

Ronald McDonald House Charities®
Central Indiana

HEART & HEARTH

WINTER
2021

THE POWER OF POP TABS

P.16

LARRY VAN NESS'S JOURNEY TO 25 MILLION.

CELEBRATING DR. AUDREY EVANS. P.12

STORIES FROM OUR HOUSE

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Ronald McDonald House Charities® Central Indiana

HEART & HEARTH WINTER 2021

A magazine for friends of Ronald McDonald House Charities of Central Indiana

ABOUT HEART & HEARTH

Heart & Hearth is published twice annually by RMHCCIN. Our mission is provide a supportive *home away from home* for families of children receiving medical care at Riley Hospital for Children at Indiana University Health and other area hospitals.

On the Cover:
Larry "The Can Man" Van Ness chats with fellow collectors at the House's annual Pop Tab Drop event.

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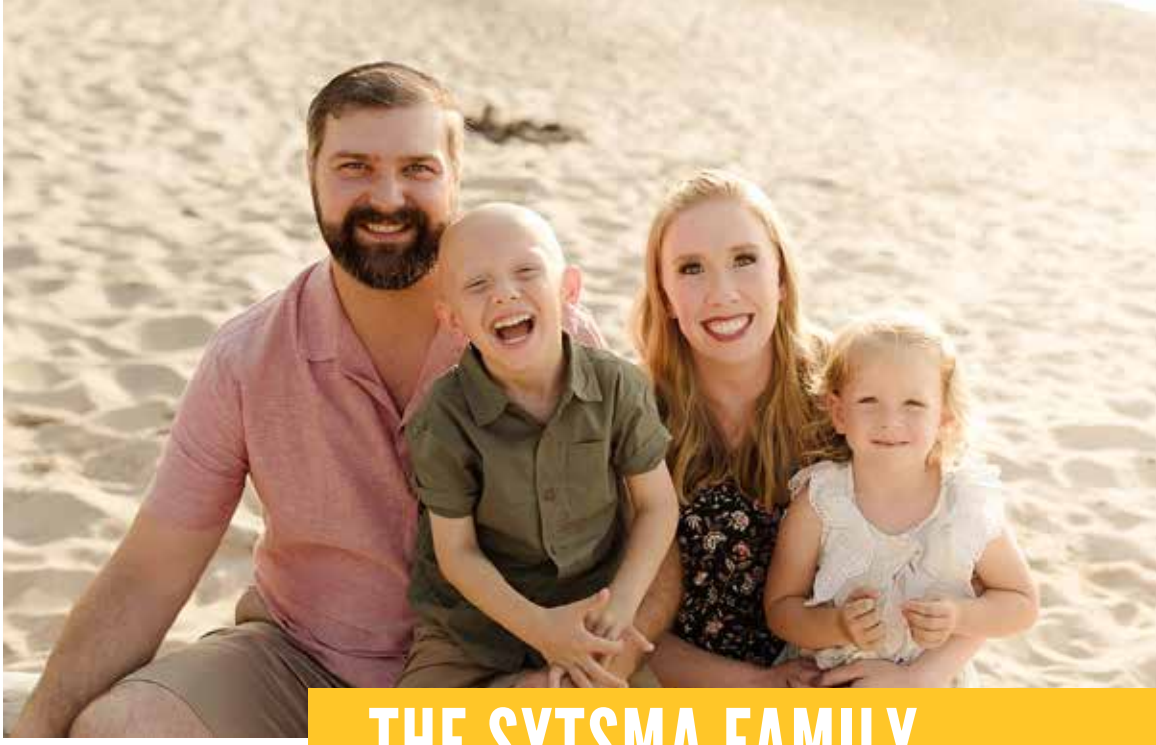

THE SYTSMA FAMILY

In the fall of 2020, our four-year-old son Corbin developed a limp. After a month of exams, scans, and ultrasounds, doctors found a tumor above Corbin's kidney. They determined it was stage IV neuroblastoma. Corbin needed immediate and intense treatment. To receive that treatment, we had to relocate from Demotte, Indiana to Indianapolis. Before staying at the Ronald McDonald House, we were moving between hotels as often as every night and frequently driving 30 to 40 minutes between the hotel and Riley Hospital. Getting a room at the House was a godsend. We no longer had to worry about transportation, accommodations, or even meals. Our daughter Kinley was able to stay with us and we took full advantage of the playground and indoor play areas. My husband Mitch and I were able to connect with other families who were on similar journeys, helping to ease our isolation. Even during this stressful time, we created happy memories of the kids playing around the House, an experience we could not have had at a hotel. Corbin's prognosis is good, and doctors are optimistic. To every donor that supports the House – thank you. What this House provides can't be matched by a hotel. The comfort and stress relief we found during our stay were amazing. We were able to focus on our family, and that means so much to us.

With love and gratitude,
The Sytsma Family



Luisa called RMH home for six months while baby Amelie recovered in the hospital.

