



Christmas
2023



Aria

We can't do what we do without our Volunteers!

We want to express our deepest appreciation to our dedicated volunteers for their outstanding efforts and the incredible difference they make during this special time of year, helping to make Christmas an even more memorable and heartwarming experience for RMHC® New Zealand. Thank you for everything you do.

Santa gave out gifts to all our families just prior to Christmas and here's a photo of a chap who looks pretty thrilled to be receiving his prezzy's!

Together, let's make this holiday season special for families who need it most. Your donation helps us keep the lights on and doors open, to bring families together for Christmas.

From our whānau to yours, thank you.

If you'd like to donate, please visit www.rmhc/donate or scan the QR code below.

Your contribution is greatly appreciated.



Scan the QR code to donate today!



Santa gave out gifts to all our families just prior to Christmas and here's a photo of a chap who looks pretty thrilled to be receiving his prezzy's!



House Happenings

Aria's Christmas Journey: Finding hope at RMHC® New Zealand

For the Tiraha Cook's, Christmas was always a time filled with laughter, joy, and the warmth of whānau. But little did they know that the Christmas of 2022 would be unlike any they had experienced before, bringing them face to face with the harsh reality of a life-threatening illness.

Meet the Palmerston North whānau: mum Ngaire, dad Casey, four older brothers Isaiah, Tyrese, Elijah, Kapene, and the youngest, four-year-old Aria. Their world turned upside down on August 16, 2022, when Aria began showing mysterious bruising to her legs. A visit to the doctor led to a frantic phone call, and Aria was soon admitted to the hospital. A couple of days later, the family received the devastating news that no parent ever wants to hear – Aria had Leukemia. Their lives were forever changed, and they were immediately flown to the National Children's Hospital in Auckland.

In the middle of this nightmare, they discovered RMHC® New Zealand, a bright light in one of their darkest times.

Ngaire reflects on their initial encounter, saying "I had heard of the Ronald McDonald House but knew absolutely nothing about it." Something that is all too common amongst families with a sick child.

After being told that she needed to stay in Auckland for another 4 weeks, her first thoughts were "How on earth am I going to afford to stay in Auckland for another month or so?" But with the help of a social worker and their national travel agent, the family were offered a room at Ronald McDonald House – Auckland Domain.

The moment they arrived at RMHC NZ; they knew they had found a home away from home. "As we arrived at Domain, Aria's eyes lit up. From being stuck in the ward for 6 weeks, not being able to go anywhere, to arriving at the Domain House with the awesome welcoming of the lovely staff. Aria absolutely loved it." It offered them comfort, support, and a chance to heal together.



Ngaire, Aria and brother on train

"It's been lovely having Mummy with me. It means a lot to have my Mum by my side through these tough times."

Aria



House Happenings



For Aria, having Mum by her side during this challenging journey was invaluable. Aria herself beautifully expressed this, saying "It's been lovely having Mummy with me. It means a lot to have Mum by my side through these tough times. My family has made me stronger, being there for me when I need them."

As Christmas approached, the Tiraha Cook whānau faced a heart-wrenching reality.

They would be far from their home during a very sentimental time, separated from loved ones and the older brothers had to stay behind to work. Ngaire confesses "I was seriously dreading being away from home and family over Christmas. It broke me not all being able to be together."

Christmas day arrived, and it was filled with a whirlwind of emotions. Aria and Ngaire were in the hospital, uncertain if they would be allowed to leave. Meanwhile, the rest of the family stayed at the Domain House. "So many emotions on Christmas Day with everyone being separated," Ngaire reflects; "We ended up getting let out of the hospital at lunchtime to stay at RMHC® for the rest of our 25 day stay. When we arrived at the House, they had given us one of the apartments for our stay. We went to the room and OMG, we got there and more presents, socks, and an awesome Christmas food hamper."

Despite the physical distance, RMHC made every effort to create a special Christmas for Aria and her family, ensuring that the spirit of the season remained intact, and they could keep her family close. Their support services and resources had a profound impact, from the friendly staff to the chef who provided delicious meals. "The support you give families, especially during the Christmas period, does not go unnoticed," Ngaire says with gratitude.

