

# The Ronald McDonald House: Make an Impact with Your Business...

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

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## SPEAKERS

Michelle Kravetsky, Halie Morris

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Halie Morris 00:02

everyday business solutions, the podcast that offers you the right perspective on achieving success. Hello, everyone and welcome to everyday business solutions. My name is Hayley Morris, I'm your podcast coordinator and host today I have with me Michelle. Michelle is from Ronald McDonald House and I'm going to let her introduce herself. Michelle.

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Michelle Kravetsky 00:24

Hi, thank you for having me. I'm the development director at Ronald McDonald House, which means it's my job to make sure that we have the money that we need to keep the doors open. In a Ronald McDonald House setting, there are about 368 of us worldwide, the house itself, every house operates on its own. So there is a Ronald McDonald House global organization. But it is our job to make the money that we need to keep our doors open. And if something were to happen, say the academy collapses in Toledo. And we don't have the support that we need. We literally closed the doors after you've run out of say endowment money or whatever. So there isn't an organization above us, like McDonald's Corporation does not come in and say, oh, that house isn't doing so well. We'll give them you know, \$2 million, or something like that. Every house needs to have the staff to keep it open and running and support all the programs that we decide to have.

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Halie Morris 01:25

Okay, out of curiosity, then how do you how does a house form?

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Michelle Kravetsky 01:31

So that's our house. I can tell you the story of our some of them form from hospital saying we need a Ronald McDonald House. Some of them formed from the community. Ours was actually formed by three founders. One Gary and Trisha younger, they had two daughters who grew up with CF and passed away in their I want to say 1214 years old. And Gary and Trisha had lived in many different areas. But when they were in Columbus, they use the house in

Columbus. So then Gary relocated to Toledo, and he decided we need one here. Dr. vorti Pierre voti. He also was a doctor for children with CF. And Gary and Tricia knew him from their experiences elsewhere. Well, peer also came to Toledo. And then one of our regional Ronald McDonald House or rattle McDonald's owners, Dan and Denise Michael, they also wanted to be involved. So Gary pulled the three groups together. And they started the fundraising and you know, kind of the process of, you know, getting a house. And it obviously don't go through our global organization. But the three of them were responsible for building Well, they didn't build the initial house, the initial house was actually people who've lived in Toledo longtime know this, but it started out as a farm house way back in the early 1900s. And then it was a decent piece of property, you would need to imagine where the roundabout is right now for Toledo hospital. That's where the house used to sit. But that was all farmland in the early 1900s. And probably where the hospital is, as well. A funeral home took it over, as once the farmer saw the funeral home was there. And then the three founders, that's the building that they bought to start around medalla house, many people kind of hesitate with that. But there are several houses that houses a 14 bedroom home, several houses of the 300 and save roughly 70 worldwide begin in something such as a funeral home, because it already has the rooms that you need. So it sounds kind of you know, I would never want to live in one you would think, but it's the perfect building to begin with. For a house of that size.

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Halie Morris 04:00

Well, it's very, you're right, like you need the rooms and the space and everything but it is kind of weird thing. This is a funeral home. actly Exactly. Um, but it's kind of cool because you do get to repurpose something that had a sadder connotation and rebrand it as something that's a little more helpful and helpful to the people currently living. And,

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Michelle Kravetsky 04:24

and the proximity to the hospital is always key. And it just so happens with Toledo Children's Hospital. That's why they chose that location. I mean, we we could have located further downtown, you know, but the children's hospitals, what drove that and Dr. VO T was actually working there. So

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Halie Morris 04:40

yeah, and that is the point of it. Speaking of talking about the point of the Ronald McDonald House, you know, I grew up hearing about it, and I'm sure many other people did. But tell us more about what the Ronald McDonald House does because we know it's associated with a children's hospital. But what does it do? What is the functionality With the Ronald McDonald House.

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Michelle Kravetsky 05:01

So again worldwide depending on where you go, we're all different. Our particular house in will we'll start with Toledo in Toledo, our mission is to bring access to health care closer for families. So that doesn't mean where the doctor, it just means we give you proximity, okay, so any program that we decide to institute or begin or try, it's all about access to health care. So where Ronald McDonald House exists for the family. Now, many times a family may include an adult child. So in our house, a child is considered anyone from in vitro to the age 21. So if you had an adult child, unfortunately, there are accidents, accidents happen, maybe it's a sporting accident, and you end up at Toledo children's, the family could stay with us. We also consider anyone with a lifelong disability, developmental disability a child for life. So we have families who come back, have specialized doctors in town, and they come back and they'll stay with us. And then also anyone with a lifelong children's illness. So as you're growing up, you know, CF is one of them. Unfortunately, the life expectancy for CF is much shorter. But we do have adults who come in. Also, if one of