LITTLE ROLY-POLY'S BIG DEBUT

When Martha (pronounced Marta) Barba looked for a nickname for her granddaughter, Amelie, she came across the phrase roly-poly. It seemed the right term of endearment for a beautiful 1lb. 13oz. newborn. Today, it's a spot-on description of the now 18-pound toddler.

Restrictions on personal contact meant to slow the spread of COVID-19 have made distances between loved ones feel greater. After a lengthy absence, Luisa Saucedo Barba decided she had to see her family for the holidays.

Though she was 18 weeks into her first pregnancy in December 2020, Luisa boarded a plane in her native Santa Cruz, Bolivia with her brother and his family, and traveled to Elkhart, Indiana. Mariano (the family patriarch), Martha and, Luisa's sister, Daniela, have become adopted Hoosiers.

Time passed too quickly and by the new year Luisa was scheduled to return to her home in South America. Bolivia requires a negative COVID-19 test to enter the country; however, on January 2, 2021, she tested positive.

While it turned out to be a mild case, Luisa was required to spend two weeks in isolation. On January 25, she tested negative and a new flight home was scheduled. In the interim though, Luisa began to bleed.

The Barbas rushed to the emergency room at Elkhart General Hospital where Luisa received a steroid injection that medical staff hoped would

stem the hemorrhage. At 2:00am on February 6, an ambulance transferred her to South Bend Memorial Hospital where she gave birth to Amelie – all 13 inches 840 grams of her – at, as Grandma Martha noted, precisely 5:48pm. Hospital staff informed the Barbas that Amelie would probably be required to spend two or three months in the Newborn Intensive Care Unit (NICU). A feeding tube perforated her tiny esophagus, resulting in a need to transfer little Amelie to Riley Hospital for Children in Indianapolis via ambulance – the weather too severe for a helicopter transfer. Luisa's sister drove her to Indy the following day.

Amelie received world-class care in the Riley NICU and her esophagus healed without surgery. But complications common to babies born very prematurely developed. She remained intubated for her first month before being slowly weaned. A procedure on her heart was required. Two weeks in the NICU turned into two months, which ultimately became six months.

Except for two one-day trips to Elkhart for previously scheduled consultations with her resident OB-GYN, Luisa and her mother remained near Amelie from 9:00am-to-9:00pm every day. "We wanted to stay longer," Martha remembers, "we never wanted to leave her." But Riley nurses told the Barbas they had to keep up their strength, and in order to do so, they needed rest. Medical staff and social workers urged the family to get in touch with the Ronald McDonald House and helped complete the required paperwork. "Thank God we found this place," Martha says with a deep sigh.

Luisa adds, "It was very hard." In addition to learning English (fluently), she had to acquaint herself with the layout of Riley, the IUPUI campus and the Ronald McDonald House. She became all too familiar with a host of technical and frightening medical terms and struggled to follow the progress of Amelie's condition. "Every time a nurse came in the room, we were terrified there was bad news," she recalls, shuddering at the memory. "The anxiety was constant."

We all know the Ronald McDonald House provides a clean, safe, comfortable place to stay for families of very sick children who are often going through extended treatment. We know families are furnished tasty and nutritious meals. What we might not always consider are the intangibles. Luisa murmurs, almost to herself, "Some days I just wanted to cry. It was so nice to have someone smile and say, 'Good morning,' someone to ask, 'How are you today?' A friendly voice saying 'Don't be sad, today will be a better day' helped a lot. Thank God for the Ronald McDonald House."

"It was so nice to have someone smile and say, 'good morning,' someone to ask, 'How are you today?' A friendly voice saying 'don't be sad, today will be a better day' helped a lot."

Amelie grows stronger day-by-day. She's out of the hospital and the family is together in Elkhart. Little Roly-Poly is steadily gaining weight making her adorable nickname a spot-on description of the now 18-pound toddler.

There are still the regular check-ups and tests at Riley but doctors have advised that, for the first time, her oxygen tube can be removed whenever she's awake.

Due to the atmospheric pressure of high-altitude flight, it will be a few months before Luisa and Amelie can travel to Bolivia where the toddler will be introduced to her homeland. "I'm not sure about a timeline. We do what she says. She's my boss now," Luisa says with a hearty laugh.

You'd think the tribulations of 2021 would make Luisa reluctant to risk having more children. You'd be wrong. "Oh, no," she insists, "I want 10 kids."

- DALE OGDEN

GIVING GOOD FOOD A SECOND CHANCE

When you shop for groceries, do you pass on the *ugly* produce - the tomato with a blemish, the carrot that has a funny shape? Maybe you pass up that can of soup because the label is torn, or you reach towards the back of the milk cooler to make sure you get the freshest possible gallon. Many of us are contributing to food waste without even realizing it.

The FDA reports that nearly ⅓ of all available food in the US goes uneaten through loss (not making it to a purchaser) or waste (being tossed out). The global pandemic has only worsened the problem, creating severe supply-chain challenges, causing catered events to be cancelled, and shuttering restaurants. Yet, despite the abundance of food lost in the US, more than 10% of households face food insecurity. In Indiana, that number grows beyond 14%.

