One day in the fall of 2017, twelve-year-old Anna was picked up a few hours early from school in her hometown of Silverdale, Washington. With her father, Augustine, she went to the local oncology clinic to surprise her mother, Angela, who was finishing her very last treatment for cancer.

It had been a tough year for their family. Angela had been diagnosed in late 2016 and spent the following months undergoing multiple surgeries and chemotherapy. Near the end of Angela’s cancer fight, her own mother – Anna’s grandmother – passed away unexpectedly.

After that last appointment, though, it felt like the hardest part was behind them, and the family tried to get back to a normal routine. But their return to normalcy lasted only a few months: in March, Anna found a lump on her collarbone.

“Because of my mom’s diagnosis, I knew that I should report something like that,” said Anna. “So I went to my mom and said, this doesn’t seem normal and it’s bothering me.”

They saw a doctor a few days later and, after some tests, the diagnosis was confirmed: Anna had Hodgkin’s Lymphoma.

The family came to Seattle Children’s Hospital, and while they didn’t yet know how long Anna’s treatment would be, they knew they wouldn’t be going home anytime soon.

“We were looking at AirBNB and other solutions like that, but it would have been very expensive,” says Angela. “We did a lot of praying, because we knew that we would have to make something work during Anna’s treatment.”

The day that Anna started chemotherapy, they got a call from the Ronald McDonald House in Seattle: a room had opened up. They moved in later that day.

Because she had watched her mom go through it, Anna knew that chemotherapy would be hard. But what she found most difficult about living in the Seattle House was being away from her friends and family.

(continued inside)
Anna’s Story (continued)

Back home, she was on the wrestling team, played clarinet in the school band, and spent her weekends with her friends, family, and dogs. She missed the social interaction and community that she encountered on a daily basis back home.

Luckily, the Ronald McDonald House offered her a place to connect with her family and friends – to bring that community to her.

“It’s so great to stay in a place where we can have people come and visit,” says Angela. “We still have a place that can be a home-away-from-home where the people we love can visit and support us.”

Since she started treatment, Anna’s brother, teachers, and friends all visited her at the Seattle House. Her best friend came to visit early in Anna’s treatment, and the two shaved their heads together in Anna’s room at the Seattle House. “We’ve been best friends since the fourth grade,” says Anna, “and she’s been there for me through everything.”

In the late summer of 2018, Anna got the news she was hoping for: she was in remission. She moved home a few weeks later with her parents – back to her dogs, friends, and her normal life. Going forward, she hopes to find a way to support other kids with similar diagnoses. “Cancer can be scary, it can be hard to go through,” she says, “but it can also be used to help others.”

An Epic Experience thanks to Sounders FC & Uber

With a smile that lights up a room, you wouldn’t know 9-year-old Orlando, a soccer player and Sounders FC fan, was diagnosed with cancer in August 2017. His family stayed at the Seattle House during his cancer fight and he was recently able to return home.

Through an Uber NW Community Impact Initiative grant, Ronald McDonald House Charities of Western Washington & Alaska received $10,000 in donated rides to help families get to and from the airport, attend crucial doctors appointments, and more. For Orlando and his family, that meant a ride to a Sounders game!

We’re so grateful to Sounders FC and Uber for coming together to provide Orlando and his family with a thrilling experience in honor of his fight with cancer. They arranged for the young soccer fan and his family to attend the Sounders match on Saturday, September 1, where they saw the Sounders win 3-1. They even got to meet Alex and Cristian Roldan on the field afterwards!

What will your legacy be?

A bequest to RMHC may be the most important gift you ever give. It allows us to provide an open door for families with a child facing cancer, hot meals for exhausted parents, and so much more.

Contact Heather Bauer for more information about bequests at 206.838.0614 or heather@rmhcseattle.org
Volunteer to cook a meal in 2019!

“You feel so much love from the people serving the meals. Sometimes I don’t know where I’m going to get the strength from to get through the day, and it’s such a relief to have a warm meal waiting for us at the end of the day.”
— Ireland’s Mom

2019 still seems quite a ways off, but we’re already starting to look past the holidays and plan out our Family Meal Program schedule for January and February. Why not gather your friends, family, or co-workers and volunteer to cook a meal early next year?

Did you know that there are many meal program opportunities to choose from? You could cook dinner at House A (110 servings) or House C (30 servings), make casseroles to be frozen and served at a later date, provide the pies for our weekly pizza night, and more. There’s a meal program opportunity for almost every group!

For more info, visit rmhc-wwaak.org/volunteer today! ♥

Summer at RMHC

The leaves are turning and there’s a chill in the air, so let’s take a look back at what our families have been up during the late summer and early fall. ♥

Vail was a resident at the Seattle House for most of 2017. Here, Vail and his dad stop by for a quick visit after a routine follow-up appointment - he’s doing great!

These neighborhood kids raised hundreds of dollars by running a “Kids’ Place Market”, where they sold paper airplanes, painted rocks, cookies, and lemonade. So cool!

Trick or Treat in the Heat is a charity event that gives Anchorage residents the chance to trick or treat before the weather turns too cold. This year’s TOTITH was the most successful ever!

The Master Gardeners have been tending to a pumpkin patch next to the Seattle House throughout the summer. Recently, it was time to harvest - and luckily, Seattle House resident Elijah was there to help out.

The Seattle Mariners Wives group provided amazing makeovers and face painting to families. Thanks for bringing smiles to so many faces at the Ronald McDonald House!
Be a Hero!

You can help families like Anna’s with a gift to Ronald McDonald House Charities of Western Washington & Alaska.

A donation to RMHC will directly support the families staying at our Anchorage and Seattle Houses. Your contribution will provide housing, essential services, and a welcoming community to families in need.

Be a hero for families today - donate using the enclosed envelope or at rmhc-wwaak.org!