

Summer 2025

# A HOME AWAY FROM HOME

## The Koza Family's Story

When the Koza family's world turned upside down on May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2025, they had no idea that a small booklet from a trauma nurse would become the start of something life-changing.

That evening, 9 year-old Payton was in a devastating head-on collision that left her with multiple lacerations, a concussion, a broken and dislocated wrist, significant damage to her Brachial Plexus, and fluid on her spine. She was flown by LifeLion to Penn State Health Children's Hospital, then transferred to Penn State Health Rehabilitation for weeks of inpatient recovery.



Amid the chaos and uncertainty, the Koza family was introduced to Ronald McDonald House Charities of Central PA. The connection was immediate, and the impact, unforgettable.

Over the course of Payton's healing journey, their family stayed 53 nights at the Ronald McDonald House. They

found comfort not just in a warm bed or a stocked kitchen, but in the little things that made all the difference. Late nights often ended with a quiet moment in the living space, a welcome change from the hospital room. During the earliest, most stressful weeks, the RMHC-CP Hospitality Cart at the hospital became a saving grace and a small act of kindness when leaving Payton's side felt impossible.

What stood out to them the most were the people. "The staff honestly made the biggest difference," shared Jessica, Payton's stepmom. "They were so welcoming and accommodating with all of our requests. They never acted like we were a burden. This place was a godsend."

Payton continues to recover with immense strength and resilience. She attends outpatient therapy twice a week, works daily to regain movement in her right arm, and wears a C-collar to support her spine. Through it all, her bright and spunky personality continues to shine. Her family is filled with hope and gratitude, crediting the support and care from RMHC-CP for helping them through their most difficult days.

"We are ever so appreciative and will sing your praises forever," Jessica said.

To help RMHC of Central PA provide services to families like the Kozas, visit [rmhc-centralpa.org](http://rmhc-centralpa.org)!

To share your RMHC-CP story with us, email [marketing@rmhc-centralpa.org](mailto:marketing@rmhc-centralpa.org)!



Payton enjoys time in Hershey.

"They [RMHC-CP] were so welcoming and accommodating with all of our requests. They never acted like we were a burden. This place was a godsend."

- Jessica Koza



Payton Koza, on the road to recovery.

# A New Place to Play: Building Hope, One Slide at a Time!

Dear Friends,

We are thrilled to share some incredibly exciting news with you! This year, we'll be embarking on a project that will bring immense joy and vital support to the children we serve: the construction of a brand-new, inclusive **playground** at the RMH in Hershey.

At our organization, we understand that childhood should be a time of wonder, discovery, and most importantly, play. For many of the children we support, who are navigating a stressful situation, the simple act of outdoor play becomes even more crucial. Research consistently shows that engaging in outdoor activities significantly benefits children's mental and emotional well-being, helping to reduce stress and anxiety. Beyond that, active play boosts their physical health and strengthens their immune systems – critical components for their overall development and resilience, especially when dealing with a medical illness or injury.



Karla Mitchell  
RMHC-CP Executive Director

This new playground will be more than just climbers and slides; it will be a safe haven where children can laugh, explore, build friendships, release energy and simply be kids.

**We need your help to make this dream a reality.** Constructing a playground of this caliber requires significant resources, and we are reaching out to our incredible community of supporters to help us fund this vital project.

Here's an extraordinary opportunity to double the impact of your generosity: thanks to the Patricia Ford Estate, we have a **dollar-for-dollar match for every contribution we receive, up to \$250,000!** This means that your gift, no matter the size, will have twice the power in bringing this much-needed playground to life.

Would you consider making a gift today to help us reach our goal? Your support will not only build a playground but also cultivate resilience, joy, and health in the children and siblings staying at the RMH in Hershey.

You can make your secure donation online at [rmhc-centralpa.org](http://rmhc-centralpa.org) or by check in the envelope included in this newsletter today.

Thank you for your unwavering commitment to our mission and for helping us create a brighter, healthier future for the children and families we serve every day at Ronald McDonald House Charities of Central PA.