Started by three chefs in 1998, Second Helpings has been fighting the battle against food waste and food insecurity, while providing on-the-job culinary training throughout central Indiana since its inception. Through staff and volunteers, Second Helpings saves prepared meals (but not served, such as with a catered event that has been canceled) and perishable food from wholesalers, retailers, and restaurants throughout central Indiana. That food is used to create nutritious meals for food-insecure Hoosiers or redirected to partner agencies in the area. None of the food rescued by Second Helpings has been served, nor has it expired.

For Emily Martin, Marketing & Communications Manager for Second Helpings, the work done by the organization carries through to everyday life. "I'm more conscious about food waste when I shop and when I eat. I pay attention to what I throw away, I think more about what I buy when I'm shopping."

RMHCCIN's executive chef, Vlad "Chef V" Bora, knows Second Helpings well. He has served as a guest instructor, a board advisor, and has participated in a number of the agency's fundraising events. Joining the RMHCCIN team, Chef V. has been able to find a natural fit between the two organizations. "Working with Second Helpings allows us to support a more nutritious menu, with fresh ingredients, diversity and nutritional balance." Since December 2020, RMHCCIN has partnered with Second Helpings to receive food on a weekly basis, through redirects, ready-made lunches, sandwiches and more.

To the uninitiated, a redirect looks a little like a reality-TV cooking show. Organizations like RMHCCIN send representatives to Second Helpings to "shop" (at no charge) their warehouse for anything from produce and dairy to prepackaged snacks, bread, and other essentials. It's a fevered rush bolstered by friendly and professional competition amongst

2021 RMHCCIN MEAL STATISTICS

5,145
INDIVIDUAL COOKED MEALS SERVED

12,800
POUNDS OF FOOD RESCUED (MORE THAN 6.5 TONS)

2,400
GRAB-N-GO SANDWICHES SERVED








peers searching for food for their respective organizations. Emily Martin shares, "Feeding Indianapolis is really a community effort. We're not doing anything on our own – we'd have nowhere to send our food without our partner agencies like Ronald McDonald House, and we wouldn't have the food to share if it wasn't for food donors. None of these issues get solved by one organization." To date, RMHCCIN has rescued more than 12,800 pounds (nearly 6 ½ tons) of food, all of which goes directly towards feeding the guest families of the House and Family Rooms.

Bolstered by a dependable source of quality ingredients, Chef V launched Meals that Heal, RMHCCIN's volunteer-driven meal program that is taking the lead on feeding guests of the House and Family Rooms. Under the direction of Chef V, volunteers are trained on how to effectively work as part of a commercial level culinary team – affectionately referred to as Chef V's Culinary Crew. For the most dedicated volunteers who have prepared and served meals with Chef V, they are able to receive the honorary title of sous chef.

Recognizing the long-standing tradition of businesses, civic organizations and clubs visiting the Ronald McDonald House to prepare meals for guests, RMHCCIN also extends participation in the Meals that Heal program to anyone in the community that has a passion for service. With a small monetary contribution, groups arrive on their selected date to find that Chef V has already shopped for ingredients and prepared the kitchen for their arrival.

By removing these barriers, groups find they can show up ready to cook and not have to worry about anything else. Jim Overbey, Senior Lead Mechanical Engineer for Allegion, recently participated with his coworkers. "The Meals that Heal program is a whole new level of experience that delivered restaurant quality food and a fun experience overall that was a little different than in previous years, but in a very positive way. I'd do this in a heartbeat again. Chef V makes it a fun and pleasant experience, no matter your skill level in the kitchen. You just show up and have a good time."

Those interested in participating in Meals that Heal can visit www.rmhccin.org/get-involved/mealsthatheal.

- ADAM LOWE

COOKING WITH CHEF V:
Curried Butternut & Pear Bisque

INGREDIENTS

1 (2 pound) butternut squash

3 tablespoons unsalted butter

1 onion, diced

2 cloves garlic, minced

2 teaspoons minced fresh ginger root

1 tablespoon curry powder

1 teaspoon salt

4 cups reduced sodium chicken broth

2 firm ripe Bartlett pears, peeled, cored, and cut into 1 inch dice

½ cup half and half

½ cup sherry wine

¼ cup thick cut bacon

COOKING INSTRUCTIONS

Preheat an oven to 375° F. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper.

Cut squash in half lengthwise, discard the seeds and the membrane. Place squash halves, cut sides down, on the prepared baking sheet. Roast in preheated oven until soft, about 45 minutes. Scoop the pulp from the peel, and reserve.

In a skillet crisp and render the bacon diced in ½ inch strips and reserve.

Melt butter in a large soup pot over medium heat. Stir in the onion, garlic, ginger, curry powder, and salt. Cook and stir until the onion is soft, about 10 minutes, deglaze with sherry wine. Pour the chicken broth into the pot and bring to a boil. Stir in the pears and the reserved squash, and simmer until the pears are very soft, about 30 minutes.

Pour the soup into a blender, filling the pitcher no more than halfway full. Hold down the lid of the blender with a folded kitchen towel, and carefully start the blender. Puree in batches until smooth. Return the soup to the pot, stir in the half and half, and reheat.

