

Help spread the word about RMHC Atlantic and our PJ Walk For Kids!

When Maritime families with sick or injured children need to travel to Halifax for medical care, the Ronald McDonald House provide a place where their family can stay together and be close to the hospital where their child is receiving treatment. We support all families traveling more than 40km to receive care at the IWK Health Centre - for every visit, and regardless of their diagnosis, family income, or the length of their stay.

By helping to spread the word about RMHC Atlantic and the services we provide, we can help our friends, neighbors, classmates, or anyone going through a difficult time understand how these services can support their families, and we help make our communities stronger by connecting them to crucial resources and support when their family needs them most.

About Ronald McDonald House Charities® Atlantic:

RMHC® Atlantic helps families with sick children stay together and near the medical care they need. Our programs include Ronald McDonald House®, a "home-away-from-home" for out-of-town families with sick children and two Ronald McDonald Family Rooms—in Halifax and Moncton—which provide an oasis of calm and support right inside the hospital.

Families from New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Nova Scotia with sick or seriously injured children often need to travel to the IWK Health Centre in Halifax for treatment. The travel distance, costs (hotel, food, parking, etc.) and additional stresses of an unanticipated trip can be an added burden for families. The Ronald McDonald House provides a safe, comfortable place for families to stay with hot meals and a supportive environment, just minutes from the hospital.

RMHC Atlantic is a non-profit organization. While RMHC was founded—and is generously supported by—McDonald's restaurants, it is an independent charity and depends upon charitable donations and volunteer support from individuals, corporations and foundations to fulfill their mission. They receive no operational funding from government.

For more info about RMHC Atlantic:

RMHC Atlantic website: rmhcatlantic.ca

Family Is Medicine campaign video: youtube.com/watch?v=jhoERQF3jg8

Saltwire article about NEW Ronald McDonald House saltwire.com/ronald-mcdonald-house..

For more information, contact:

pjwalk@rmhcatlantic.ca

902-429-4490

RMHC Atlantic Stats

- In our most recent typical year (2019), RMHC Atlantic supported 2,067 families at the Ronald McDonald House in Halifax and our Family Rooms in Halifax and Moncton.
- In 2019, RMHC Atlantic provided 4,195 nights of comfort to families.
- No family is ever turned away due to an inability to pay. For those that can, families are asked to contribute \$11 per night.
- While we only request \$11/night, it costs \$140 per night for a stay at the House. Families' stays are made possible through the support of donors, sponsors, and volunteers.
- Our Ronald McDonald House is located a 5-7 minute walk from the IWK Health Centre.
- RMHC Atlantic runs fundraisers each year to help cover the costs of supporting families in their time of need. The biggest annual fundraiser is the PJ Walk for Kids, which takes place on June 12, 2022 in Charlottetown, Halifax, Moncton, Saint John, Sydney, and virtually for participants from anywhere in the RMHC Atlantic community.
- The PJ Walk For Kids symbolizes the walk that RMHC families make from House to hospital - often in their pyjamas. You, your school, or your family can all participate in the PJ Walk - either at one of our five event locations, or from home!
- RMHC Atlantic is building a brand new Ronald McDonald House in Halifax, with 36 rooms that will support twice as many Maritime families.

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RMHC Atlantic School Activity

Grades 6-10

Pre-Activity Questions/Discussion:

- Has anyone you know ever had to travel for medical treatment?
- What are the benefits of keeping a family close to one another when they have a sick or injured child?
- Think of all the things you and your family need when planning an overnight trip (clothes, toothbrush, food, chargers, toys). Imagine you didn't have time to pack those things, how would it feel to travel without them? How would it feel to have those things provided if you had forgot them?
- How does the Ronald McDonald House make a difference in your community?
- How would it feel if your family had to travel far from your community of support – your friends, extended family and neighbours – during such a difficult time?

Activity:

Create a news article about RMHC Atlantic! Use your writing or video skills to create a news story that will inform people in your community about the services offered by Ronald McDonald House.

Help your audience understand: *What is the Ronald McDonald House? Where is the House located and who does it support? Why are these services important? How can families find more info about RMHC Atlantic? How can your community help support RMHC Atlantic?*

Research the Ronald McDonald House by visiting rmhcatlantic.ca. Feel free to include pictures or images from the RMHC website, along with info about the new Ronald McDonald House, RMHC Atlantic's community activities (PJ Walk, Home for Dinner), and their impact on families.

PJ Walk For Kids:

Does your school ever hold a pyjama day? Our PJ Walk is a great student engagement activity for your classroom or school that can help foster community support for families in need!

Schools can create a virtual team at pjwalk.ca and create their own PJ Walk in their community. Students can run a peer-led day of awareness and fundraising to promote the PJ Walk that highlights what it symbolizes and who it supports. Students can share their news articles with their classmates or school, create posters, and ask their families and friends to sponsor their PJ Walk in support of those traveling to Halifax for their sick or injured child's hospital care.

RMHC Atlantic can help support and promote your school-based PJ Walk! To arrange a guest speaker for an assembly or classroom visit (virtual or in-person), contact pjwalk@rmhcatlantic.ca.

For more information, visit:
rmhcatlantic.ca/pjwalk

Meet the Guignards!

In May 2019, Julie discovered a rash on her son Dylan's eyes. What she first thought was a simple allergic reaction led to the discovery of a rare bone marrow disease that would require a transplant for her son and multiple returns to the IWK Health Centre in Halifax – 465 kilometres from home.

Of those first visits to the hospital, Julie recalls, "It's very scary when you've never been to Halifax, and even scarier when you're thinking about the worst that could happen to your child.

