

# ***EXPANDING HOPE***

The Campaign for  
Ronald McDonald House Charities of Charleston



Ronald McDonald  
House Charities®  
Charleston

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Keeping families close®

Heidi McManus woke in a panic when her phone rang. It was 2:00 in the morning; she knew immediately that something was wrong.

"Jaxson's heart has stopped," said the nurse on the other end. "You need to get here as soon as possible."

The McManus family's journey began in Greenville in 2010. Late in Heidi's pregnancy, an ultrasound discovered that Jaxson's heart had only two chambers, not the normal four. Heidi's doctors told her Jaxson's best chance of survival was in Charleston—with MUSC's pediatric cardiology team. Both scared and hopeful, Heidi and Steve left to deliver their son far from home, their family, and their friends.



Jaxson McManus was born with only two of four chambers in his heart

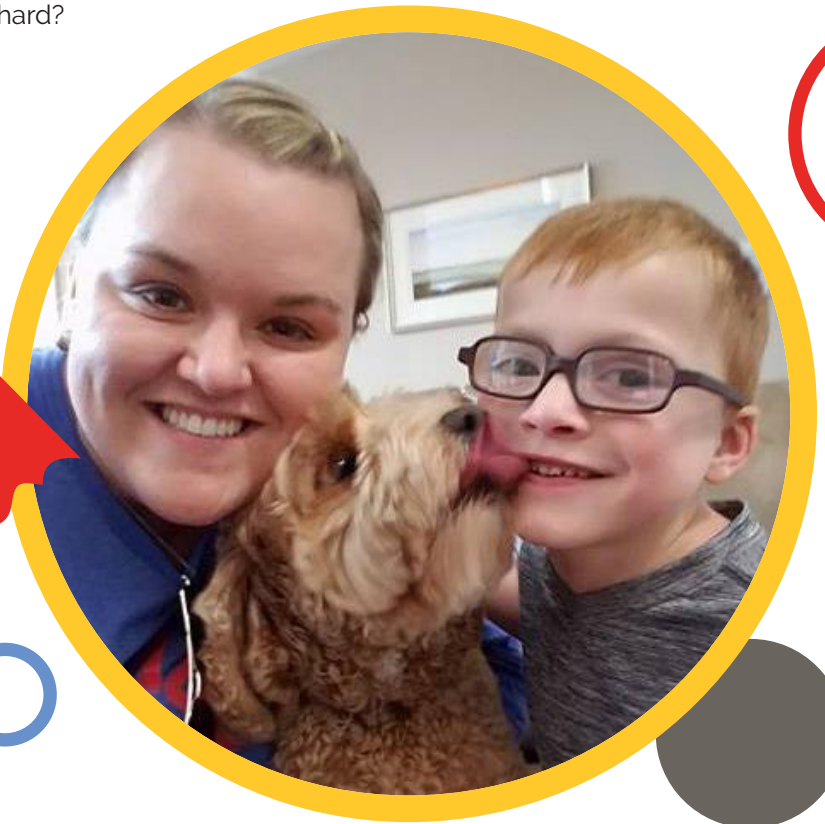
Jaxson was born two days before Christmas. Eleven days later, he had his first open heart surgery—the first of three.

It was after the second surgery that Heidi received that middle-of-the-night call. She thinks about that night often. **What if there was no Ronald McDonald House®, and she hadn't been able to get to Jaxson so quickly?** What if she hadn't been there to hold his hand? And what if she hadn't had the other families at the House to lean on when things were so hard?

Fortunately, Heidi never had to answer those questions. Thanks to your support of Ronald McDonald House Charities® of Charleston, Jaxson is a happy and healthy second grader today.

**Sadly, too many families experience a very different story.**

**95%**  
of RMHC Charleston  
families are from  
South Carolina



Jaxson is in the second grade at Mauldin Elementary in Simpsonville thanks to the doctors at MUSC Children's Hospital. "When our son's heart was being 'fixed' at MUSC, RMHC Charleston was taking care of our hearts," explains his mom, Heidi.

Currently, almost every room in our House is full each night. We are committed to serving more families who need us and *now* we need your help to grow.