our doctors in Toledo hospital has a specialization, many people from around the country will come in. And if they're going to see the doctor, they can stay with us. So we are there to provide everything that is needed. And we would, we'd like for people to think of the Ronald McDonald House as, as a family arrive there. Let's just say went into premature labor. The last thing that you have time to do is pack a bag at that point, right? Most likely you were at your doctor's office, they said, We have an issue here you're going to Toledo children's. So the house is ready for you with everything that you need. So you obviously you have the overnight room as a private room, fully stocked with every toiletry that you would need from shampoo, toothbrush, toothpaste, everything that you need, the room itself will have a queen size bed, it'll have a pullout sofa. So if your parents needed to come and stay with you for a while, we certainly encourage that because family is needed in time of crisis. And we also have a lazy boy there for moms who are very pregnant. Sleeping in the Lazy Boy sometimes is much easier than, you know, just crashing on that bed. We also have brand new clothing. For instance, we had a family a couple of years ago, that when they arrived at the house, it was in the summer. So unfortunately, the baby was very, very early. And they had been in the house all through the summer. And we get into the winter. And we noticed that mom is wearing flip flops. And we're like what's going on and she's like, I just I haven't left the baby. So I haven't gone home to get any while we have clothes and shoes as well. So we accept only new, we don't accept any use clothing. And we were able to help her with that. The other thing is the house is fully stocked for food. Every night, there's a hot meal prepared for the family, not by the family before the family. Typically that's a group from around town could be the company that you work for, or could be a family that used to use the house or still uses the house and comes back and the hot meal is ready. It's always ready five o'clock, and it's out until seven we keep it warm and hot. Of course during COVID that was all different but we're going to pretend that we're just back in normal times which we are now and the family can come down anytime they want. And then all the leftovers are packaged into containers so that if they come back later at night and want to eat dinner, warm something up, or the next day they're going to head back to the hospital. The containers are ready they take them with them to the hospital, so that eating out of vending machines and spending unnecessary money. So we do we have all of that fully stocked pantry again, those are all donations from around Toledo and our region's companies, families just keeping the pantry stocked. Breakfast and lunch are typically on their own. They make their own breakfast and their own lunch. Sometimes a group will come in for that as well. But it's not something that we necessarily solicit for we really want dinner to be the meal that they're ready for. So they have all that and then we also have laundry facilities and that we have one on each floor. So we're three four facility. One is off the playroom when we moved into the new house, couldn't figure out why families didn't use the playroom lot and they were like well it's in the basement, in the original house that was in the basement and I really need to get laundry done and you can't leave the kids there alone. So when we moved into the house, we added that the other thing that we do at our house is we Have a day gas program. So a day gas is someone who really doesn't want to stay at the house for whatever reason. Number one, it could be that they have a Toledo mailing address we actually don't offer overnight stays to people who live in Toledo proper. The houses for people who live outside of Toledo or maybe your child is receiving some sort of treatment that you need to be there for. But come on over, have breakfast, come have lunch, do your laundry, do what you know, do your child's laundry, whatever needs to be done. So our house basically services, any hospital in Toledo, there are hospitals that deal with eating disorders in Toledo families don't stay at those hospitals, but they can stay with us. We are closest to Toledo hospital, obviously, because we're there right there on the property. But we certainly invite families from all around other homes or houses, if you will, are specific to an illness. So if there's a children's hospital that specializes in cancer, sometimes that house is only there to serve the families of cancer patients. Just depends on where you are. Toledo we have one house. And our has to New York has four. Chicago has, I think two or three. So you know just depends on what the service and the regional area that's needed. We cover one of the largest geographic areas of any house, we actually covered 21 counties, which when you think of Toledo, when you think of Northwest Ohio, that's pretty much what you think of right, you know, all service areas. So, right. And basically what at when a house comes into existence, you are there until you bump into the next house. So if you think about Okay, you're going to travel from Toledo to Ann Arbor, Michigan. So we would have the counties right up until it was seemed better that someone come from Ann Arbor, you know, to go to the Ann Arbor houses cleito house, and that's kind of how we do it. We go as far east is kind of Erie County, and then he hit Cleveland, and they have a house so we don't need to worry about that. And then we go

down toward Columbus, and we go all the way to the Indiana line, because then there's another Indiana so and that's pretty much how every house exists. Now imagine though, if you were in Montana or, you know, Minnesota, obviously, their region is bigger by they tend to be closer into the cities. So

