

# Get to Know Ronald McDonald House Charities of Arkoma

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Ronald McDonald House Charities of Arkoma was chosen as the 2023 Mitchell Williams Take Time To Give charity for the Northwest Arkansas market. We are excited to share the story of RMHC of Arkoma and their work in this interview with Marketing and Communications Manager Niesha Smith.

## **Describe the mission of RMHC of Arkoma.**

The mission of RMHC of Arkoma is to create, find and support programs that improve the health and well-being of children and their families in Western Arkansas and Eastern Oklahoma. Keeping families close to the care they need is the foundation for our three core programs – the Ronald McDonald House, The Ronald McDonald Family Room and The Ronald McDonald Care Mobile. Our programs allow us to provide necessary accommodations for families while their child is receiving medical treatment, expose children to oral hygiene education, and offer comprehensive dental care to children without the burdens of missing school or their parents missing critical time away from work.

## **Tell us about any future plans or program expansions.**

As healthcare services expand in our local areas, RMHC of Arkoma acknowledges the relevance of our mission and the crucial need to anticipate and create programs that support area families in unique circumstances. The area families we serve inspire our growth, while the feasibility to provide for their needs help establish expansion. Our mission allows us to extend support in unconventional ways. In the past, we have established programs in many forms – from a new home that provides flexible accommodations, to a hospitality cart that delivered meals to families around the hospital. We are always developing new ideas to best support families and keep them close to the care they need.

## **Give us an example of how you have seen the work of RMHC of Arkoma make a difference in the lives of families.**

RMHC of Arkoma makes a difference by providing more than 5,000 overnight stays each year to families who need to travel far from home for their child's medical care. Every year, RMHC of Arkoma saves families thousands of dollars in lodging and meal costs so they can focus on the needs of their child. Without the necessary amenities of the Ronald McDonald House, Ronald McDonald Family Room, and the Ronald McDonald Care Mobile, families would experience an increase of stress, financial burdens, and inconveniences that would hinder their child's access to healthcare.

## **Is there anything that you wish more people knew about your organization?**

The one thing that sets RMHC of Arkoma apart is our restorative spirit! We energize by finding and creating unique solutions that will benefit our community and restore hope in families during a time of crisis. Our core values of family, flexibility, community, compassion, and excellence allow us to deliver an

impactful experience to all we work with while keeping the needs of others as the focal point of every decision we make.

**What would make the greatest difference in helping your organization improve upon the mission?**

Since opening our first program in 2010, we have learned a lot about our community and the families we serve. RMHC of Arkoma has been able to serve over 17,000 children and their families over the past thirteen years with the remarkable support of our community. We believe that increasing the awareness of our mission will allow us to engage, cultivate, and inspire many new ideas and partnerships. We also have a tremendous understanding of the meaning of “it takes a village.” The more support we are able to gain through volunteers, donors, and partnerships, the further our mission will be able to reach.

**If I wanted to get to know your organization better, what are the best ways to learn more?**

Contact our team at 479-756-5600 or by visiting our website at [rmhcofarkoma.org](http://rmhcofarkoma.org) to set up a tour and get involved at a local program. Touring a local RMHC program can help connect individuals to the meaning of our mission and the actions behind every word. This is also a great time to learn more about the different areas and opportunities of becoming a volunteer, donor, or advocate.