RMHC New Zealand has been a lifeline for Aria, offering her the opportunity to connect with friends, keep up with her education at the Auckland Domain onsite school, and, most importantly, have her family by her side in her medical journey. "Having RMHC available for Aria and our family has been a huge lifesaver".

To all the donors, partners, volunteers, and the rest of Aotearoa who support RMHC New Zealand, the Tiraha Cook family has a heartfelt message...

"We would like to say a massive thank you to all the staff, volunteers, teachers, cleaners and the rest of the team at RMHC New Zealand. As well as everyone who supports and donates. There is no way we would have been able to do this without each and every one of you. You are amazing."

Aria and her family have found a loving and supportive community in RMHC New Zealand. Their journey is a testament to the resilient spirit of families who face adversity with unwavering love and hope. This Christmas, let us remember the children just like Aria, who will need invaluable support from RMHC New Zealand and to have their whānau by their side during some of their toughest times.



Want to help children like Aria this Christmas? Scan the QR code to donate!

Auckland Domain House & Auckland Grafton Mews House

A Heartwarming Holiday Celebration

As the holiday season unfolds, the heart of RMHC® brims with festive joy as a dedicated team of 30 volunteers comes together to decorate the famous Christmas trees, transforming Domain House and Grafton Mews House into a Christmas wonderland. However, the highlight is the grand Christmas Party, where families and staff come together for a festive celebration with a beautiful Christmas dinner, games, carols, and a surprise visit from Santa. Christmas ends with each family receiving a special breakfast pack to host their Christmas celebration, create lasting memories, and keep families close.

Christmas party, thoughtfully organised to create a sense of togetherness where staff, volunteers and families come together for an early Christmas celebration, sharing the spirit of the season with Santa, gifts, and entertainment. On Christmas Day, there is a lovely lunch that embraces tradition with hams, salads, pavlovas, sweet treats, and heartfelt gifts. Wellington House is where the magic of Christmas thrives, nurtured by the warmth of a supportive and close-knit community.

Christchurch House

Creating Holiday Magic

At RMHC Christchurch, the holiday season brings us together, sharing joy as our house is transformed into a festive wonderland thanks to Farmers Northlands, setting the stage for heartwarming celebrations. Staff, volunteers, and families gather at the Christchurch House, where the magic of Christmas continues as Santa's visit, complete with gifts and smiles. The day ends with a delightful dinner, leaving the entire RMHC Christchurch family filled with Christmas spirit and full bellies.



Wellington House

Spreading Christmas Joy and Community

In Wellington House, Christmas is a season that brings people together, creating a heartwarming sense of joy and community. The festive season begins with the decoration of trees, filling the air with enchantment. A true highlight is the Wellington House



Southland Family Room

A Decade of Comfort and Community in the Family Room

The Family Room at RMHC Southland celebrates a remarkable milestone – its 10th anniversary, opening its doors in December 2013. Over the past decade, it has welcomed more than 1,200 families, in addition to countless day guest visits. To mark this special occasion, a function was held in November, offering gratitude to the generous sponsors, supporters, and dedicated volunteers who have made it all possible. The sense of community and togetherness remains at the heart of the Family Room, where a dedicated team of volunteers gathered for their annual Christmas lunch, Celebrating the spirit of giving and care that has defined this remarkable space.



Christmas Appeal

A cuddle with dad - so I sleep better.



Give the gift I really need this Christmas. My family by my side.

As the festive season approaches, we find ourselves reflecting on the importance of family and the joy that comes from being surrounded by loved ones.

We expect to see over 400 families who need our help during the holiday season. To make sure they can spend Christmas together, we need to raise \$300,000.

Having family close while you have a sick child in hospital is essential. That's why this Christmas, we invite you to join us in making a difference to a family like Aria's or Zion's, by donating to our Christmas Appeal.

Zion, a resilient young boy, is facing a different kind of Christmas this year.