Imagine you're told your child or grandchild needs emergency surgery. Now imagine you have to travel to an unfamiliar place to have this surgery. You don't hesitate because you'd do anything for your child.

Then reality sets in and you realize you'll be away from home, family, and friends for weeks. You start to panic. How will you afford a hotel for that long? How will you cope all alone?

Since 1983, RMHC Charleston has been providing a 'Home-away-from-home' for critically ill children and their families. RMHC Charleston offers parents every opportunity to stay close by their child's side. Each year, our 32-bedroom home gives hundreds of families comfort, encouragement, and a sense of normalcy while away from their homes seeking medical treatment.



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**“RMHC Charleston is the House that cheers you on and offers you so many small pieces of normalcy in a time that is anything but normal.”**

—Emily Battaglia, whose daughter was born prematurely at 26 weeks. The Battaglia Family spent 94 nights at RMHC Charleston

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## THE NEED

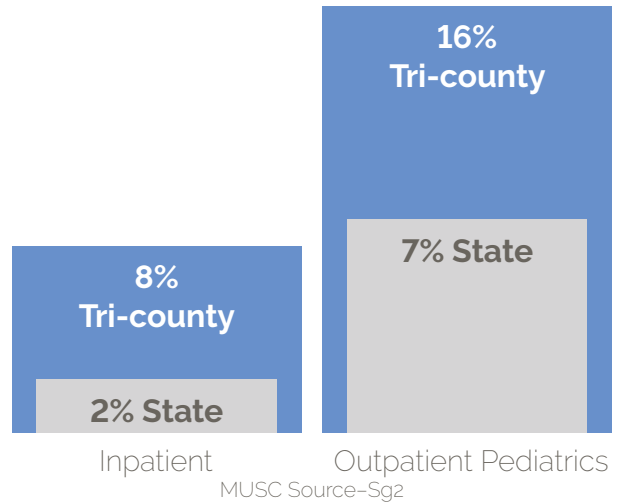
For too many families every year, there's no Gardy, the House dog, to greet them after long hours at the hospital. There's no hug from another parent who's going through the same trauma. Instead, there's an expensive and sterile hotel room across a river from their child or a coffee shop that serves as a resting place. There's financial stress and loneliness to add to their long list of worries.

RMHC Charleston is full nearly every night with a long waiting list. **It's heartbreaking, but on average, over the last three years, we have had to turn away 400 families yearly. Some years it's more than 500.** A recent assessment shows that we need 55 bedrooms now and as many as 80 within ten years. At present, we have 32 bedrooms; all are small by national standards, and the majority have no private bathrooms.

Our families deserve the option of using the House during their trauma. *Expanding Hope* will expand our Day Pass program so our local families can rest and eat at the House with other families.

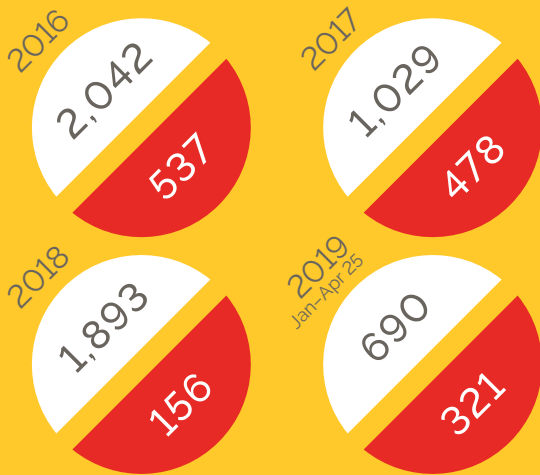
## EXPANSION ENABLES US TO EXPAND AND INCLUDE MORE LOCAL FAMILIES

SC Pediatric Growth Projections 2018–2028



### LACK OF CAPACITY

● Total Waitlist ● Total Turned Away



**"In 1971, when I was working in the OR at MUSC I used to leave through the front lobby at 11:00 at night. There would be families camped out on the floor and in the few chairs that were available because they had no place else to go while their child was hospitalized.... Then along came the Ronald McDonald House Charities of Charleston. It was the answer to a lot of prayers."**

— Donna Dawson-Hethington, MUSC Nurse

# THE SOLUTION

We hope you will be part of the solution.

