RMHC was faced with the challenge of finding new ways to serve families. With limited operations in both their House and Family Room programs, the organization creatively solved the problems many families face. A few solutions included forming partnerships with four local hotels to house families at low or no cost, gathering restaurant gift cards to cover parents' meals, providing transportation with gas cards and no-cost taxi services, and gifting families "Comfort Bags."

[continues on back]

Coming Up

- **May:** Circle Conversations & Coffee event (see invitation on back)
- **July:** New Edition of Circle Conversations
- **August:** Annual membership donation due
- **September:** Women's Health Fund grant applications open
- **October:** Annual grant review + new edition of Circle Conversations



NICU Mother's Nursing Kits

At left, Ronald McDonald House volunteer Christy Graham, Ed.D., holds components of Ronald McDonald House Charities of the Four States' new NICU Mother's Nursing Kits.

Ronald McDonald House (cont.)

"[They] coordinated lodging, transportation, and food," said Dr. Rahul Oberoi, Freeman Hospital neonatologist. "Now, mom and dad can just focus on their child. There's no other entity, at least one that I could think of, that would help coordinate all those things in one go. A hospital can't do it. A social worker can't do it. But you have a team of volunteers and staff who are able to pull in every resource known that this family needed."

In 2021, volunteer Christy Graham, Ed.D., expressed concern for the welfare of nursing mothers and met with a team of healthcare professionals to learn about opportunities to help them. With the team's help, Graham created a plan to make a "NICU Mother's Nursing Kit" comprising a nursing curriculum, a nursing pillow with a washable cover, a tube of lanolin cream, and an insulated hydration cup.

After the idea was hatched, RMHC applied for a grant from the Rita J. Bicknell Women's Health Fund. In June 2021, \$1,500 was granted to the charity to fund the NICU Mother's Nursing Kits. RMHC staff members and volunteers are honored and excited to add these vital kits to their list of services available for families in need.

If nothing else, COVID-19 proved that the people involved in Ronald McDonald House Charities have a resilience and dedication that can only come from an overwhelming spirit of service. As former RMH guest Amber Marrett of Baxter Springs stated, "These women have truly beautiful hearts. Caring comes naturally to them, and I am forever grateful for knowing them."

Emily Gibson

Senior Executive Assistant, RMHC

JOIN THE WOMEN OF THE
RJB WOMEN'S HEALTH FUND FOR

*Circle Conversations
& Coffee*



Thursday, May 12th

8:00-9:00 am

The Foundry at Block 22

Presentation by grant recipient
Fostering Connections

RSVP to kim.lynch@southeastkansas.org

Join the Women's Health Fund

[Click Here to Join](#)



or scan with
your smartphone:



The Rita J. Bicknell Women's Health Fund is a fund of the
Community Foundation of Southeast Kansas

100 S. Broadway St., Ste. 100 • P.O. Box 1448
Pittsburg, KS 66762 • (620) 231-8897

SoutheastKansas.org