When we got there, they took blood tests and told us they thought that Dylan had leukemia...your whole world stops turning."

That summer was the Guignard family's first stay at Ronald McDonald House. They've since had 12 stays at the House, totaling 96 nights.



Julie says "I'm blown away by the support the Ronald McDonald House has given us. They always go above and beyond. When something like this happens, you are so stressed because of your child's illness, it makes finding a place impossible. And financially, it would've put added stress on us; not everyone has a back-up plan. If RMHC Atlantic wouldn't have been there... ouff, I don't want to think about that."

Julie adds, "family support is everything to us. To have all of us there, we could tell that Dylan was less nervous going in for procedures and appointments. As a parent, it's nice to have another set of ears to understand all of the information you receive from the doctors. And, we both want to be there for every milestone. It's a blessing that we can all be there. It makes us stronger to be together."

Julie Guignard
Bathurst, NB

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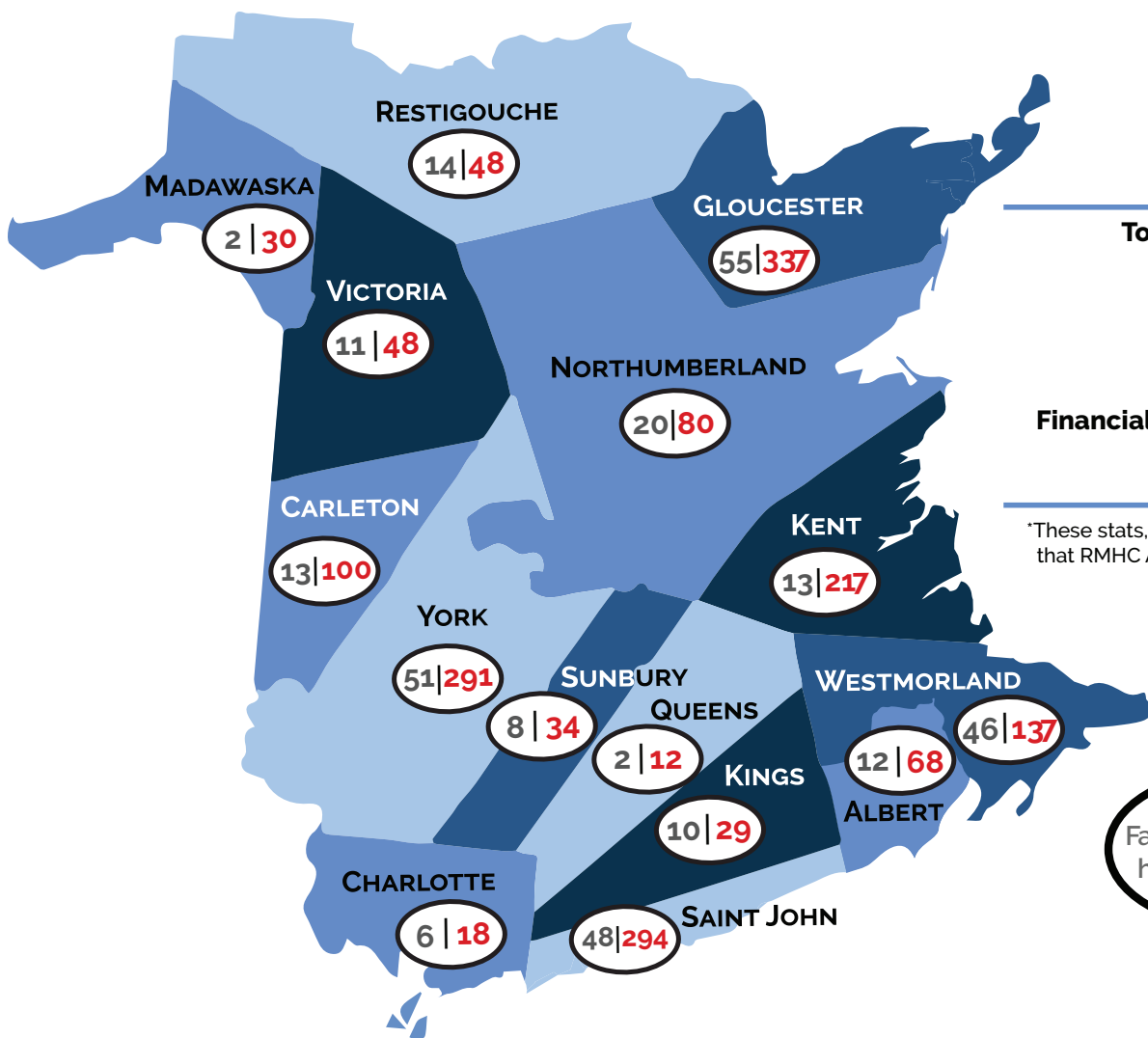
Ronald McDonald
House Charities®
Atlantic



Ronald McDonald House®

PJ Walk for Kids

PRESENTED BY VOGUE OPTICAL®



Total families served:

311

Nights of comfort:

1,744

Financial burden alleviated:

\$474,368

*These stats, from 2019, are indicative of the support that RMHC Atlantic provides in a 'typical' year.

Families helped | Nights of comfort

Highlights from a typical year

Longest stay for a NB family: **245 nights** (\$66,640 saved)
Average number of nights per family: **6 nights**
Average length of a single visit: **3 nights**
NB family visits to the IWK Health Centre: **665**

NB 10-year snapshot

Total nights of comfort: **18,237**
Total savings for families: **\$4.96m**
Longest family stay: **630 nights**
- that's \$171,360 saved!

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