



RONALD McDONALD
HOUSE CHARITIES
OF WESTERN WASHINGTON

Ronald McDonald House Charities of Western Washington

External Events Packet

THANK YOU for your interest in supporting Ronald McDonald House Charities (RMHC) of Western Washington! Only with the help of people like you are we able to provide a home-away-from-home for more than 1,200 families who call the Seattle Ronald McDonald House home each year.

An External Benefit Event is an event organized and held by volunteers for the purpose of raising funds for and increasing support of RMHC. This packet will help you get started and manage an External Benefit Event. Hopefully this will guide you and answer some questions. It is by no means your only resource. RMHC staff is available to help with ideas, forms, tips and more. Contact Fund Development at (206) 838-0613 or Vanessa@rmhcseattle.org.

GETTING STARTED

The first step in hosting an External Benefit Event is to decide what you would like to do. Examples vary widely from office and holiday parties to golf or bowling tournaments. We even have a group that brews and sells a special beer, donating its proceeds to RMHC. From events with friends and family raising \$250 to corporate-sponsored events raising \$15,000+, we have it all. No event or amount of support is too small!

Below are some ideas and examples of successful events. Remember, your only limitation is your imagination.

Parties –

- Invite friends and co-workers over for a fun social event and raise money at the same time! Ask guests to bring a donation in lieu of a birthday or hostess gift.

Nights “In” –

- Instead of spending money for an evening out on the town with friends, plan a night in a private home with a theme, special cocktail, etc. and the money you would have spent in a restaurant or bar can be donated to RMHC.

Groups/Clubs –

- Incorporate fundraising into your club. Buy your next book club book in bulk for a discount and donate the savings to RMHC.
- Rent a movie for your next film club outing and donate the cost of the theater tickets to RMHC.
- Have a collection box at your next knitting or supper club meeting.

Sports Tournaments –

- Turn a day of your favorite sport into a fundraiser! Golf, snowboarding, disc golf, croquet or pool – it all works. Organize a tournament, charge an entry fee and donate the fees to RMHC. If you want to have a large event, solicit corporate sponsors to underwrite the costs in exchange for exposure of their product or logo.

Pledge Events –

- Hold a walk, run or other activity and ask participants to collect pledges. Pledges can be per mile, bowling pin, pool lap, etc. You can even piggy back on an existing activity like the Seattle-to-Portland (STP) bike ride and have your teammates collect pledges for the House.

Business Proceeds –

- If you have a business or know of one that is having a Grand Opening, ask them to donate a portion of the proceeds to RMHC.
- Ask your favorite restaurant or bar to have a charity day and donate a portion of the proceeds of that day's sales to RMHC.

Sales –

- Bake sales, car washes and other “sales” types of events are great and can be regularly scheduled events. Monthly events can raise a significant amount over the course of a season or even a year.

Miscellaneous –

- Have a cookie or recipe exchange party and ask everyone to bring a donation.
- Organize a benefit performance or concert and donate ticket revenue to RMHC.
- Ask your local coffee shop or eatery to donate a month of their tips to RMHC.

Step Two

Once you have decided what kind of event you would like to host, it is time to start gathering help. If you are going to host a big event, you will want to enlist the help of friends, family and co-workers. Tell them about the House and why you are a committed supporter. Assign responsibilities based on individual strengths. For example, you might need someone responsible for PR, someone else to handle the money, and a point person who communicates with RMHC.

When you have formed your committee, schedule a visit to the House. It's a great way to help build their passion for the House and the event! Staff members are very willing to show individuals or small groups around the House to show them how their support will help. Depending on the size of your committee, you are welcome to hold meetings at the House. We have a conference room that is available (schedule permitting) for groups of 30 or less. If you are interested in scheduling a tour or meeting date, please contact Vanessa at (206) 838-0613 or Vanessa@rmhcseattle.org.

Step Three

Now, you are ready to start raising money!

First, familiarize yourself what we do at RMHC and the Ronald McDonald House. We have a variety of educational tools, including newsletters, brochures, fact sheets and staff members to walk you through the basics of our organization. Once you feel comfortable, start talking to other people about RMHC and your event and invite them to participate.

Next, decide if you want PR around the event. If your activity is open to the public, you may consider contacting your neighborhood newspaper to do a story about your event to help increase participation. Or you may want to distribute flyers or posters. RMHC can also list upcoming events in our newsletter (subject to printing deadline) and on our website (www.rmhcseattle.org).

If you need materials (brochures, fact sheets, etc.) to hand out to prospective participants, just call RMHC and we can send them. We also have sample pledge forms that you might want to use.

Other tips and suggestions to help raise money:

- Be optimistic – excitement is contagious!
- Set a fundraising goal and display your progress.
- Be committed. When you raise money for RMHC, you are directly helping families with seriously ill children as they go through a very traumatic time in their lives.
- Ask anyone and everyone! Ask family and friends for support first. After tackling the “easy ones,” branch out to clients, co-workers, clubs, etc. Make a list of places where you spend money and ask them for pledges. Restaurants, medical offices, dry cleaners – they are all great resources. Remember...anyone and everyone.
- Ask for a specific amount. Tell sponsors what your average pledge is and ask them to beat it.
- Ask for donations on pay day. Timing is very important.
- Send letters and emails. Send an announcement of your plans to raise money for RMHC to all of your contacts. Don't forget company, church and school newsletters. Ask for support in writing.
- Double your pledges by using matching funds. Be sure to ask donors if their company will match their donation and request matching gift forms.
- Save spare change. You will be surprised how quickly the spare change adds up and makes a terrific pledge!
- Call us to borrow a RMHC banner to display.
- Call us to see if “Ronald” the clown is available to attend your event.
- Call RMHC anytime for more ideas and tips.

Step Four

Now it is time for the event! Make sure you have fully read and signed the External Benefit Event guidelines and agreement (download it at www.rmhcseattle.org.) Let RMHC know if you would like a staff member to come to the event. We are more than happy to attend and talk about the House or just volunteer.

Step Five

To wrap things up, you need to collect money from participants and sponsors, give the funds to RMHC and thank your supporters.

You may choose to collect money as you go or wait until the event to get the pledges. Once the funds are received, RMHC will automatically send a thank you letter with tax information to the donor. Of course, it is always nice to thank donors yourself, as well!

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