CHEF'S SUGGESTION

Serve topped with bacon, diced chives and heavy cream drizzle, enjoy with fresh crusty bread.









GIVING BACK FOR FAMILIES

Through their selfless labor, volunteers at the Ronald McDonald House on Limestone Street and the Ronald McDonald Family Rooms within Riley Hospital for Children at Indiana University Health help RMHCCIN staff provide aid and comfort to thousands of families each year. Whether answering the telephone, performing daily housekeeping tasks, helping Chef Vlad prepare and serve meals or simply offering friendly and helpful personal support to our guests, volunteers make a critical contribution to running the House and Family Rooms.

Volunteering is a two-way street. The pay's not great but the perks are invaluable. According to long-time volunteer Lori Ball, "I became a volunteer because I wanted to give back for the love and care my family received from the Ronald McDonald House." Volunteer Tim Lewis says, "I love using the (handyman) skills I have learned over the years to lift families up when they need it most."

Just like donations of time, financial contributions are critical to creating a *home away from home* for the families that stay with us. With the help of long-time volunteer Mercedes Root, we launched the 2020 volunteer campaign last March, right before the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the uncertain time and having to suspend the program for six months for the health and safety of our families, volunteers banded together to give what they could and raised enough funds to purchase a new luggage cart.

This summer, volunteers Lori Ball and Tim Lewis introduced the 2021 volunteer campaign. One luggage cart had been a help, but two more would be even better. They are something everyone can see and touch, that impacts staff, families, and volunteers. Setting a concrete goal – $1,500 for two carts – was a valuable tool for team building. "Everyone can participate," says RMHCCIN Volunteer Resources Manager, Mary Friend. "Every little bit helps. Add them all together and now you've got something big." The 2021 campaign was a great success, exceeding the monetary goal and once again illustrating the power of teamwork.

The physical, emotional, and financial contributions offered by RMHCCIN volunteers have made, and will continue to make, a tremendous impact on the welfare of innumerable families in need.

- DALE OGDEN

REFRESHED FAMILY ROOM

After 17 years in operation, the Ronald McDonald House inside of Riley Hospital for Children at IU Health received a beautiful makeover and has become a Ronald McDonald Family Room.





Closed during the initial throes of the pandemic, what you remember as the Ronald McDonald House at Riley, temporarily served as a resting place for beleaguered hospital staff, and later as a food pantry to help those hit hardest by COVID-19. Today, we're back to business, providing families with children receiving treatment in the hospital a place of respite, free from all the commotion and stress of hospital life. Located on the first floor near the library and chapel, the Ronald McDonald Family Room at Riley Hospital is a quiet place for a well-deserved break for parents, grandparents, and other family members. The Family Room serves continental breakfast and lunch, along with grab-n-go dinners, snacks, McDonald's McCafe® coffee, and water.





OUR NEWEST DELIVERY

Previewed in the Summer 2021 issue of *Heart and Hearth*, the Ronald McDonald Family Room Maternity Tower opened in early November in conjunction with the opening of Riley Hospital's new Maternity Tower. It includes comfortable resting spaces, snacks and drinks, a beauty bar to pamper new moms, and a state-of-the-art massage chair. It's a great place for escaping the noise of the hospital and relaxing, as well as connecting with other NICU families!

Our Ronald McDonald Family Rooms are peaceful, intimate, and comfortable; but most importantly, they're private spaces away from the medical place.

Our Ronald McDonald Family Rooms were made possible thanks to the generosity of:

- *Fraternal Order of Eagles*
- *Lilly Endowment Inc.*
- *McDonald's Owner/Operators of Central Indiana*
- *The Family of Michael Rhinaman*
- *Riley Hospital for Children at IU Health*
- *Ronald McDonald House Charities Global*







Credit: Julia Fisher Farbman

THE WOMAN WHO CARED:
DR. AUDREY EVANS



Born in York, England on March 6, 1925, Audrey Evans knew from the time she was 5 years old that she wanted to be a doctor. She even kept a small medical kit with her in case any animals needed healing. In an era when such thinking was hardly universal, Audrey was blessed with parents who believed as she has said, "Girls should do as well as boys."

During World War II, Audrey took advantage of the shortage of male medical students and enrolled in the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh (Scotland) where she struggled with her courses. As she shares, "I never excelled in school because I had a memory problem. Most students learn by reading, but I remember things from what I hear. I had trouble in medical school. I failed my first year in anatomy." Eventually, her lessons were explained verbally and via pictures. "I scrambled through medical school till I got to the clinical part," she admits. "Then I could talk to the medical staff and the families. I was a good connector."



After graduating from the Royal College of Surgeons in 1953, Dr. Evans spent the first two years of her residency on a Fulbright Fellowship at the Boston Children's Hospital, training under Dr. Sidney Farber, a renowned pathologist, pioneer in the study of leukemia and the father of modern chemotherapy. It was Dr. Farber who introduced her to the "total care approach" of tending to the entire family, not just the sick child. This philosophy became the driving force behind the rest of Dr. Evans long career.