His parents, Grace and Joshua, along with their four children had been living a peaceful life until earlier this year, their son Zion's received a shocking diagnosis. Unfortunately, Zion is still undergoing medical treatment and will remain in the hospital throughout the Christmas season. RMHC NZ will continue to be their 'home-away-from-home' during this period, bringing some much-needed cheer to their lives wherever possible.

"The fact that we have been able to stay together as a family and support Zion has been incredible and made

this journey a bonding experience for us. Without RMHC®, it would not have been viable for us to stay together, and Zion would have struggled through treatments much more than he has." - House Dad, Josh

Please, if you can, help a family like the Holdaway family today with a kind gift - you can help to relieve some of the stress of their medical journey this Christmas.

Kiwi families with children in hospital will need food, accommodation and - most importantly - their family by their side this holiday season. You can make it possible!

"I cannot say thank you enough to everyone who has made RMHC possible. During our hardest trial in life, we couldn't have done it on our own and we want to say thank you to each and every donor, staff member and volunteer who has come alongside us and helped carry this burden."



Please give them the gift they really need. Donate today rmhc.org.nz/christmas or scan me.

A giggle with my brother - so I feel strong.



Christmas Stats 2022

Christmas Day

 **73** families

73 nights 

\$12,483

Christmas Season

614 families 

 **3,708** nights

\$634,068

Christmas Week

130 families 

 **617** nights

\$105,507

Illness doesn't take a holiday - there are still sick children at Christmas.

During the holiday season, remember that not all children can enjoy the magic of Christmas. There are still many sick children who spend their festive days in hospitals, battling illnesses that don't take a break for the holidays.

Your contribution can truly make this season a little brighter for those in need. So, let's remember the children who are still fighting, and let's make this holiday season a time of compassion, giving, and sharing.



Scan me

Little Ray of Giving



Over 11 years of support

Volunteer Spotlight



This year, over 400 families will spend the Christmas season at RMHC® New Zealand.

Far from home and supporting their child in hospital, families often don't have the time or energy to think about presents.

The wonderful team at Ray White have been bringing the magic of Christmas to the Ronald McDonald House® and the Ronald McDonald Family Room® programmes since 2012.

Dedicated offices from across Aotearoa work tirelessly collecting gifts from their local communities, ensuring that the holiday season is filled with smiles and joy for families staying at RMHC New Zealand.

In the true spirit of Christmas, their efforts bring comfort and joy during difficult times, making a lasting impact on the lives of families who need it most.

From our team to yours, thank you Ray White for making a difficult time for families so much brighter.



It takes a Village

Introducing Our Little Village: Spreading Joy this Christmas

Meet Anna, the heart behind Our Little Village, a charity dedicated to supporting families during the early stages of parenthood.

As a mother of two, Anna understands the challenges of raising newborns, and her mission is to ease the journey for others.

Our Little Village creates Little Village Boxes filled with essential items for newborns, which are delivered to families in need. **Anna and her team have been invaluable support to our Auckland House having delivered over 100 Little Village Bags to RMHC® families.** This collaboration stems from Anna's personal experience.

Despite having the support of her husband and family, she struggled during her early days as a new mum, especially with her first child.

Our Little Village complements RMHC's mission by providing essential supplies for babies and mothers during the initial weeks, allowing families to focus on their children's well-being.

Last Christmas, Our Little Village supported both our Auckland House and our Wellington House. Ensuring bags were delivered in time for mums and their babies to receive them on Christmas day, spreading joy and support during the festive season.

What drives Anna and Our Little Village is the recognition that raising a newborn comes with challenges, and every bit of support makes a practical difference. **Despite their small size, they are making a meaningful impact.**

Our Little Village is a volunteer-driven initiative, and every donation goes directly towards purchasing the products included in the Little Village Boxes. While they've already made great strides, there's much more they wish to achieve as they continue their mission of bringing comfort to families during this delicate phase of life.

This Christmas let's celebrate the spirit of giving and support organisations like Our Little Village, who are dedicated to making the world a little brighter for those in need. **Together, we can make a meaningful difference in the lives of families and spread the joy of the season.**

Visit their website - www.ourlittlevillage.org.nz



Your donation's mean the world to us! Scan the QR code to donate!

