



Holiday 2024

Love Notes

News & Updates from Ronald McDonald House Charities of the Triangle

Spotlight: Finley's Fighters

To see young Finley's calming presence, you wouldn't imagine the many challenges she has already faced so early in life.

When Finley's parents, Ashley and Tim, learned they were expecting their fourth child, they were elated. The high-school sweethearts always wanted a large family. Even amid the challenges of Tim's military deployments, they were grateful for the gift of another baby.

Ashley's pregnancy appeared normal. As her delivery date neared, they decided to have a gender-reveal party. The blood test results were not what they expected.

Ashley's doctor shared there was a high likelihood Finley would have Down syndrome.

After the shock of the potential diagnosis settled, they began to prepare for Finley's birth and the possibility of raising a child with special needs.

Finley entered the world small, weighing just two pounds. From the start, she proved to be a fighter.

Many children born with Down syndrome have heart issues, and Finley was no different.

Ashley and Tim were told to expect surgeries to repair two holes in Finley's heart and to correct a narrowed aortic arch that threatened her safety.

From that point forward, Finley's parents experienced what they describe as series of miracles. Each time they prepared for a procedure, doctors found surgery was no longer necessary. The holes in her heart closed. Further, the aortic arch stayed open.

Similarly, each time Finley appeared to be at risk, her condition improved.

{continued}



Watch Finley's heartwarming story — <https://bit.ly/RMHCFinley>

The gift of hope

We're often asked about the greatest gifts families receive from RMHC and friends like you.

Is it the cost-free lodging at a "home away from home?" The hot meals made by caring volunteers? The community of love and support?

While these things are true, the most powerful gift is one that cannot be seen. *It is hope.*

The journeys that bring people to us are diverse — a baby born early, a devastating diagnosis, an unexpected accident.

Whatever the circumstance, RMHC Triangle programs offer families hope.

This intangible feeling is something we all know. Yet it's difficult to paint a picture. It is something that cannot be seen or adequately stated in words.

There was a Ronald McDonald House mom who once told me, "The hospital provides an ICU for my child; RMH provides an ICU for my entire family."

I guess that's as good a definition as any for hope — the ICU for families while a beloved child faces the challenges of serious childhood illness.

What makes hope possible for thousands of families each year? In short, *you do.*

Your many gifts of love are always right on time.

- **Hot meals** for the families living with us welcome them home each evening.
- **Wish-list items**, including household supplies and all-important snacks keep our programs running.
- Volunteers' care in baking **homemade treats** for families make our Houses feel warm and welcoming for our treasured guests.
- Donations of **pop tabs** help pay the utility bills.
- Your **financial contributions**, especially at year-end, ensure our programs support families as they support their fragile children.

Thank you for every act of kindness that gives families the invaluable gift of hope.

With gratitude,



Oie Osterkamp, CEO



Meet Raines

“Raines is two years old and is a happy and fun-loving little boy. Raines loves his younger sister Reid.

Raines is now battling cancer for the second time.

He was diagnosed with bilateral retinoblastoma in 2022 — cancerous tumors in both eyes. He initially did six rounds of intra-arterial chemotherapy. He also had injections of chemotherapy drugs directly into his right eye. Because of these treatments, his tumors became inactive.

Unfortunately, about three months later, Raines' cancer metastasized to his brain and his spinal cord. He began a new protocol of chemotherapy, which involves four rounds of intravenous treatment, followed by a stem cell transplant. Today is our 41st day inpatient for the transplant.

We thank you and all the friends of RMH who are making Raines' treatment possible.”

- The Simonsen Family



{Finley's Fighters continued}

Tim credits Ronald McDonald House in part for Finley's outcome.

“One of the reasons the doctors said Finley came home at all was because both Ashley and I were able to be there every day — every time the medical team did rounds, every time she needed a bottle feed, we had the option to be there.”

Finley's family stayed at RMH during her 88 days in the neonatal ICU. She's now home in Harnett County with her parents, big brother, and two sisters. She continues to thrive — and to teach everyone she meets about courage and true love.





Ronald McDonald
House Charities®
of the Triangle

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Thank you for
the gift of **hope!**

Leave your mark on our programs.



Want to support seriously ill children
& the families that love them?

Start your new year off right - **resolve to be a light** for families in need of comfort.

PREPARE A MEAL for families at the House

BAKE COOKIES and other sweet treats to welcome families home from the hospital at the end of the day

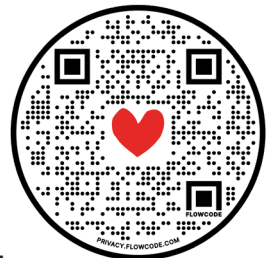
GREET GUESTS at the front door

Host a **WISH-LIST DRIVE**

Host an **EVENING ACTIVITY**

Staff the **FAMILY ROOM** inside the hospital

**Opportunities in Raleigh,
Durham & Chapel Hill**



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