◀ *Ronald McDonald, Jimmy Murray and Dr. Evans outside of RMHC Philadelphia. Credit: RMHC Philadelphia*

From Massachusetts, she spent a year at Johns Hopkins before finishing her residency at the Royal Infirmary Teaching Hospital in Edinburgh, where, for a time, she was the only female among over a dozen residents. Rather than finding her situation difficult, she remembers it as amusing . "I was having fun," she recalls. At the time, only about 6% of American doctors were female, so she felt she was lucky. "I knew where I was going. I had a plan."

After returning to Boston Children's Hospital, Dr. Evans found her true calling, caring for children with cancer. In 1969, following a stint at the University of Chicago, she was recruited by the future Surgeon General of the United States, C. Everett Koop, to be the first Chief of Pediatric Oncology (the diagnosis and treatment of cancer) at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. Dr. Evans would spend the next four decades at the hospital, where she would eventually found the Children's Cancer Center.

A vision for her life's work became clear in church one Sunday. "God was calling for a woman who cared, and I thought, 'Wow, that's who called me.' I knew at that sermon that was why I came to Philadelphia, to take care of children who had cancer." She shares that, sadly, at the time there was little more she could do than care. She talked to children about dying and about not being afraid. She told them that heaven is a place where you "meet your friends" and it can be whatever you want it to be. "It's just a lovely place."

Among her early accomplishments, in 1971, Dr. Evans developed a system for analyzing the progression of cancer to determine the best course of treatment. The Evans Staging System has been credited with reducing the mortality rate for neuroblastoma, a common type of early childhood cancer, by 50%.

Throughout the years, Dr. Evans noticed that families had nowhere to stay while their children were undergoing treatment. Former Philadelphia Eagle tight end, Fred Hill, remembers her telling him, "The families we see every day, some of them come from long distances and sleep in their car."

As the parents of a toddler stricken with cancer, Fred and Fran Hill had worked to raise awareness, organize fundraisers, and with help from Fred's teammates and their wives, support leukemia and other pediatric cancer organizations. In 1972, the Hills were referred to Dr. Evans as someone who could use their assistance. The answer to their question, "How can we help?" was naturally straightforward. "We need $35,000 to buy a house where parents can stay," Dr Evans replied.

When the Eagles then general manager, Jim Murray, approached McDonald's regional manager Ed Rensi about donating 25¢ from the sale of each of the area stores' new Shamrock Shakes toward the realization of Dr. Evans vision, Rensi replied, "We will give you all that money." His only requisite? To call it "Ronald McDonald House Charities" to which Audrey replied, "You can call it the hamburger house if you'd like, as long as you cover the bill."

In 1974, with invaluable assistance from the Eagles Fly for Leukemia foundation, which the Hill's friend and neighbor, Stan Lane, had founded, Dr. Evans, Murray, Rensi and the Hills created Ronald McDonald House Charities and opened the nation's first Ronald McDonald House in Philadelphia.



▲ *Dr. Evans and her peers in the 1950s. Credit: RMHC Philadelphia*



▲ *Dr. Evans teaching. Credit: Dr. Audrey Evans*



▲ *Dr. Evans at the grand opening of the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House in 1974. Credit: RMHC Philadelphia*



Dr. Evans checking on a young child.

Nearly a half-century later, Dr. Evans continues to be gratified by the fulfillment of her mentor, Dr. Farber's, "total care" philosophy. "If I go to a Ronald McDonald House, I see somebody taking care not only of the child who's staying there, they're taking care of the whole family. That's just a beautiful idea."

Lest anyone fear that Dr. Evans' life has been consumed by nothing outside of her career, do not be concerned. She has been an avid scuba diver, horseback rider, world-traveler and – believe it or not – sheep shearer.

Of course, Dr. Evans' lasting legacy will revolve around her work on behalf of children in need and their families. In 2005, Dr. Evans married her longtime friend and colleague, Dr. Giulio D'Angio. Prior to his passing in 2018, the duo worked together for 50 years to advance the field of pediatric oncology through many efforts including the founding of the nation's first Neuroblastoma Research Group.

After her retirement in 2009, there was still more work to be done. So, in 2011, Dr. Evans co-founded Philadelphia's St. James School - a year-round, tuition free middle school for under-resourced youth.

When reflecting on her life, Dr. Evans states, "I was given a mission to make a difference in the lives of children." Asked how she'd like to be remembered she says simply, "As a woman who cared."

- KARIN OGDEN

**Special thanks to "Modern Hero" - a series profiling female role models - for providing source material for this article. Audrey's "Modern Hero" video garnered 17 Million views across platforms, and can be seen on Amazon, YouTube, Facebook, and other platforms.*

COMING SOON: AUDREY'S CHILDREN



I'm the writer and one of the producers of "Audrey's Children" – the upcoming, scripted, biographical feature film inspired by the life of, you guessed it, Dr. Audrey Evans. The film takes place in 1970, and follows Audrey, the first female Chief of Pediatric Oncology at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, as she tackles dated treatment methods to ultimately transform the landscape of pediatric cancer and co-found RMHC. The screenplay has won multiple awards, and now our production team is casting the leads of the film and revving up for a spring 2022 shoot in Pennsylvania.