Adjacent to RMHC Charleston is a parking lot. This blank slate is a canvas full of opportunities to help thousands of families. ***Expanding Hope: The Campaign for Ronald McDonald House Charities of Charleston*** is the first phase of an expansion of the current House.



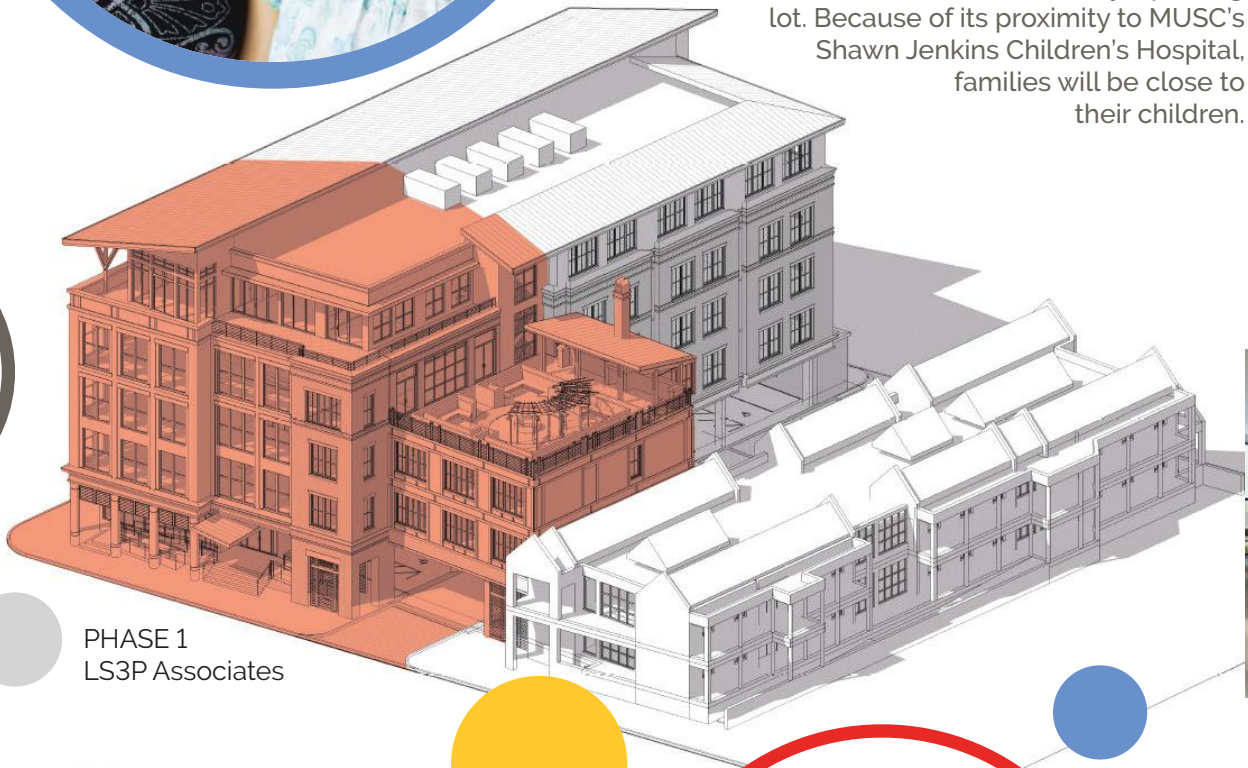
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“Like any parent would do, we’ve given up everything to be able to take care of Jonna. Hotels are too expensive. This place takes the pressure off—it’s a blessing. Without it, we’d be sleeping in our car.”

— Mitch Huggins, whose daughter Jonna was born with a genetic disorder

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Your support of *Expanding Hope* will make the first phase of expansion possible. It will be built adjacent to the current House on land that is currently a parking lot. Because of its proximity to MUSC’s Shawn Jenkins Children’s Hospital, families will be close to their children.