With deepest gratitude,



*Thank You for Helping  
RMHC-CP Keep Families  
Together in 2025!*



## NEW BOARD MEMBERS

### Coryann Catalano

*Pennian Bank, Relationship Banker*

Coryann Catalano brings over ten years of experience in the financial and insurance services sector. Currently a Relationship Banker at Pennian Bank, she uses her extensive knowledge to build lasting relationships and provide exceptional service to clients.



"I was introduced to RMHC through the Red Shoe Crew in 2017, and I quickly became passionate about the families and the organization's mission. Having a supportive space away from home during a child's medical treatment is invaluable. I now serve as the chair of the Red Shoe Crew and am excited to deepen my involvement with RMHC by joining the board this year."

Coryann resides in New Cumberland with her husband and two dogs.

### Adam Thomas

*The Hershey Company, Engineer, and Project Manager*

Adam is a Civil Engineer with The Hershey Company. He has 17 years of heavy construction, design, and project management experience. He has bachelor's degrees in both Civil and Architectural Engineering and is currently working on his Master's in Structural Engineering. Adam currently leads a team of engineers and project managers that design, build, and upgrade facilities at the Hershey Company that produce candy, mints, and gum.



Adam is an active alum in Phi Kappa Psi Fraternity whose motto is "the great joy of serving others". He enjoys giving back to the communities where he lives and works. He is currently the chair of the Midstream and Pipeline Committee for Marcellus Shale Coalition and a member of the Carlisle Fish and Game and volunteers on their fundraising efforts.

Adam resides with his family in Carlisle.

### Tammy Derk

*Penn Medicine LGH, Executive Director of Women & Pediatric Service Lines and Women & Babies Hospital*

Tammy is a healthcare executive with thirty-plus years of experience in executive leadership, hospital operations, service line leadership, highly matrixed organizations and joint venture partnerships, business, program, and volume development, strategic planning, marketing, community education and public/community relations.



"The RMHC of Central PA is near and dear to my heart, passion, and vocation. As the Executive Director of the Women and Pediatric Service Lines and Women and Babies Hospital at Penn Medicine Lancaster General Health, I am personally and professionally dedicated to the health, well-being and support of children and their families. RMHC-CP serves as a wonderful opportunity to collaborate across healthcare systems and counties to assure the optimal support of families in need during their child's healthcare journey."

Tammy resides in York, Pa.

### Johnathan Jackson

*UPMC, Director, Project Management Office, Epic EHR Transformation*

Johnathan is an accomplished IT leader with over 15 years of experience. He brings expertise in identifying the various technological needs of the organization through consultation on products and services to RFP support and contract review.



In addition to his IT background, Johnathan brings 5 years (four in leadership roles) of direct board experience for not for profits in the capital region where he has chaired committees, served as an officer and has experience fundraising. He also currently serves as Chairman of the Board for Vision Resources of Central PA, where he oversees the board's activities and ensures alignment with the organization's mission and goals.

Johnathan holds a Master of Science in Information Systems Engineering and holds credentials as a Government Chief Information Officer (CGCIO) and Certified Information Technology Executive.

Johnathan lives in Harrisburg with his wife and their 4 children & two dogs.

### Don McKenna

*Penn State Health Milton S. Hershey Medical Center, President*

As president of Penn State Health Milton S. Hershey Medical Center, Don focuses on operational and financial management; building and maintaining relationships with key stakeholders; optimizing patient experience; promoting a culture of safety; and working with teams to navigate the evolving health care environment.



Don joined Penn State Health in 2020 when he became president of the then-under-construction Hampden Medical Center. He oversaw the opening of the hospital in October 2021, and it grew steadily under his leadership.

He also presided over the integration of Holy Spirit Medical Center into Penn State Health following its acquisition from Geisinger in 2020 and served as president of both facilities.

Prior to joining Penn State Health, Don was the president and chief executive officer of Jupiter Health in Florida, where he created a comprehensive stroke center with neurosurgical and interventional services and developed an open-heart surgery program that included dedicated operative suites.

Don received his master's in public administration and a bachelor of science in business administration and marketing from Long Island University in Brookville, New York.

*Translating our vision into reality*



# Help make MORE play possible

at the Ronald McDonald House in Hershey!

With your help, kids staying at the Ronald McDonald House in Hershey will have access to a fun, safe and educational outdoor space starting in 2025!