Dr. Audrey E. Evans is many things to many people: revolutionary pediatric oncologist, visionary behind RMHC, trailblazer, (dare I say) rule-breaker, role model, mentor, friend, a woman who has devoted her life to caring for others. I've had the privilege of knowing Audrey my whole life and have had a front row seat to her unprecedented and unbelievable ways. She's a dynamic and complex human being who literally stops and smells the roses while walking down the street, who waves to strangers and cuddles their babies, and who carries dog treats in her purse, despite having no dogs. She's taught me what it means to live a life of service to others – that can be as grand as transforming pediatric cancer and co-founding an organization that serves millions around the world, or it can be as simple as holding the door for a stranger.

When I approached Dr. Evans to do this film years ago, she agreed under one condition – that this story, her story, will continue to make a difference in the lives of children, for generations to come. There's no doubt that sharing her incredible story will do just that.

To follow along the film journey, visit *www.AudreysChildren.com.*

- JULIA FISHER FARBMAN



POP TAB COLLECTING HERO: LARRY "THE CAN MAN" VAN NESS



Credit: Rachel Lee Photography



Born in 1947, Larry Van Ness had a rough start in life. His early childhood was cursed with an abusive father and a mother who abandoned him. His father threw him out of the house at the age of 16, so Larry lived with his grandmother who died within a year. Left homeless, he lived on the streets of Anderson, Indiana doing what he could to survive. He quit school and found odd jobs, some paying cash, others in beer. It was the start of a path toward alcoholism and substance abuse. Larry began collecting cans to recycle for a little cash. Often drunk while rummaging through trash for cans, he was the target of countless cruelties.

Larry was eventually connected to resources that assisted with housing and food, but he continued as the town drunk for decades. One day, his doctor told him he'd likely be dead within weeks if he didn't stop smoking and drinking. Larry resolved to abandon those habits "cold turkey," which he did!

On a typical day in 2003, while Larry was at Shadyside Park in Anderson looking through trash cans, a family he knew stopped to chat. They told him about the Ronald McDonald House (RMH), a place that collected can tabs to help provide a home away from home for families of children receiving medical care at Riley Hospital for Children and other Indianapolis hospitals. The family challenged Larry to remove the tabs from cans he collected and donate them to RMH. They teasingly bet that he couldn't collect one million. Not one to back down from a challenge, Larry started removing tabs. Over time, local bars, schools and individuals saw what he was doing and began giving him tabs they had saved.

It took him three years, but by 2006 he'd collected one million tabs, every one of which was hand-counted and tabulated on sheets of judiciously kept notes. With the help of a friend, he delivered that first million to Ronald McDonald House. By then, setting aside tabs for RMH had become a well-established routine and Larry decided



he wasn't going to quit after one million. By 2014, he was on the cusp of 10 million tabs. When the local newspaper noted his exploits, their story went viral.

When I saw the story, I knew Larry could help take `the tabs I had collected off my hands. He thanked me for the tabs and for taking time to talk to him, confessing that he was lonely. I started checking on him from time to time. I came to realize what a special person he is and how his overcoming failure in the face of many trials was a story that would inspire others. Larry remade his life into one that's focused on helping others. He often says, "I used to be an alcoholic, but now I'm a 'TAB'aholic!' I may not have much money, but I'm a multi-millionaire . . . of tabs!"

In 2016, we took Larry's story to social media and the results were instantaneous. Word spread across the country, and he began receiving tabs in the mail from people in other states. In the five years since Larry's presence on Facebook, he has collected and donated nearly 13 million tabs, which brings his total to almost 25 million! Larry walks a ten-mile circuit throughout Anderson daily,



▲ *Larry hangs out with RMHCCIN CEO Karin Ogden during the Pop Tab Drop.*



▲ *Celebrating 20 million pop tabs, Larry was presented with a custom pop tab necklace.*

checking trash cans and stopping by places that save tabs for him. He's the first to give credit to everyone who pitches in. "It isn't just me, it's all of us. I'm just the boss!" There are more than a dozen locations in the Anderson area where people can drop off their tabs for Larry and his small crew of volunteers.

What started as a bet has exploded into a years' long mission. Larry expects to reach 25 million tabs in the coming months. It's a milestone no other person will likely reach, but that doesn't mean he's ready to quit. "Not until I'm 6 feet under." He hopes someone local will take his place when he's gone and keep the community saving tabs for RMH. "It's all about the kids," he says.

Family is what means the most to Larry -- his community family and his Ronald McDonald House family. That's the gift he's received in return for the tabs he's collected and donated to RMH. Larry says that even though he had a rough start in life, and struggled for many years, he's grateful for what he has and for the people who support him.

