When Rachel noticed a lump underneath 18-month-old Mackenzie's ribcage on top of a lingering fever, she knew something was wrong. Their hometown doctor sent them to Seattle Children's and within several hours of their arrival, they had an answer. Mackenzie was diagnosed with stage 4 neuroblastoma. "They put us in the hospital and started treatment immediately."

Rachel and her family live in Stanwood, an hour and fifteen minutes from the hospital. When doctors told them Mackenzie needed to be within 45 minutes of the hospital at all times, Rachel’s first thought was, “How will we do this?”

After they met with a social worker, they knew Ronald McDonald House was an option, but no rooms were available. "I slept bedside on a pull-out couch in the hospital. It was hard because I couldn’t get the rest I needed and many of the services were limited due to COVID. It was a mess."

When they were able to move to the House, things changed. "It was such a relief knowing that we would have a home away from home where we could have toys and sleep in a real bed and have a place to do laundry and shower." Now, Rachel could keep her focus on Mackenzie and her family.

Rachel's five year old daughter and husband have stayed back home in Stanwood during Mackenzie’s treatment. "My older daughter calls the Ronald McDonald House our city home," as she only knows it as the place her mom and sister go. This city home has been a savior in their time of need. (continued on p. 2)
"It is hard to imagine how we would get through Mackenzie’s treatment without the Ronald McDonald House,” says Rachel.

With movement in the House restricted due to COVID, Rachel and Mackenzie have really appreciated the meal program. "Since we can’t spend a lot of time in the kitchen or other gathering spaces, not worrying about cooking is amazing. When we are in a hurry and have had a long day, to have a meal ready and available is a weight lifted off our shoulders."

“Everyone here is super friendly, the front desk is great and so are the managers. They are always checking in making sure things are taken care of and we have what we need,” Rachel says. The community and support at the House has been a huge lift for Rachel and Mackenzie when they needed it the most.

The RMHC Gala is going virtual again this year!

Join us for a week of moving stories and silent auctions, all leading up to the livestream program on Thursday, October 21st. The pre-show will begin at 6:30pm and the main program at 7pm.

We hope you are able to participate and help bring hope, care, and kindness to the families at RMHC when it is needed most. Check our website for a link to register for this free event.
When so many things paused due to COVID-19 last year, the plants didn’t get the memo. They kept growing, and the Master Gardener group that has been caring for our grounds since 2004 kept coming to tend to them.

For over 17 years, the Master Gardeners have beautified our grounds, added fruit and vegetable plants, and overseen work groups. Like many of our volunteers, they have become indispensable and are a vital part of our community of care.

"While some in our group understandably took a break during COVID, a small group of us kept coming," says Susan Ebby. "Having this weekly connection has been a big help for each of us."

It has also lifted the spirits of families and staff. "What a gift for our families to return to this natural beauty after a stressful day at the hospital," says Judy Adams, RMHC Volunteer Manager. "The dedication and care that our Master Gardeners show through their work at the House is incredible.

Thank you Master Gardeners for all the beautiful blooms, nourishing fruits and vegetables, and compassion for our families. We appreciate you.

Can You Help with Meal Support?

With our dinner program still on hold due to COVID-19, we will continue to offer families boxed meals nightly. But to do that, we need your help. Can you sponsor a boxed meal?

Becoming a sponsor is easy and means so much to families. You can select the caterer or restaurant to work with on your own or from a list we can provide. No homemade meals please. Each meal sponsorship will provide 70 boxed meals that are fully cooked, cooled and packaged in individual, microwaveable containers.

Have questions or want to sign up as a sponsor? Contact Eleanor at eleanor@rmhcseattle.org.

Dedicated Gardeners Grow Love at RMHC

Some of our amazing Master Gardeners. From left to right: Susie Thorness, Lark Fisher, Susan Eby, and Virginia Korycki.
This summer has brought lots of progress on our expansion. The roof is on, most of the windows are in place, and the exterior siding is almost finished. Work has started on the connection point between the main building and the new wing. The interior is mostly framed and pre-sheet rock work is well underway, with most of the plumbing and sprinkler work complete.

Work has begun to add new family cooking spaces, a dedicated kitchen for volunteers to prepare meals in, an expanded pantry, and more seating for families.

There’s still time to contribute to this exciting project. Check out our website for more information or get in touch with Vanessa at vanessa@rmhcseattle.org.