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Halie Morris 12:30

yeah, you know, people come on, most people are probably going to come into the cities for the care anyway. Exactly. So Exactly. So it seems like a lot, but when you think they're coming to the hospitals for care, and that's, that's what you're focusing on. Exactly. So yeah, it's it's very eye opening, because we always hear about it. And you know, it has to do a lot with like children and the hospitals and things like that. But to put an actual perspective on, you're providing care, and you know, like almost living assistants for the time that they're there and they need it is incredible, because I know, I've seen people with kids going through things and how much of difficulty it can be to get the everyday tasks done when you're just trying to take care of all the medical side, which is a crazy, crazy thing that doesn't seem surmountable at times. So

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Michelle Kravetsky 13:26

right. And at the end of the day, there's no choice, no cost to a family, we pay for everything. It it right now, in 2021. The actual cost of a family staying with us per day approximates about \$157. A night. We never ask a family for any money. If someone were to say no, I really want to do something we just say Oh, consider \$10 donation. A family coming out of a hospital no matter what the reason, has insurmountable hospital debt. I see you we have a family who just left us maybe within the past month or so had been with us for 80 days. So you consider 80 days, Nick, you baby. All the costs that went into that could be insurmountable. So we really don't look for any money from a family. We give them ideas you do a Facebook fundraiser you could do you could ask for your family to collect pop tabs, believe it or not. Okay, so that's usually what we all remember right? Even me growing up the little pop type houses, which we still have, you do have one here. And those are the kinds of things that people can do. It's just a little things and you think, oh, that really isn't doing much. Well right now, aluminum is at an all time high. And our path to recycling alone offsets part of our food budget more than half of our food budget. So when you think of something like that, and a family could just you know, no tend to have their soda they pop the tab and save it for us so and it's amazing when I go places and get the pop tabs the containers that I'm given I've come back with every with pop tabs in every possible from pails to coffee containers which is good because always has a lid right yeah the big Cheetos containers the big pot oh yeah it's it's fun you know and we kind of have like little jokes around that like okay what what did your pop tapes come in today? So it's the houses don't last long which is good and then they start dumping them into something else but

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Halie Morris 15:39

that's funny Yeah, no I've been schools and other things when you get to collect tap cop pop tabs There we go. And so now we do it with the Office it's a really cool thing from a business perspective because it's so easy. We have pop in or break room and sometimes some sparkling water and things like that employees can go get in so we have a recycling bin for the pop cans and then we have a little house for the pop tabs. Yes and so everybody kind of knows to separate that freedom Yeah, yeah, it's such an easy way and then that small step can go so far and then if you think like every area of business we're doing that how far that would go we

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Michelle Kravetsky 16:20

have some Whirlpool Corporation as a matter of fact, they have set up recycling stations for us all through their

plant which I got to tour by the way, it was amazing, I must say. But those are the kinds of things and people usually it's kids if I go to a school and they talk about they always want to know why don't want the can and the reason being that the most pure part of a can is the pop tab. Now this was true up until things like jolt and all these energy drinks and they started painting those days that now that does require a process obviously to remove that but it is the most pure part of the can and it requires the least amount of processing. We are fortunate in Toledo that I'm new source number one provides the dumpster for us outside they come and pick it up dump recycle and give us all the money for it they don't and I know that they have to then go through a process so they do have to sort that out but they they just give us the all the money back and they don't charge for the dumpster or anything so that's kind of that kind of nice that's very nice to have that relationship and we're fortunate to have Omni shops in town so

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Halie Morris 17:33

it's really cool because that's them saying okay our part is doing this for you This is how we can contribute to the house and employees to from like the business perspective love to know that they're doing something to help and so even if it's like we love like project Playhouse and some of the other things that we can get involved in but it's a cool little way to like know that even when you're drinking pop you're doing a little something so getting involved as a business even if it's just in a small way and then you can say hey look what we look how much we're donating this this month or you know these however often people bring them in depending I'm assuming on the size Ours is a smaller office but whirlpools got to have a lot yeah,

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Michelle Kravetsky 18:22

I'm excited because for the first time that they have that they're ready we're still talking about do I get to come back there and they're going to do the presentation or are they going to bring people up here you know what's like those photo apps obviously