- RACHEL LANDERS

SAVANNAH MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Meet Savannah Welu, age 10 and a fifth-grader at Sand Creek Intermediate School. Savannah is the embodiment of the idea that anyone can make a difference. After learning that a friend of her brother's had to be hospitalized recently because of childhood cancer, she knew she wanted to help and do something for kids like him and so many others. She started by using her crafty talents to create paintings and other treasures she thought people would like and sold them to friends and family to raise money. She even worked with her grandma, famous for her chocolate candies, to make treats to sell. "People really like those," said Savannah, smiling.

Then, she learned from her parents who both collect pop tabs in their offices, that pop tab collecting is a simple way to help families that need a place to stay while their children heal at a local hospital. She was inspired to snap into action. She started collecting tabs at home and inspired her grandpa to start collecting at local credit union branches. She recruited her friends who also wanted to help kids. They met with their principal and lobbied to put recycled collection containers around the school to collect tabs and promoted the drive with a video message they made that promoted the idea of recycling tabs for a purpose. The mission caught on: kids and teachers alike started collecting until the bins were full.

Savanah recently came to the House to deliver tabs and a check from her craft and chocolate sales. Thanks, Savannah, for showing that anyone can truly make a difference not only in their own collecting but by inspiring others to take action.

-STACY CLARK



▲ *Savannah led her school's efforts in collecting pop tabs.*



▲ *Dumping tabs in the collection bins - a collector's right of passage.*



▲ *Savannah presents her check to Stacy Clark, Director of Development.*

BE THE CHANGE

There is a certain joy that can be found in philanthropy. And we know that our mission is relatable to our donors. We all have a family and we have all experienced injury and illness. I am inspired by the number of moms, dads, grandmas, grandpas, aunts and uncles, brothers and sisters that donate online, mail checks, collect pop tabs, host Facebook fundraisers and conduct drives to fulfill the wishes on our list.

When you make a gift to the Ronald McDonald House, you may not be able to alleviate the worry a parent feels about their child's health, but you can allow them to feel and function better by providing them a good night's sleep and nutritious food.

And, we have more ways than ever to support the House as we wrap up 2021.

-STACY CLARK





GIVE THROUGH A DONOR ADVISED FUND

Like Noah – you or your family can make a gift using your Donor Advised Fund (DAF). Why a DAF? They are easy to establish and can offer greater tax benefits. They are also easy to use with online access for your grant recommendations.



BECOME A LEADERSHIP DONOR

Like the Hintons – you can become a Leadership donor. The Hinton Family is generously offering to match any qualifying gift of $500 dollar for dollar, up to $10,000 dollars, doubling your gift. If you are a new donor, your gift qualifies! If you have given less than $500 in the past but give $500 this year, your gift qualifies! And, with the matching donation, not only do you double your impact for the House, you will become a new member of our Heart of the House society for leadership donors giving at or above the $1,000 level.



BECOME A MONTHLY GIVER

Like Laurie - you can set an automatic withdrawal from your account to support the House with small gifts that add up to a more significant gift by year end. You can set a donation to be sent monthly or quarterly right from our online giving page.

"A recurring donation is a great way for us both to budget. It saves RMHC resources so they don't have to spend as much time and money pursuing donations each year. Donations are greatly appreciated at any time, however, my recurring donation has great benefits for both me and the House." – Laurie Henry



FUNDRAISE ON FACEBOOK

Like Catherine - you can host a Facebook Fundraiser. Each year, Catherine shares her family's RMH story to remember and to honor her daughter Caitlin's birthday. Friends and family support Catherine and the House when they make a gift.

Setting up a fundraiser is easy, just visit our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/rmhccin and locate the *Fundraisers* tab at the top of our page. Then click *create a fundraiser.*

Don't forget to see if your company matches qualifying donations to Ronald McDonald House...it's a great way to double your impact!







TASTING HOOSIER DELICACIES

Taste AT HOME AGAIN IN INDIANA

A huge thank you goes out to everyone who participated in Taste at Home Again in Indiana. In years past, the theme of Taste has been different regions or countries. This year, we wanted to bring the theme back to its home state. For our families, being close to home sometimes just isn't possible, so we bring home to them. And what better way to celebrate that than to bring the Hoosier state to each of you!

Working with 14 different local businesses, we were able to curate a decadent party box to accompany our virtual program. The local community does so much for us, and this is one small way for us to show our appreciation for the impact they create. As you sipped and savored your way through the evening, maybe you even discovered a new favorite local brand.

We hope you all enjoyed your evening in with friends, cocktails, and a yummy charcuterie board.

- ROBIN CHALMERS














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Do you shop online at Amazon.com? If so, you could help support RMHCCIN at no cost to you, all with the click of a button. Amazon Smile is a simple and automatic way for you to support RMHCCIN every time you shop.

Simply visit www.smile.amazon.com, log in using your existing Amazon account, and select Ronald McDonald House Charities of Central Indiana as your charity. A portion of the purchase price will be donated to RMHCCIN. Amazon will prompt you to use Amazon Smile in the future, and you can even bookmark the link.

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You shop. Amazon gives.

WELCOME TO THE TEAM!