For over 40 years, your unwavering support has empowered Ronald McDonald House Charities of Central PA (RMHC-CP) to break down barriers to care for families with critically ill children. Every day, families facing the immense challenges of childhood illness find comfort and community at the Ronald McDonald House in Hershey and through our in-hospital programs. None of this would be possible without the incredible generosity of our community.

This isn't just any playground; it's designed to be inclusive and safe, ensuring children of all abilities can play and enjoy the outdoors together.

We're thrilled to announce an exciting new addition coming to the Hershey Ronald McDonald House in 2025: a brand-new

playground! This isn't just any playground; it's designed to be inclusive and safe, ensuring children of all abilities can play and enjoy the outdoors together.

Leading research from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services highlights the profound benefits of outdoor play for children's physical health, cognitive development, mental well-being, and social skills. Key advantages include reduced stress and anxiety, improved sleep quality, increased Vitamin D, and a boosted immune system, all of which help children fend off illness.

We're especially excited to share that thanks to a generous donation from the Patricia Ford Estate, the first **\$250,000 in support for the playground will be matched dollar for dollar!**

Please consider helping us **Make More PLAY Possible** at RMHC of Central PA. Your contribution will directly impact the well-being and development of the children and families we serve.

*Donate to the Playground Project today and your donation will be matched thanks to a generous donation from the Patricia S. Ford Estate.*

## PLAYGROUND FUNDRAISING TRACKER



Patricia S. Ford Donation



# Transformational \$1 Million Gift from Patricia S. Ford Estate to Benefit RMHC of Central PA Families



Ronald McDonald House Charities of Central PA (RMHC-CP) is thrilled to announce a **transformational \$1 million gift** from the Estate of Patricia S. Ford. This extraordinary donation will significantly impact our ability to provide comfort, care, and a "home-away-from-home" for families with critically ill children.

A remarkable **\$250,000 of this generous gift will be dedicated to a dollar-for-dollar match for the construction of our new playground**. This means every donation made towards the playground will be matched, effectively doubling the impact and helping us create a much-needed outdoor space for children to play and heal.

Patricia, formerly of Duncannon, along with her late husband Jack, were well-known antique dealers and the original



*Jack and Patricia Ford*

**We are profoundly grateful for Patricia's philanthropic legacy and her commitment to the families we serve.**

owners of The Cove Barn in Duncannon, PA. Mrs. Ford's family personally received direct support from RMHC-CP program services, making this gift even more meaningful. We are profoundly grateful for Patricia's philanthropic legacy and her

commitment to the families we serve. Her incredible generosity will help ensure that RMHC-CP can continue to provide vital support to families during their most challenging times.

This monumental gift arrived at a crucial time, enabling us to enhance our facilities and expand our services, ultimately benefiting countless families in the years to come. We invite our community to join us in celebrating Patricia's remarkable legacy and consider contributing to the playground matching gift challenge.

## How You Can Help

Your donation towards our new playground will be matched dollar-for-dollar thanks to the Patricia S. Ford Estate. Help us reach our goal and create a joyful space for children!



### DONATE TO THE PLAYGROUND FUND

We are incredibly humbled by this gift and extend our deepest gratitude to the Patricia S. Ford Estate for their profound belief in our mission.



dollar-for-dollar match donations



## Introducing RMHC-CP's Enhanced Guest Chef Program

Exciting News – we are revamping our Guest Chef Meal Program to create a more meaningful and enjoyable experience for both our volunteers and the families we serve. Starting September 1st, volunteers participating in our Guest Chef Program will partner with our new Culinary Experience Chef, Tim Harris, to bring new energy and care to every meal we serve.

Thanks to a grant from Reliance, Inc., and feedback from our families, who are seeking more diverse and healthier meals, we will be aligning volunteers with our Chef Monday through Fridays. Chef Tim will help prepare the menu and acquire the necessary staples which will enhance the meals and make volunteering easier and more rewarding.

How will it work? Check out available dates on our website. Once you choose your date, you will choose your sponsorship level for the meal, either \$300 or \$500, depending on your recognition interest level. Then gather 5 of your co-workers,

friends, community group members, family and show up to the RMH on your chosen night. That's it! No grocery shopping, no meal planning, just a great opportunity to have a meaningful night supporting Ronald McDonald House Charities and the families we serve.