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Halie Morris 18:36

Yeah, cuz you have the where you dump it and everything you can do photos. Yes,

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Michelle Kravetsky 18:39

yes. It's and we have children who have been at the house you know, maybe from for instance on Whitley. Sweet little Whitley, three months old was diagnosed with neuroblastoma, and I believe she had like 13 tumors when they found it. Whitley is now four. And she is a beautiful, bubbly, spicy little girl. And every year and Matter of fact, she was just the house last week she comes and she brings all the tabs at her family and such and of course it make a big deal because Whitley was with us for the better part of her first two years of life. She actually celebrated her first birthday at the house we had a cake and everything for her but um, those are the families we have all kinds of families no one young man showed up a couple years ago and he's already in high school and we're just like, wait, what happened? Like, I haven't been there that long, but right you know, it's the stories of the families and there's pictures in here like but I know who you are, you are just this little guy. So that's that's what's I think that's what makes Ronald McDonald House special. Is that from childhood because like you said, we learn about it in our schools all the way through and I'll go into an organization now. They'll reach out to me and say, you know, we're kind of interested in finding out a little bit more And then when they introduce it to the company and find out Oh, well, actually one of their employees, well, yeah, when our son was born, we were there. It's not something that people talk about, you know, you don't go into a situation and meet someone who say, oh, by the way, Did I ever tell you I had a child who was in the nickname you for how you don't? That's not how you Yeah. So it's really interesting to then

reconnect with those families, like, okay, where we know sometimes they'll say, Well, I was in Columbus, Well, okay, great, but how was it? You know, what did you Yeah, like, you know, and very, very reassuring that the work that we're doing is making a difference when people just, they just, you know, start their stories and tell you all about,

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Halie Morris 20:44

yeah, well, and people not talking about it later, I kind of think of that as a good thing. Because that means throughout that horror idea, that was the one thing they didn't have to think about. You know, that was the one thing they didn't have to worry. And it was like a stress off so they can focus on what matters because that, especially when you're talking about the babies, and when the babies are struggling,

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Michelle Kravetsky 21:09

it's hard for people. That's a really good point. I never really thought of it that way. But you're right, that's exactly right, that that's the part of their life at that time that they didn't have to worry about, you know, the food will be there, the, the laundry will be there, you know, it was, and as I said earlier, we certainly encourage families to have their extended family come in, stay with them, because that's so, so important. That was so hard during COVID because the house was closed to any outside guests. We just couldn't encourage that. Yeah. But I think you know, when he, when we look at that awful pandemic, everything had to be that way. But it was so hard on us that seeing and getting to meet the extended family. It's all

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Halie Morris 21:53

Yeah, it's a family affair. Like what what you're focused on is the family unit, and those connections within the family unit. So when you don't get to stress and rely and build on that. It you know, it's a little disheartening. And I think that's why like, you know, people have struggled and Alas, it's just about two years Jesus is because things like family and things that we just assumed would at least be our steadfast. We're kind of off the table assign. Exactly, exactly. So in my Yeah, like, my grandma lives three hours south and I saw her for a period when numbers got fired. And then it was like, Okay, why can't visit again, because it's a little it's just too risky, too risky to go down and things like that. So it is it is crazy to think about, like, everybody was distressed when you're down to like the either no visitors. Right? Wait for a while that was crazy. Or the one visitor which is still very common is if you're there, usually it's still down. Tell me one for some of the facilities. Well, I know somebody who's, I think doing cancer treatment or something and everybody came up to visit and they're like, you can't even stay by the hospital. Like you have to be off the property. Right? Well, they got their one visitor. So that's hard for people. And of course my my grandmother picked that time to get bit by a rattlesnake. Oh, no. So we literally just sat out some benches by the hospital and kept. Yeah, we were there. We couldn't go up and see your She's fine. That's

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Michelle Kravetsky 23:32

good. Goodness.

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Halie Morris 23:34

she's a she's a fiery woman. But though Yeah, walking in the park up in Ann Arbor. So watch yourself up there.



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Michelle Kravetsky 23:40

No kidding. Okay. Yeah, good to know.

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Halie Morris 23:42

Um, I, unfortunately, they're right by the hospital. And that hospital happened to be one of the few that have in the tri state area that have the anti venom.

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Michelle Kravetsky 23:51

So if you're going to get bit by a rattlesnake, that's the place if you

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Halie Morris 23:55

just want to scare us. I should accomplish grandma. Right? Right. Um, so I'm glad that you guys are kind of back on a normal pace now that you can open things back up and bring back in the family side and that support system. Because it seems like that's what you are, you're part of that support system. So all right, now shifting a little bit. Let's talk about what you do specifically at Toledo's Ronald McDonald House. Okay,

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Michelle Kravetsky 24:26

so, as I said earlier, I prepped my job description a little bit by saying every house has to raise the money to stay open. So when Toledo house for instance, in 2021, in order to meet our operating budget, we need \$1.3 million. And it's my job to secure that money and it comes from a variety of avenues. We do some grant writing. We have some grants that come to us without even being asked. So there are people who probably set up a foundation And then when they passed away, Ronald McDonald House was there and always will receive money. But it's a matter of writing a grant request, you know, making sure that we can kind of hit the soft spot of the board that's going to decide how they're going to distribute that money. So we do that. And keeping in mind that with the service area we have of 21 regions, we do look to fundraise out in the regions, because when you think about it, asking Toledo to give Toledo families aren't really the ones receiving our services. Toledo does tend to be our biggest supporter, because of so many companies and people locally who no of us, obviously. Yeah. So fundraising does incorporate grant writing. It's also about relationships. So I've lived in Toledo all my married life, which recently was 30 years. I just passed that 30 year mark,

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Halie Morris 25:55

Congratulations!