PHASE 1  
LS3P Associates



Every aspect of the House will be designed to promote healing for the whole family. It will connect to the current house, which will continue to serve families.

The first phase features:

- ➔ 18 bedrooms with private bathrooms
- ➔ Two elevators that can accommodate a stretcher (current House has no elevator)
- ➔ Large kitchen and dining room for family meals
- ➔ Classroom (siblings often attend class while their brother or sister is in the hospital)
- ➔ Communal spaces where families can find support in one another
- ➔ Separate play areas for toddlers, youth, and teens
- ➔ Outdoor terrace, roof garden, and family grilling area
- ➔ Family laundries on all floors
- ➔ Quiet areas where families can find solace when they need it.

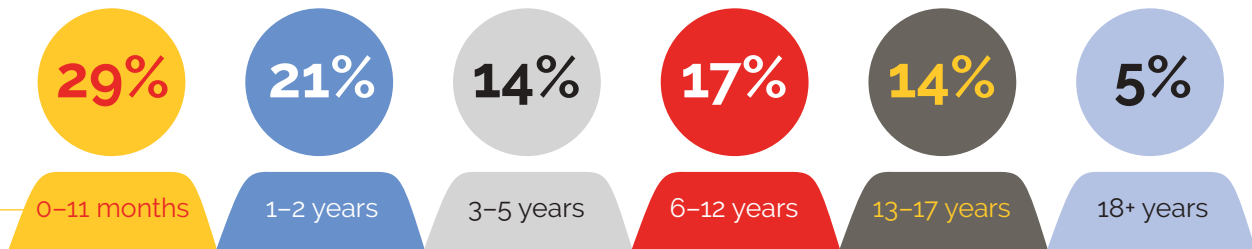
The total cost of the entire project is estimated to be between \$20 and \$25 million. By raising \$10 million in the *Expanding Hope* campaign, we can break ground on the first phase in 2021, taking a big step in meeting our current need, and preparing for future demand.

**“Charleston deserves a premier RMHC facility to complement & support the growing Lowcountry, pediatric excellence and family-centered priority of MUSC.”**

—Ellen Early, RMHC Global,  
US East Fields Operations Manager

## WE SERVE FAMILIES

Age Breakdown of Patients Served in 2018



The new House will connect to the current RMHC Charleston. Every aspect of its design will promote healing.

LS3P Associates

Your support of *Expanding Hope* will build more than a physical respite for weary families; **you'll be helping children heal.**

Dr. Sinai Zyblewski, a pediatric cardiologist at MUSC, knows first-hand the importance of RMHC Charleston. Her second son was born prematurely at MUSC a few years ago.

"My house is just seven miles from the hospital, but even that distance was too far," she explains. I stayed by his side late into the night because I wasn't willing to be so far away." She knows the exhaustion and the anxiety that comes from long hours by a child's bedside.

**Having parents at RMHC Charleston and so close to their children—and not in a hotel across town—is critical.** "Children between the ages of 3 and 13 are especially dependent on their family to be emotionally consoled," explains Dr. Zyblewski. "Children call out for their parents in the middle of the night." By being across the street at RMHC Charleston, parents can be by their side within minutes.

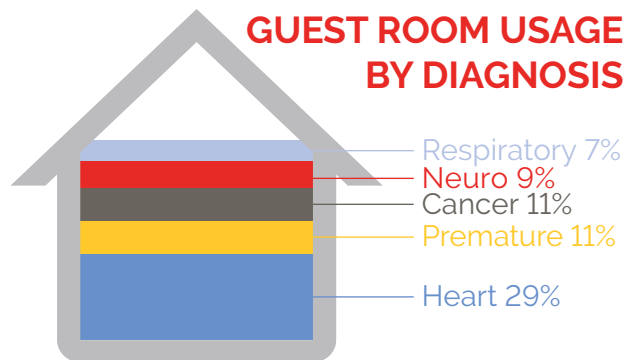
The American Academy of Pediatrics notes that **"the health and well-being of children are inextricably linked to their parents' physical, emotional, and social health."**<sup>1</sup>

