



# PROGRAM OVERVIEW

“A meal has the power to turn a house into a home and a stranger into a friend.”  
*Melody Beattie*



#KeepingFamiliesClose

f i t @rmhcgws

in Ronald McDonald House Charities  
Greater Western Sydney



Ronald McDonald House Charities, Greater Western Sydney is built on the simple idea that nothing else should matter when a family is focused on the health of their child – not where they can afford to stay, where they will get their next meal or where they will lay their head at night to rest.

As a Chapter, we support families through Ronald McDonald House Westmead, Family Room Nepean, and our Education Services; these services ensure families have a warm and welcoming place to stay, and meaningful support for their family when they need it most.

## What is Meals from the Heart?

Often, parents and carers of seriously ill children simply do not have the time, funds or energy to prepare a meal after an emotional day at hospital.

Keeping families close through such times is at the heart of what we do.

Meals from the Heart is a group volunteering program, providing families staying at Ronald McDonald House Westmead with a home-cooked meal three nights a week. Families can find comfort in coming home to a healthy home-cooked meal, hearing laughter in the kitchen, and enjoying a meal served by warm and friendly faces.

Corporate and Community groups are invited to step into the kitchen up to three evenings each week, to make a meaningful difference for families, and help make our House a home.

**“The Meals from the Heart dinners were always such a highlight when we were there. Especially when you’d had a long day on ward the last thing you wanted to do was cook dinner! And the kids always enjoyed the company of the people who came.”**

Tanya-lee mum of Codee,  
who stayed at the House for 241 nights.

## How does it work?

365 nights a year, up to 60 families sleep under the roof of Ronald McDonald House Westmead, coming and going to and from the hospital each day to be close to their children when they are receiving vital medical treatment.

Meals from the Heart caters for volunteer groups of 12 people. - If you have a larger group please contact us to discuss the available options.

As a group, you'll be working together with a qualified chef to prepare a home-cooked meal for approximately 200 people. If you have a larger group, you could consider additional activities (decorating the dining room, games for families) that some group members can perform while others are preparing food.

This unforgettable, hands-on experience provides an opportunity for your team to connect while giving back to the community.

## Bookings

To book a Meals from the Heart experience, visit <https://gwsfundraising.rmhc.org.au/event/gws-corporate-volunteer-programs/home>

### Payment

The program is \$1,650 to cover the cost of food for the families. Payment can be made via credit card at the time of booking, or on invoice. Where an invoice is issued, payment is due within 14 days. Fees must be paid 28 days prior to your booking.

### Donations

The fee charged only covers the cost of food for the meals served on the night. To help keep our program running, we'd appreciate you considering a donation to our Chapter, above the participation fee.

### Insurance

As part of participating in any program at the house it is a requirement to supply us with a copy of your workers compensation and public liability insurance.

### Participant registration

Advance registration is compulsory for every person visiting the House. It's quick, easy and can be completed online at: <https://gwsfundraising.rmhc.org.au/programs>  
Participants who do not register will not be able to participate on the night.

### Cancellation policy

There is a 28 day cancellation policy for all program bookings. Email us to cancel or reschedule. Cancellations or changes within 28 days agree that the full participation fee will be converted to sponsor a meal. We value your support and appreciate your understanding.

## RMH Westmead Provides:

- A selection of Menus for you to choose from
- All produce for the evening
- Our food Safety HACCP-accredited chef to oversee the evening and all food preparation

## Your Group Provides:

- A group of enthusiastic volunteers to prepare and serve meals for families

**Cost: \$1,650 per group**



# A typical 'Meals from the Heart'

3:00pm

Arrival and sign in

3:15pm

Welcome/briefing, and house tour

4:00pm

Introduction to kitchen, food preparation begins

6:00pm

Dinner served

7:30pm

Dinner concludes, pack up/wash up commences

8:30pm

Evening concludes



\*Please note, for previous participants, welcome/briefing and House tour is optional.

Once meals are prepared, all group members are encouraged to sit together with the families in the dining room to enjoy the meal together.

Kitchen clean-up is included as part of Meals from the Heart, and it is important that all team members step in to assist with the clean up. This ensures that your group finishes on time.

“We are extremely honoured to be able to support the families at Ronald McDonald House Westmead through the Meals from the heart Program. We love coming to the house and making a meal for the families and hearing their stories. Knowing that you have helped the families to think of one less thing for that day is so worthwhile”

- Suntory Coffee Team



## Alcohol

Due to the large number of guests in the House, we do not encourage the service of alcohol at Meals from the Heart. Should your team wish to enjoy a drink with dinner, we would ask that you please limit this to one per person.

# Attendance etiquette

While visiting Ronald McDonald House Westmead, we ask that you are mindful and understanding of families and their differing circumstances while staying at the House.

Despite being under tremendous emotional stress, families welcome your support and contribution. It is not appropriate to ask questions about a child's illness or why a family is staying at the house.



## Important details on infection control: when NOT to attend the House

The majority of children staying at the House are immune-suppressed due to the hospital treatment they are receiving. Everyday illness can cause devastating outcomes for these children.

Children staying at the House must not be put at risk of contracting any illnesses through contact with visitors to the House.

It is extremely important that all Meals from the Heart participants are free of infection or illness and practice a high degree of hygiene at all times whilst visiting the House.

Participants must also be free from coughs, colds or any viral illnesses, and have had NO contact with chicken pox, measles or gastro illnesses in the last three weeks.

**If any member of your group is unwell or has come in contact with any of the above medical conditions, they must not attend the House – there simply are no exceptions.**

## Personal hygiene / attire

As your group will be utilising equipment in our commercial grade kitchen, all participants must:

- Wear disposable gloves and hair nets (supplied by the House)
- Wear closed in shoes and comfortable clothing
- Remove jewellery
- Wash your hands thoroughly prior to and after preparing any food
- Not cough or sneeze over food or where food is prepared/stored
- Keep personal items clear of food preparation areas
- Keep nails short and not wear nail polish that can chip into food
- Cover cuts and wounds with an approved waterproof strip
- Tie back hair

Attendees will each be provided with a Meals from the Heart apron to wear on the night.



# Photography / social media

We encourage all participants to capture photos of their group in action in the kitchen on the night.

Photos of families staying at the House however are not permitted, unless with the direct consent from an individual family. Participants are asked to be mindful of family privacy, and even if a family consents to a photo, not more than one photo request is made to them.

Participants are encouraged to share photos on social media using our hashtag, #KeepingFamiliesClose. You can also find us on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter at @rmhcgws or as **Ronald McDonald House Charities Greater Western Sydney**.

## Getting here

The House street address is 1 Labyrinth Way, Westmead NSW 2145, off Redbank Road.

The best way to access the House is to put Redbank Road, Northmead into your navigation system. From there, you can turn left from Redbank Road into Labyrinth Way.

There is limited free parking available at the House. We encourage volunteers to carpool or catch public transport if possible.

Westmead train station is an easy 15 minute walk to the house.





To learn how you can make a real impact in supporting seriously ill children and their families, please contact our team:



02 9806 7111



[programs.gws@rmhc.org.au](mailto:programs.gws@rmhc.org.au)



[www.rmhwestmead.org.au/westmead](http://www.rmhwestmead.org.au/westmead)



Street address: 1 Labyrinth Way, Westmead NSW 2145  
Postal address: Locked Bag 4001, Westmead NSW 2145

Thank you for your support in making our House a home.

[#KeepingFamiliesClose](#)  
[#RMHWestmead](#)