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Michelle Kravetsky 25:57

thank you. My husband is a very wonderful man and is very patient man, as everyone will tell you to put up with me for that one. So relationship building, really, it's funny, because you start out, I started out in market research of all things, automotive market research, right out of college, went to UT fell into an internship started working locally.

And as life you know, takes you along a path, you're you are forming relationships with people. And then I eventually went into fundraising. And then you start to reconnect with people, and not intentionally so much as you are now in a different area, and you're in a different focus. And the people that are also have like, what's the word I want? passions? That's where you cross paths again. So all of your life, you have all these people. And sometimes when you find them again, you're like, Where? Where do I know you? Yeah, but it's all about those relationships. So about two, I think it's about 20% of our donations come from individuals. So you have the grants, and then you have individuals. And obviously, it isn't strictly me who solicits every dime. We do mailings, we do newsletters, we reach out to anyone who has come in contact with a house, maybe through email or things like that. We also work closely with a lot of businesses and most nonprofits do, you want to have their involvement from the top down. So you do want obviously them to think about you in their corporate giving. But what's important at a Brian McDonald House is the staff that they'll come and volunteer, we need about 250 volunteers a year just to keep the house running. So we want, you know, help with the dinners being made at night. We like to have someone at the reception desk, it's easier to have a volunteer there. And then it is a paid staff because a paid staff you like Well, you could be helping elsewhere. Yeah. So we like volunteers there, we have people who come in and stack the pantry for us. So things like that. You don't know, it's back to that time, talent, treasure. And when you're a fundraiser, you do still look at all three of those, of course, the treasure is what makes the 1.3 million, right. But the time and the talent are just irreplaceable. For someone willing to come in and help us for instance, we had a company, they were kind of a startup, but they're building, they were a group of builders. And in the spring, they had to slow down and like, okay, every spring, we will come and just we'll walk through the building with your maintenance person. And we'll do all the maintenance that needs to be done. Well, can you imagine, we all have a part time maintenance person to know that, hey, we don't need to necessarily worry about every light bulb fixture to be changed right now. Or the fact that that particular light switch isn't working, because they're coming in to help us with that. So yeah, so those are the great relationships, right? So obviously, the corporate giving. And I think when you when you look at it all and you bring it all together, you're really focusing on the mission and getting that out to people. And that's what I do, whether I'm talking at a civic organization, or a school I love well haven't been invited into a school and over a year, but a while Exactly. I love being invited into schools because that's where it all starts. Philanthropy starts at a very young age. And it's, it's lead by example. So it's great to start talking to the kids about what the house does and show them pictures. But then it's also my job is also to keep them engaged not only the children but the families. So here's an interesting fact for you in fundraising. thing I've been doing it for many, many years. Many strong donors or older donors, typically a female, particularly, a widowed female is much more inclined to give than a widowed male. These are just facts I don't I don't make things up, I'll female will stay with you longer. A male is more of a Okay, here you go. I'm busy kind of you know, typically they are right. But an inch interestingly enough at the Ronald McDonald House where the average wealthy or maybe repeat donor in the worlds I worked in prior was usually you're 55 and older, okay, and you think about it, you're raising your kids, you don't really have that money. But then your kids get off your payroll, and then you can start really looking at where your philanthropy interests are. at the Ronald McDonald House, the average age of our donors is between 18 and 35. Wow. Very interesting, right?

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Halie Morris 31:05

That's a really young age.

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Michelle Kravetsky 31:06

For donors. It is. We have more donors at that age than we have the older they don't give as much because of their age that obviously the older donors get more. But the reason being that is when they are still remembering the house. So let's just say you were young, I had my first child, let's say 24. And you still remember, your child is still growing up? At 34? They're only 10. I still remember being at the Ronald McDonald House and in the ICU and everything they did to me, or did for me, I should say, and then they've graduated. Oh, my gosh, what a relief. Look at this child. You know, we didn't even know if they make it now they've graduated. Okay, rattle down our house has



kind of forgotten at that point. Yes. Now they're an adult. And so my job is to not only keep that age, engaged all the way through, yeah. But then to, if you think about it, you're not actually talking to the grandparents. But then you want to talk to those that are grandparents, and tell the story of this is what has happened or could have happened in your life. So

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Halie Morris 32:25

a lot of times, that's, I think of grandparents, too. And I think of my grandparents, my grandma, so connected to her grandkids, and that's also the age group that you're probably helping like my, her youngest right now is seven, but and then there's make the oldest, so she's got quite the age range. She both Yeah. Yeah, there, you know that also, you can make it relevant to them.