ROBIN CHALMERS

Events Manager

A Ball State grad with a degree in Hospitality and Event Management, Robin owns her own wedding planning business – so you know she has a keen eye for making events happen without a hitch. Robin is an Indiana native and recent transplant back from Dayton, Ohio. In her free time, Robin enjoys reading and spending time with her husband Cody, and her cats Lucy and Jay.



MEREDITH SMITH

Riley Guest Services Coordinator

Meredith is a Baltimore native and recently graduated from Virginia Tech. Previously, she completed service with Americorps and taught preschool. Meredith's late father served as treasurer on the board of Ronald McDonald House Maryland Charities, and she spent many of her formative years there volunteering at the House. Meredith is excited to keep the RMHC tradition alive as she supports families visiting our Riley Family Rooms. In her spare time, she enjoys exploring new restaurants, listening to crime podcasts, and knitting.



TOP TEN WISH LIST

Thanks to generous donors like you, thousands of families that stay at our House have free access to snack foods, cleaning supplies, toiletry items and more. We've listed out our top 10 most used items here, but a full list can be found online at ***https://a.co/6bP0EIN***. If you are able to help donate the items on our list, we ask that you consider having them shipped directly to our Limestone House - **435 Limestone St. Indianapolis, IN**. Shipping them direct keeps you, our staff and most importantly our families safe and distanced. In-person deliveries are still welcomed, but must be made by appointment only. Please call 317-269-2247.

1. Winter Coats
   (All Ages)
2. Hats
3. Gloves
4. Scarves
5. Vitamin Water
6. Bottled Water
7. Individual Sized Chips
8. Individual Sized Snacks
9. Pop Tarts
10. Disposable Masks
    (Adult & Child Sizes)

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HEAR FROM OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

WHAT ARE YOU GRATEFUL FOR?



KAREN CAMPBELL

The dedication of those on the board, past and present, who have made the RMH possible.

WHY IS GIVING OR GIVING BACK IMPORTANT TO YOU?



THERESA DUNN

Giving is important to me in order to make a real and lasting impact in the lives of others, to support our communities, and encourage others to do the same.



TROY HOGAN

The ability to stay steps away from the hospital and have meals provided is a blessing that you can't really appreciate until it happens to you. This is why I give back to RMH.



CATHERINE STIVER

During difficult times, our community showered us with so much love and support, and I want others to feel that they are not alone.

WHAT IS YOUR BIGGEST WISH/DREAM FOR THE HOUSE?



MICHAEL HILLSMAN

My biggest wish is that the House is able to continue to grow and provide the critical services it does to more families in need.



DAVID KLEIMAN

My biggest wish for the House is that there would be room to serve all that need it.



WITH GRATITUDE

I love this time of year. It prompts us to consider the blessings in our lives and the things for which we are thankful. Coming out of tough times, it can be a difficult proposition. But that only provides a greater contrast for the beauty, hope, and courage we can find in our everyday lives if only we look hard enough. They are there and are often the silver linings we discover when our way forward is clouded. I have invested a fair amount of time this year finding silver linings, and what I've discovered is just how much I have to be thankful for.

I am grateful for our staff, volunteers, and partners that have forged full steam ahead, with relentless passion and energy, to open our TWO new Ronald McDonald Family Rooms at Riley Hospital for Children at Indiana University Health. Our RMHCCIN team has created two truly amazing spaces that are now serving families with what they need most, where they need it most. From weary grandparents, hours from home, picking up lunch, to a single mom-to-be taking advantage of our Hydro-massage chair, it's exciting to see the joy, comfort and relief on the faces of our guests as they visit these new Family Rooms.

I am grateful for our donors, whose generosity is what makes it possible for us to unlock the doors to quiet and cozy guest rooms complete with a hot shower and warm meals. I'd like to share a special thank you to those donors that helped with the funding of our new Family Rooms: The Fraternal Order of Eagles, Lilly Endowment Inc., McDonald's Owner/Operators of Central Indiana, the family of Michael Rhinamen, Riley Hospital for Children at IU Health, and Ronald McDonald House Charities Global. Your generosity is directly impacting the lives of thousands of families during a time they need it most.

I'm thankful for Dr. Audrey Evans. I hope you enjoyed reading her story and are looking forward to the movie premier. She inspired and led a movement that put families in the center of their care, and her intrepid spirit and passion built a global community that serves millions of families every year.

Most of all, I'm thankful for you - for your generosity, your kindness, your time. Your gifts fill the heart of the House with kindness and hope. This holiday season, know that your support and investment in our work has been a silver lining for me and our families. It is the light that brings hope. It is the light that begins healing.

Wishing you a joyous holiday season,

Karin Ogden

KARIN OGDEN
Chief Executive Officer

UPCOMING EVENTS

Save the date for our upcoming special events benefitting Ronald McDonald House Charities of Central Indiana.

BRUNCH & BOUQUETS
SATURDAY, MARCH 19, 2022
INDIANA LANDMARKS CENTER - INDIANAPOLIS, IN

SWING FOR KIDS GOLF TOURNAMENT
MONDAY, MAY 23, 2022
THE BRIDGEWATER CLUB - CARMEL, IN

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Make a gift on our website by visiting www.rmhccin.org.

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