



GLOBAL OFFICE OF RMHC RECOGNIZES RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE CHARITIES OF AUSTIN AND CENTRAL TEXAS WITH THE HEARTS & HANDS AWARD AND A \$10,000 GRANT

Children's Charity Celebrates and Honors Twelve Local RMHC Chapters with Distinguished Award during the 2013 RMHC International Conference

Austin, Texas. (September 23, 2013) – Ronald McDonald House Charities® (RMHC®) of Austin and Central Texas and its First Fridays Program was recognized with an *RMHC Hearts & Hands Award* and a \$10,000 grant during the Charity's biennial International Conference. Through this Award, the family-centered nonprofit recognizes the most impactful programs developed by local Chapters in response to the critical needs of children in their communities.

This year, RMHC awarded nearly \$500,000 in grants to local Chapters that achieved exceptional results in the delivery of vital services, care and compassion to children and their families. RMHC of Austin and Central Texas was one of twelve Chapters recognized in the category of Financial Sustainability.

"The *RMHC Hearts and Hands Award* is an exceptional opportunity for us to recognize and promote best practices within the RMHC system," said J.C. Gonzalez-Mendez, president and CEO of RMHC. "We are proud of the work of local Chapters like RMHC Austin. Its First Friday program exemplifies the Charity's focus on sustainable program development to enhance the mission, reach and impact of RMHC.

The First Fridays program of RMHC Austin strengthens the financial sustainability of the Ronald McDonald House and Family Rooms by promoting the customer donation boxes at the sixty-eight McDonald's restaurants in the Austin area. On the first Friday of each month, McDonald's crew members make a special effort to encourage customers to donate their spare change to support families staying at the Ronald McDonald House® or Ronald McDonald Family Rooms in Austin. Since its inception in 2011, this program has increased customer donations, not only on the First Friday of each month, but also on a daily basis by creating a greater awareness of the RMHC Donation Boxes among McDonald's customers. RMHC Austin depends on generous financial support from the community to meet the increasing demand for its services.

The Awards reception and gala was a highlight of the 2013 RMHC International Conference which welcomed more than 1,200 RMHC staff, board members and volunteers from more than 40 countries and regions to Chicago for a week of educational programming, networking and celebration of the Charity's mission.

About Ronald McDonald House Charities of Austin and Central Texas

Ronald McDonald House Charities of Austin and Central Texas creates, finds and supports programs that directly improve the health and well-being of children and their families. **The Ronald McDonald House**, with its 30 guest rooms for families, provides lodging and support services in a nurturing, home-like environment where families stay together while caring for their critically ill or injured children receiving treatment in Austin-area hospitals. **Austin's Ronald McDonald Family Rooms** are places of rest and support within the walls of three area hospitals for families with children in the intensive care units. A fourth Austin Ronald McDonald Family Room is scheduled to open inside Seton Medical Center in 2013. For more information visit www.rmhc-austin.org, follow us on Twitter ([@RMHCAustin](https://twitter.com/RMHCAustin)), like us on Facebook ([Facebook.com/RMHCAustin](https://facebook.com/RMHCAustin)).

About Ronald McDonald House Charities

Ronald McDonald House Charities® (RMHC®), a non-profit, 501 (c) (3) corporation, creates, finds and supports programs that directly improve the health and wellbeing of children. Through its global network of local Chapters in 58 countries and regions, its three core programs, the [Ronald McDonald House](#)®, [Ronald McDonald Family Room](#)® and [Ronald McDonald Care Mobile](#)®, and millions of dollars in grants to support children's programs worldwide, RMHC provides stability and resources to families so they can get and keep their children healthy and happy. All RMHC-operated and supported programs provide access to quality health care and give children and families the time they need together to heal faster and cope better. For more information, visit www.rmhc.org, follow us on Twitter ([@RMHC](#)), or like us on Facebook (Facebook.com/RMHC Global).

Media Contact

Clara L. Carrier, RMHC
(630) 623-6573
clara.carrier@us.mcd.com
www.rmhc.org

Jan Gunter, RMHC Austin
Communications Manager
(512) 628-5931
jgunter@rmhc-austin.org
www.rmhc-austin.org

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