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Michelle Kravetsky 32:49

Exactly. So Exactly. And so obviously, you want to talk to all of them. But it's it was just so interesting to me to take our database and analyze it and say, wait a minute, my average donor is how old and the funny thing was, I didn't know at the time our global office was doing the same thing. They were analyzed and our results matched. And that is the primary age of Wow, the donors, I should say the bulk of the donors. Okay. But again, I need to emphasize those are your that's where your highest percentage percentage and that your highest money. Yeah, so you're so that's, you know, pretty much what a philanthropy officer or in my position of development director, that's what we do, we, we want and events, obviously events, the most time consuming way to raise money. But also good to get your mission out. It's so funny, because obviously, everything went virtual in 2020. And our, our biggest fundraiser, is our heartwarming party. It's always in November, and we obviously switch to virtual last year, it was so interesting to go from months and months of planning. And, you know, the week before an event, you're 50 hours, 60 hours is trying to get everything ready. Yeah. To Oh, this is going to be virtual. It's one hour, you turn it on, you turn it off. There was just so different. So right away, I said 2021 needs to be virtual as well. It was before the Delta variant came out, but I was because it's in November. I figured flu season. Right now. I rolled the dice and could have maybe COVID could have gone away completely and I would have been like, Oh, I should have had live event. So as it turns out, I took some flack, you know people What do you mean you're going to do it virtual we need alive, you know, people. People were tired of virtual. And I said let me remind you that in 2019 You had to beg, borrow and steal to get people to come to events, they were so tired of events. Yeah, it's, you know, Oh great, another silent auction, and I'm going to bid on things that I really didn't want or really didn't need. So we did stay virtual, it will be virtual again this year. And thank goodness we did, because obviously, indoor events aren't a good idea. And our global organization is not allowing any houses to do indoor sponsored events. But anyway, events are a big part as well. And that gets your mission out. Another huge, huge way that Ronald McDonald House has supported is through McDonald's owners and operators, okay. So, for instance, shamrock shakes you and I go out and buy a shamrock shake, the owners take part of the profit that they make on that and they donate back to the house. Every time a happy meal is sold, they give the house right now actually, during 2020, they increase it to two cents. It doesn't sound like a lot, but trust me, when you think about all

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Halie Morris 36:03

the Happy Meals, that's

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Michelle Kravetsky 36:04

exactly, that's a lot of money. What else Oh, koozies in this area were sold the sleeves that went on the cups. Yeah,

they're very hard to come by, because they only order a limited amount, and they're only sold during certain times in the spring. But those, every house gets one that every house our house, for instance, our owners did it. And for everyone sold, we got \$2 of the profits. So they are just huge. And they account for about 25% of our revenue every year. very supportive of the house. They also do a golf outing for us. Mouse times when I had done golf outings in the past, you know, you're making six to 10,000 and you're thinking it's great. Our owners bring in about \$75,000 for us in a golf outing. They are just they're out there they're getting the company's their suppliers involved. And it's we do we do a very nice golf outing. But thank you to the owners and operators because we don't the house itself doesn't do a whole lot toward that we don't need to they just take care of everything. So events are important. Again, it's a mission moment. They are they now the golf outing isn't a good example of something that takes a lot of our time because it doesn't it takes a lot of the owners time. Yeah, they give it freely.

H

Halie Morris 37:25

Not gonna lie. Our businesses love golf outings.

M

Michelle Kravetsky 37:29

Exactly. It's my family. It's one of the bigger companies I was talking to them recently. They're like, you know, we've never been in your golf outing. And we're actually looking at expanding it because we are able to fill the teams just with McDonald's suppliers. And now it's kind words kind of getting out that it's, you know, a pretty good one. You know, obviously, when you have McDonald's operators kicking in a lot of the little prizes you get and things and you know, your card is full of goodies word gets out. So some houses do even bigger, you know, again, depends on where you're at, right? They can raise money, but pretty much all the owners come together and do golf outings for the houses. So I really can't stress enough that obviously, we're called Ronald McDonald House for a reason. But McDonald's Corporation is why we exist. That's why we're here. Anybody can read the story of Ray Kroc and how he swooped in on the Philadelphia Eagles and took over their Eagle's Nest and that became the first round mcdonald house. So Wow. Yeah, it's, it's an interesting history. for another time, you can read it online, or apparently he has a, there's a I want to say was on Netflix or something, somebody did a little story on him. So

