
Ronald McDonald House Charities is an organization that helps children and families all over the world. As Girl Scouts, you are learning how to use your personal power to help others, to solve problems in your community and make a lasting change in the world.

The founders of Ronald McDonald House Charities had the same goals. They saw a problem and fixed it and have made life easier for (thousands/millions?) families in 379 countries worldwide.

Here's How It Started

In 1969 in Philadelphia, little girl named Kim Hill was diagnosed with leukemia. Doctors said she most likely wouldn't recover. Frightened, her parents, Fred and Fran, vigilantly stayed at her bedside where they slept in a chair in her room. They grabbed whatever food they could and tried to hide their worry, sadness and fatigue. They mustered up every last ounce of strength they had and gave it to their daughter.

When Kim was well, the family was so grateful and wanted to help other families who had children with cancer. Fred spoke to Dr. Audrey Evans, who was the Chief of Oncology at Pediatric Children's Hospital in Philadelphia about how his family could help other families who have children with cancer. Dr. Evans told him she needed a house.

Then Fred Hill spoke to Jimmy Murray, General Manager of the Philadelphia Eagles and Ed Rensi, an executive with McDonald's® and together they created the first Ronald McDonald House in Philadelphia, which opened in 1974.

It was a place of strength so families could give 100% of themselves to their child. Families could stay at the Ronald McDonald House as long as they needed to. They found comfort, compassion, and home-cooked meals.

Community minded people in other cities, along with McDonald's owners learned about the Ronald McDonald House in Philadelphia and wanted one in their cities. That's what happened in Tucson.

The First Ronald McDonald House in Arizona

Dr. Vince Fulginiti, the Chair of the UA Department of Pediatrics, was aware of other Ronald McDonald Houses and wanted one in Tucson. He knew it would be good for our community and good for the families of his patients.

Local owners of McDonald's restaurants also agreed to help. And with a little luck, a lot of hard work and donations from the community, the first Ronald McDonald House opened in Tucson on Valentine's Day in 1981. It is called, the House that Love Built.

Then we had our own version of the Fred Hill story. In 1982, an eight-year-old boy, Michael Thomas, was diagnosed with cancer. Sadly, Michael lost his battle to cancer before he was nine. His mother, Louise, wanted to devote herself to helping other families which she said was "helpful therapy for my grieving heart."

Louise and a friend founded a new organization, Angel Charity for Children to raise more than \$300,000 to pay off the mortgage of the Ronald McDonald House. Angel Charity for Children was so successful that Louise and her team realized they could raise money for a children's organization every year. And since its founding in 1983, Angel Charity has raised nearly \$30 million for children's organizations in Tucson, helping more than one million children.

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful/ committed individuals can change the world. In fact, it's the only thing that ever has," said Margaret Mead decades ago.