Instead of sleep deprivation and exhaustion that come from sleeping in their car or on the floor of the waiting room, studies suggest that **families who stay at a Ronald McDonald House are more well-rested and ready to give their children the support they need to get better.**<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Family Pediatrics:*

*Report of the Task Force on the Family, 2003*

<sup>2</sup> Franck et al., *Behavioral Sleep Medicine, 2013*



MUSC has the only pediatric cardiac ICU in South Carolina. Children come from across South Carolina and the Southeast to be treated at MUSC because its specialists are among the best in the nation. As MUSC pediatrics expands, the demand for care here in Charleston will only grow stronger.

**"One night, Ella woke up and asked for me. I was able to make it to the hospital before she drifted back to sleep. It was the only thing a helpless father could do."**

—Thomas Williams, whose daughter Ella had emergency surgery after an ATV accident



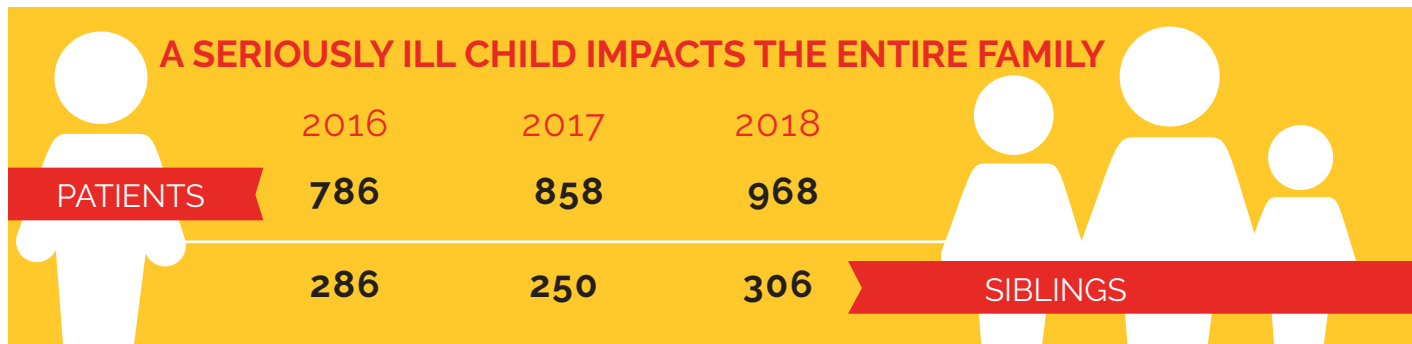
## Illness is the great socioeconomic equalizer

Numerous studies prove the link between a parents' stay in a Ronald McDonald House and better physical outcomes for the child. But you don't need data or statistics to see the true impact of RMHC Charleston.

Maybe you've volunteered to serve meals, clean, garden, or stuff envelopes at the House. You've seen the families together. It doesn't matter where they come from or how they live. They all have one thing in common...a sick child they are desperate to heal.

**"RMHC Charleston is a place you never want to use, but also a place you couldn't be more grateful to have once you need it."**

—Keith Francis, whose daughter Avery was hospitalized with a brain tumor.



Over dinner, you'll see moms helping other moms and dads comforting other fathers. **The support they receive from each other gives them the strength to face another day.** Ask these parents what RMHC Charleston means to them, and most likely you'll see tears as they talk about their "Home-away-from-home."

Milton Poppe lost his son to cancer after a three-year struggle more than 15 years ago. Today, he volunteers weekly at the RMHC Charleston because he remembers how important the House was to his family. **"The people at the House give and don't expect anything in return,"** he explains. **"We received so much goodness from the Ronald McDonald House and the families there. You're all fighting together."**