Saturdays and Sundays will continue to be reserved for groups who want to continue to participate in the traditional Guest Chef Program.

To schedule a meal, visit our website at:  
<https://www.rmhc-centralpa.org/get-involved/meals-and-activities/>

Or for more information, contact  
 Alyssa Noel at 717-533-4001 x-158  
 or at [anoel@rmhc-centralpa.org](mailto:anoel@rmhc-centralpa.org)



Welcome!

### NEW STAFF MEMBERS

#### Timothy Harris *Culinary Experience Chef*

Raised in the small town of Rocky Hill, NJ, just north of Princeton, Tim received his AOS degree in Culinary Arts from Johnson & Wales University in Providence, RI, and began his career at Caesars Hotel & Casino in Atlantic City. Over 30 years ago, he relocated to Central Pennsylvania. He's been a Culinary & Pastry Instructor at Harrisburg Area Community College and The PA School of Culinary Arts at YTI Career Institute. He has served on the executive boards of the Harrisburg Chapter of the American Culinary Federation and the Lancaster County Chapter of the Pennsylvania Restaurant & Lodging Association. Tim currently lives in Stevens, where he enjoys tending to his vegetable and flower gardens and caring for his flock of egg-laying hens. He's also a proud dad to five rescued cats. His daughter Abby, now grown, lives in Austin, Texas.



Timothy Harris



Eliz Nestorov



Emily Pavalko



Zoe White



Michelle Wiman

#### Eliz Nestorov, *Development Director*

Originally from Bulgaria, with a Bachelor of Finance, an MBA in International Politics and currently pursuing her Ph.D., in Psychology, Eliz is a mission-driven leader who has over 15 years of progressive non-profit development experience leading comprehensive fundraising, donor relations and marketing strategies in non-profit organizations. Helping families stay together is a passion for Eliz. She currently serves as a Social Justice Ambassador for the PA Human Relations Commission and has been the 2023 Recipient of Central Penn Business Journal's Woman of Influence and the YWCA of Greater Harrisburg's Women of Excellence Awards. Eliz and her family enjoy living in the Hershey area.

#### Emily Pavalko, *Public Relations Manager*

Originally from Buffalo, NY and a proud Penn State alum, Emily began her career as a marketing director for a McDonald's franchise group and has stayed connected to the mission ever since. Over the years, she's worked in various marketing and graphic design

roles and runs her own wedding photography business on the side. She is new to the area and has been loving the chance to explore with her husband, their two little boys, and Golden Irish Setter, Molly. Outside of work, she enjoys hiking and camping.

#### Zoe White, *Administrative Services Manager*

Zoe is a Millersville University alumna with a degree in psychology and has spent the past five years working in restaurant management. She is excited to be in the nonprofit sector and apply her skills in administration and leadership to help support families during difficult times. She has lived in Central PA for 25 years and loves being part of this unique community. Outside of work, she enjoys watching Jeopardy!, following the Philadelphia Eagles, and traveling. She also has a very spoiled South African Mastiff named Bane, whom she rescued two years ago. She loves contributing to the amazing work being done at RMHC-CP to support families in need!

#### Michelle Witman, *Finance Assistant*

Michelle comes to RMHC-CP following a 30+ year career with American Water Company where she served in many capacities including Sr. Regulatory Revenue Analyst. Born and raised in Palmyra, Michelle knows the local community and brings a big heart and even bigger hometown pride to everything she does. When she's off the clock, you'll likely find Michelle soaking up the sun by the pool with her husband, laughing with her three grandkids, or trying to keep up with her three spirited dogs. She's also a big fan of diving into a good book, getting lost in an art project, or crafting something beautiful by hand.

# 2024 Special Event Sponsors

# Thank You!

Thanks to all the incredible sponsors who partnered with us on our four special events in 2024: Diamonds & Denim, Annual Golf Classic, Sporting Clay's Tournament and our Gala. These events were a true testament to community collaboration, and their generous contributions were instrumental in bringing them to life. Their belief in our mission strengthens our ability to support families when they need it most. We are truly honored by their partnership.



