



## Ronald McDonald House Charities of Eastern Iowa

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Dear Friends and supporters  
of the Iowa City Ronald McDonald House:



Living in Cedar Falls, IA, we never truly understood what the Ronald McDonald House of Iowa City does for families. We had only skimmed articles in the paper and overheard commercials on TV. Yet, we never quite understood why, when, or how we would eventually come to know the House on a very personal level.



Our five-year-old Ellie was diagnosed with Clear Cell Meningioma, a malignant brain tumor, in May of 2009. Ellie experienced facial weakness and moderately severe hearing loss in her right ear. After an MRI detected a mass in her brain, Ellie was suddenly in front of world class surgeons at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics. The surgeons recommended Ellie undergo 33 sessions of radiation in Iowa City.

Ellie had surgery on May 18th to remove the tumor. Among the many questions we faced as a family was the problem of finding a housing option in Iowa City.

The Ronald McDonald House of Iowa City suddenly became our "home away from home" for the weeks after surgery when Ellie was still in the hospital, and for the 6 ½ weeks during radiation. It was a huge blessing to be surrounded by other supportive families, volunteers, and staff, all empathetic to our situation.

Realize that without your care, families like ours would experience a great deal of increased stress, both emotionally and financially.



what your gift does:

- **Provides an affordable housing option for families experiencing a great deal of stress and uncertainties.**

What a relief knowing that staff would work with us to form a payment plan suitable to our ability. Thanks to your dollars, no family is ever turned away.

- **Provides a supportive environment.**

Interacting with other families, listening to their stories, sharing our story, and meeting new people became therapeutic. We enjoyed meeting families from around the state, country and beyond. House volunteers are a blessing.

- **Keeps the Ronald McDonald House equipped with necessary supplies.**

Similar to any home, the Ronald McDonald House provided our family with food items and other basic necessities.

Most importantly, the Ronald McDonald House of Iowa City is a place where children can feel comfortable to be themselves, away from the hospital setting.

Ellie met many friends and enjoyed playing with them in the playroom and outside at the playground. Our family truly felt at home.

We are thankful to say that Ellie has completed radiation and doing quite well. Ellie is also enjoying her first year in school as a kindergartner!

Please know your gifts do make a difference.

Thank you!

Ryan Alicia Nathan

Ellie

**Ryan, Alicia, Ellie, and Nathan Smiley**



**Learn more about the House  
[www.rmhciowacity.org](http://www.rmhciowacity.org).**



Follow Ellie and her family's journey at  
<http://wearesmiley.blogspot.com>.