H

Halie Morris 38:46

I have to keep an eye out. I think we're getting to a good point to start to wrap up. So my question for you would just have to be oh my gosh, I'm trying to think of it. Because I'm gonna have like, what are you kind of, hopefully next year, we're in this period of more of a full or normal, we get past cold and flu season? And hopefully, like, we don't have any crazy variants that crop up, we've got a lot of vaccinations going and we got a lot of research and handle on this whole thing. Right? What are you see your hopefully your event in November is in person, then what are some other things that you're looking forward to from the houses perspective, which is kind of being fully back in the pace of things?

M

Michelle Kravetsky 39:36

So it's, it's funny, because it's kind of started now. Yeah. Right. Right now we have a couple families at the house that there are siblings with us. And the other day I was walking down the hall, and they got off the elevator was a sister and her two brothers and I'd say they're probably all from Well, the sister was at the house so she has to be younger than kindergarten and then down to maybe the little guy. Maybe two. That is what has been hardest for all of us who work at the Ronald McDonald House is the fact that during COVID, they were really in their rooms all the time, though, the general areas of the house, which is a 35,000 square foot home right now, we're closed, they ate dinner

in their rooms, we had refrigerators put in every room, which we've never had before. We didn't see them, it for the longest time The house was closed, we didn't even take new guests, we were actually putting up at hotels, and then taking their food to them at the hospital. We had we had rim, arrange for a courier kind of to meet us at a door and we will leave the food for the families. So I think the biggest thing is just seeing those families again, and getting their pictures and talking to them. I mean, I love to talk to families I and it's not that I want to know their story so much as I just want to know them. I mean, I'm so my job is all about, you know, relationships. And I think we're starting to see it right now. goodness sakes, this delta variant needs to just stay away from all of us. We still require masks in the house. So we still have that expecially in the front of the house. Anytime I go out there, I'm in a mask, obviously families come down in masks. But I think the biggest thing is just, you know, we all say it, but back to the normal. And our normal is families in and out of that house all the time. Eating at all different times the day and night. And that's what I miss. That's what we all miss. It's just you know what your mission is, and you know, you're there to provide access to healthcare. But when you go a year and a half, and you see maybe, honestly, because we've been working from home a lot, when I actually physically saw maybe five families. It's so discouraging, like, are we doing now we had more families there Don't get me wrong, but you're not seeing them because they don't they weren't hanging out. So just just back to talking to them and the little kids are my our administrative offices are adjacent to the playroom. And the number one rule in the playroom is we never want to hear Shush. You never shushed a child, not in our house. And so that's the first thing My office is closest to the door that separates between a hallway and honestly, I will come out of my office, if I hear parent telling child No, don't don't yell. No, no, this is a very trying time for this child, whether it's the child receiving services or healthcare issues, or, I'm here because my little sister is in the hospital. And this isn't my house. And you know, it's not a time, it's very, very hard for the kids, right? So to be back in the office now, in here, kids, having fun, the drums being played the piano, you know, the, the loud voices, it's just we let we literally sit there and just be like, this is this is why we're here. We had a dad in 2019 was a incredible pianist. And we have a grand piano in our family room. We used to prop the door open when he would come back. And it was it was his way of kind of resetting after, you know, being with his his son was in the hospital for a very long time premature and he would just he would just do it to relax, you know, and it's those are the things that we most look forward to our occupancy is up again. When you think about it, we're basically the occupancy of a hospital kind of dictates what ours looks like, right? And so the Nick, you has been down. Typically that's probably about 90% of our families are Nikki babies. So that has been down during the summer, we were usually full with waiting list because of elective surgeries for children. A lot of Orthopedic Well, they don't really haven't been doing those. So this summer, we weren't as full. we're averaging like 18 families, we have 28 rooms. So we'd like to see 28 families. And that's kind of our other thing is we just want to see the house full. Because for us, we feel like there's something missing in our mission. If we can't have 28 rooms full like there's got to be someone else who needs us. That's who we're you know, and we have a hospitality suite in the hospital just for that reason, because we want to make sure somebody's walking by Hey, do you do you know about Ronald McDonald House? Do you know Do you want to? So I think that's where we all are is just wanting, but again, I think that's the world right? Yeah. But for the Ronald McDonald House, we will return to a normal because our normal is a full house for most of us outside. I'm no, my life will never be the same, right? It'll never be the same. But what we do, it will always, you know, we just we don't we didn't change a mission for COVID. So yeah,

H

Halie Morris 45:18

I just had to change for a second. Yep. While everybody got their stuff together Exactly. We're all got it stuff together so yeah, no, no, it sounds like being in that kind of environment. The the general sound is life and vitality and screaming children I'm sure. So I can't imagine like, I have two dogs and one kid this in my house not I wake up is all of that. Then usually neighbor girls are coming over like in the summer where we have the cool pool so all the kids end up in our pool. And so like, come home and you're not greeted by a dog stuff that's wrong.