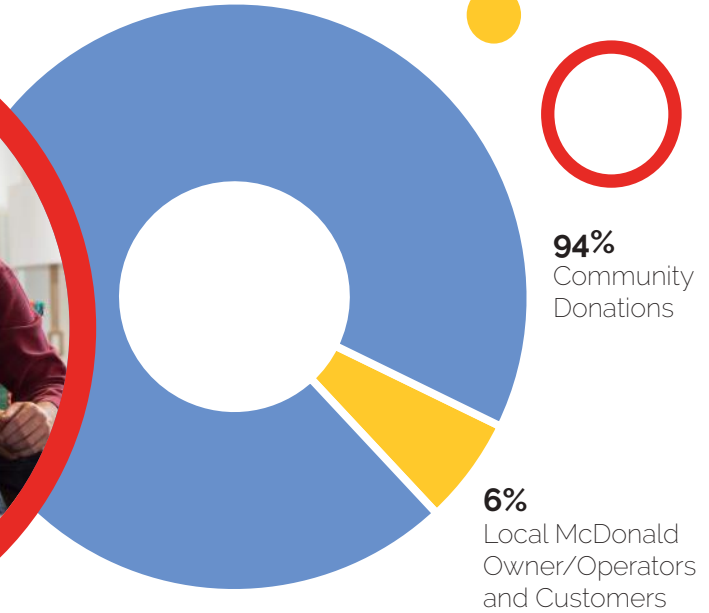


Gardy, the House dog, has been a part of RMHC Charleston since 2014. He's named after South Carolina's own Brett Gardner, who kindly sponsored his adoption. Day after day, Gardy takes care of everyone who walks into the House and brightens spirits with the wag of a tail.

*Expanding Hope* is our opportunity to show true Charleston hospitality. It's your chance to make a real and lasting difference in the lives of families when they need Charleston the most.

**Mission:** The mission of Ronald McDonald House Charities of Charleston is to create compassionate environments and programs that provide families the best chance of success in caring for their child with complex medical needs.

**Vision:** We believe that when a child is in time of greatest need, families and communities can come together to create solutions, ultimately changing a child's life forever.



It's up to you and me to build a bigger RMHC Charleston. We receive 6% of our budget from our local generous McDonald's operators and their customers here in the Lowcountry, but the other 94% of our funding comes from people just like you.

In 2018, RMHC Charleston saved families with children at MUSC's Children's Hospital approximately

**\$2,500,000**

in the value\* of out-of-pockets expenses, lodging, and meals

\*Value based on current Federal Per Diem reimbursement standards for Charleston, SC 2018

## THE DRAGON RIDER WITH THE SPECIAL HEART

Paisley Cunningham first came to Charleston when she was two-days old. She had to be transported from Greenwood because she was born with half a heart. Her parents frantically threw clothes into a laundry basket—having no idea they would spend the next two months away from their home.

Today, Paisley is almost five and she dreams of being either a princess or a dragon rider. Later this year, she'll have her third and hopefully final surgery at MUSC. **Paisley was too young to understand her first two surgeries. This time, she's scared.**

**That's why her mom and dad are already praying a room at the House here in Charleston will open up. They're still on the waiting list.**

"We've had to stay in Mt. Pleasant before. The whole time, we were terrified to be so far from Paisley. You think about them alone far from you," says Kim.

"We are prepared to stay in a hotel for a couple days, but after that we just can't afford one—especially since we'll be in Charleston during peak season. And with a hotel, you still have to pay for food and gas."

Paisley's parents know RMHC Charleston well because they've spent 55 days here already. They have made lifelong friends with a family they met at the House. Kim chokes up when she describes what the staff means to her. "They celebrate our tiny victories. They check on me, not just my daughter," says Paisley's mom, Kim.

*Expanding Hope* is for Paisley and families like hers. Together we can make it possible for more families to stay close to their children while they heal.



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**"MUSC is very excited about the Ronald McDonald Charities of Charleston Expansion. For 35 years, RMHC Charleston has been a staple of our community, offering a safe harbor for the families of critically ill children, and been a critical partner with MUSC. Expanding this 'Home-away-from-home' will magnify its impact for our community, and help us to better meet the rising demand for specialized pediatric health care services.**

**It is only with the help of community partners such as the Ronald McDonald House that we can provide the best possible care to the families of the children we serve."**

—David J. Cole, M.D., FACS, President of the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC).

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**RMHC**  
Charleston

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