MITER Charitable Foundation  
 Members 1st Federal Credit Union  
 AmeriHealth Caritas PA  
 Arnold Organization  
 Baker Tilly  
 The Household of Ms. Mary Calverley  
 Chip's Old Fashion Fudge  
 Levine Enterprises, Inc.

Milton Hershey School  
 PA Health & Wellness  
 PNC Bank  
 SNO Services LLC  
 Stonebridge Financial Group  
 Suarez Family McDonald's Restaurants  
 The Hershey Company  
 United Concordia Dental



McCain Foods  
 MITER Charitable Foundation  
 Pillar Aught  
 Hershey Entertainment & Resorts  
 Martin Brower  
 Donald B. Smith, Inc. Roofing  
 Chip's Old Fashion Fudge, Inc.  
 DMD Restaurants LLC  
 Grid Electric & Solar Solutions, LLC  
 Highmark

Kavlick Enterprises  
 Levine Enterprises, Inc.  
 Penn Medicine Lancaster General Health  
 Performance Roofing Associates  
 PNC Financial Services Group  
 Pyramid Construction  
 Suarez Family McDonald's Restaurants  
 The Hershey Company  
 York Hoist



Rawden Joint Ventures Corporation  
 MITER Charitable Foundation  
 Fort Pitt Capital Group LLC  
 Quandel Construction Group, LLC  
 The Farmers Fire Insurance Company  
 AIS  
 DMD Restaurants LLC  
 Integrated Consulting

Levine Enterprises, Inc.  
 LINKBANK  
 Mid Penn Bank  
 Quality Buildings  
 RKL LLP  
 SRMS LLC  
 Suarez Family McDonald's Restaurants

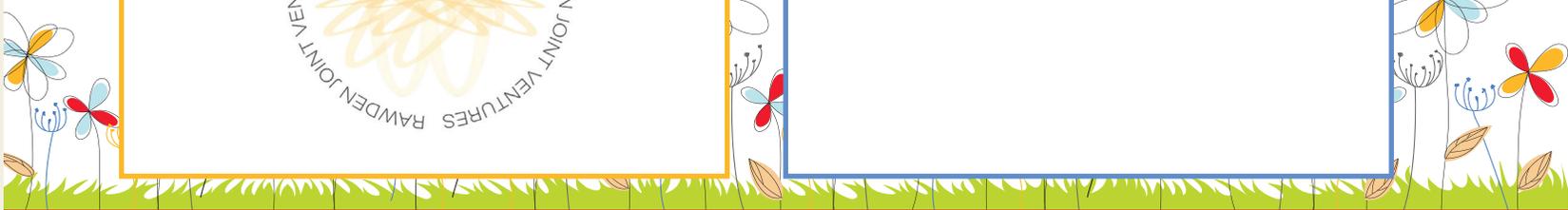


Brown & Fraser Families  
 Enders Insurance  
 GCM Built  
 Martin Brower  
 McQuaide Blasko, Inc.  
 Members 1st Federal Credit Union  
 MITER Foundation  
 Suarez Family McDonald's Restaurants  
 The Hershey Company  
 Arnold Organization

Chip's Old Fashion Fudge, Inc.  
 AmeriHealth Caritas Services LLC  
 Brown Plus  
 Carlisle Construction Materials  
 CLA (CliftonLarsonAllen, LLP)  
 Encore  
 Fort Pitt Capital Group LLC  
 Fulton Bank  
 Levine Enterprises, Inc.  
 Milton Hershey School



Stamford Office |  
 McDonald's USA, LLC  
 Country Meadows  
 LINKBANK  
 McDonald's - Rippon  
 UMPC  
 The Coca-Cola Company





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of Central Pennsylvania

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Hershey, PA 17033-2304

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YORK, PA  
Permit No. 356

# 2024 IMPACT



**10,389**  
overnight family  
stays provided



**1,295** families  
stayed @ RMH  
in Hershey



**18,086**  
individual meals  
provided



**9 nights**  
average length  
of stay



**1,008**  
families served in our  
RMHC Family Room



**5,345**  
guests who visited  
our Hospitality Cart