M

Michelle Kravetsky 45:52

Exactly. It's the same thing. It's, as a matter of fact, I actually contemplated asking our executive director could we have a comfort dog because I was at the point where we need something in the style

H

Halie Morris 46:03

of writing greet me,

M

Michelle Kravetsky 46:04

because the Columbus house I think it is has a dog. And we need a dog, but I don't want to take the dog home and take care of it. I just want

H

Halie Morris 46:16

to be the one that'd be like the dogs coming with me tonight. And tomorrow night.

M

Michelle Kravetsky 46:19

Somebody else would have to now Ours is a 24 seven week facility. So we don't we don't have staff that sleep. So technically the dog could, you know, stay there but again now that that you know and then there's risk with that to net risks which you have allergies, and you know, there's all kinds of things to consider

H

Halie Morris 46:36

have recommendations for the allergy. Yeah, exactly. But they're also very hyper dogs. Now I had 120 pound boxer. He's a very well taken care of boxer and he just came in on my lap

M

Michelle Kravetsky 46:50

this weekend. Sometimes I forget how they don't know how big

H

Halie Morris 46:53

he was so pleased because I just let him do it. So I'm a dog person. So I'm like, Yes. Get the dogs all the dogs. Yeah.

M

Michelle Kravetsky 46:59

I have a grand hoppy. That's all I have right now. And I've been we've been taking care of him a little bit here. When my son was and his wife were on vacation. But yeah, I've learned that it's probably not something that I I've never had an indoor animal. And I love him dearly. He's just a sweet, sweetest dog. But Gosh, that's a lot. That's a 24 seven. That's like having a kid again.

H

Halie Morris 47:23

It is a kid. Yeah. You know, my friend is she doesn't want kids. And she's a cat person. And they just recently got a new Finland puppy. I'm like, Are you

M

Michelle Kravetsky 47:30

crazy? Yeah, cats are using this. Like,

H

Halie Morris 47:33

I was like, and I'm like, I don't want a cat because I like plants. But I love cats. I just don't want it in my house because I have plants. And I already have the plants. But um, yeah, I was like, I'll take six dogs and I'll take six kids and I'll be fine. But that's my thing. I was like, I know what I'm getting into. I was like, do you get a puppy? Puppy?

M

Michelle Kravetsky 47:56

That's what this guy is. He's a Great Dane lab mix. So he said, Great Danes great. Dave. Oh, he is the gentlest soul. Honestly, he never barks. He's Oh, he's such as my dog sit on the side, by the way, I'll let them know. But grandma and grandpa dogs all the time. We don't anybody horn in. I told him the other day, I was vacuuming their house and he wouldn't move from where he was. I don't know what he was doing. And I said to him, you know, I plan to be much stricter with grandchildren than I am with you Just so we're clear.

H

Halie Morris 48:28

He knows you're not telling the truth.

M

Michelle Kravetsky 48:30

Exactly. Like my daughter was there with me. She's like, right?

H

Halie Morris 48:35

laughs hysterically. All right. I think this is where we're gonna wrap up. Is there anything that you would like to leave our listeners with?

M

Michelle Kravetsky 48:45

You know, I just think if you no matter where you're listening from, if you feel that I'm in, you know, anything I've said is interested, you just reach out to your local chapter, your local Ronald McDonald House, see if you can get involved what you do. There's so many ways to get involved. Everybody's looking for volunteers. So yeah. And it is a if ever, there's an opening and you think you want to work there. Trust me. It's a wonderful place to work.

H

Halie Morris 49:10

All right. Well, thank you, Michelle. I appreciate this so much. I appreciate learning. I've learned a lot today we've already talked to so thank you so much.

M

Michelle Kravetsky 49:19

Thank you.

H

Halie Morris 49:20

Thank you and thank you everyone for tuning in to this month's episode. I'm excited to see you next month. But in the meantime, head over check out the blog post will provide all of the information you need to get in contact with either Michelle or another Ronald McDonald House, and everything we just went over. So thank you and have a good rest of your month. Until next time.