



For Immediate Release

Ronald McDonald House rolls out the Red Carpet to recognize Volunteers

(April 15, 2019, St. John's, NL) – Ronald McDonald House Charities Newfoundland and Labrador (RMHC NL) relies heavily on the work of volunteers to fulfill their mission. On April 12 & 13, 2019, Ronald McDonald House recognized the hundreds of volunteers that give so much of their time in the house and in the community at a special event in St. John's titled **"Strength in Numbers" Volunteering Gathering**, appropriately themed "Team Work." This event was recognized with an International Award for best practice by RMHC in 2015 and includes training, awards, fun team building, recognition, a guided tour of Ronald McDonald House and guest speakers, which included **Kate Horton**, Executive Director RMHC Canada, **Dr. Lynette Bowes**, Pediatric Oncologist Janeway Children's Hospital, and a RMHC Family, **Selina & Sheldon Carroll & four-year old son Michael of Labrador City along with Michael's grandparents Myles & Daphne Parsons**, frequent guests of Ronald McDonald House since 2015. Since Michael was born in 2015, he and his family have stayed at Ronald McDonald House on 15 occasions totalling 409 nights.

At the conclusion of the event, volunteers were recognized for their years of commitment, which included recognizing two founding Board Members with 10 years of service, **Theresa Rahal**, RMHC Board Chairperson and **Bill Budgell**, retiring Board Treasurer.

Ronald McDonald House Charities Newfoundland and Labrador is grateful to the time and energy that **Dr. Jack Hand** gave to making Ronald McDonald House a reality in this province. Now that the House is opened, with many active and dedicated volunteers, the charity has implemented the **Helping "HAND" Awards in honor of the late Dr. Jack Hand**. These awards were proudly presented by his wife, **Tina Hand** and daughters **Amy & Jesse Hand** along with a surprise appearance by his son **Michael Hand**, who are all volunteers with Ronald McDonald House.

In order to completely recognize the many diverse volunteer contributions, the **2019 Helping HAND Awards** were awarded in **seven** categories. Here are the **2019 winners**:

- **Family Services Volunteer** **Tina Hand, St. John's, NL**

This volunteer demonstrates commitment and leads by example, inspiring others to participate in volunteer service. She is one of the most engaging people you could meet and goes out of her way to make families and other volunteers feel welcome and included. This volunteer can quickly determine what needs to be done and is a great mentor to new volunteers. As described in a nomination "She is thoughtful and dedicated in everything she does - she goes above and beyond and is a pleasure to work with – she truly cares for the children and families at Ronald McDonald House". Another nomination described her as very personable, understands boundaries, always has a smile on her face

and you can tell there is nothing she wouldn't do to keep families close". She is someone you can always count on to get things done with outstanding results and she has an incredible work ethic. Having known Jack more closely than anyone else, this individual knew Jack's **passion, knew Jack's dedication and knew Jack's commitment he had for making Ronald McDonald House a reality in Newfoundland and Labrador. This individual exemplifies Jack's deep compassion for helping sick children. She leads by example and helps all of us realize that through volunteer work, Jack is always with us.** This year's award for Family Services Volunteer goes to **Tina Hand.**

- **House Programs Award**

Rotary Club of St. John's Northwest

This group made two commitments during the 2009 Capital Campaign 1. A generous financial donation and 2 that they would gladly support the kitchen programs when Ronald McDonald House would open. They fulfilled these commitments by participating in our Home for Dinner Program since the programs started. Their commitment and dedication to the House is evident by the 28 times and over 80 hours they spent preparing meals for our families. Their incredible volunteer service has provided wonderful meals not only just for our families, they have also assisted each year with preparing the food for our Birthday Celebration. They are an inspirational example of how an organization can do so much for sick children and their families staying at Ronald McDonald House. This year's award for House Program goes to **Rotary Club of St. John's Northwest.**

- **Leadership Award**

Stephen & Sherry King, Victoria, NL

These volunteers have assisted Ronald McDonald House over the last couple of years with hosting their own fundraising events, a Red Shoe Walk, and supporting other events. Their dedication is well known in their community and they never hesitate to take on increasing volunteer responsibility, assisting with speaking at events that support Ronald McDonald House. They are creative, skillful and demonstrate enthusiasm. They are exemplary role models who demonstrates passion, commitment, dedication and generosity, in supporting families with sick children. Their story is a full circle moment as their family stayed at our House in 2016 when their daughter needed to be close to the Janeway Children's Hospital and after their experience wanted to give back. This year's award for Leadership Volunteer goes to **Stephen and Sherry King**

- **Community Engagement Award**

The Penney Family, Arnold's Cove, NL

These individuals are versatile, capable, passionate as they take on an annual initiative to support the families staying at Ronald McDonald House. They have selflessly contributed their skills and outstanding commitment to Ronald McDonald House and they have motivated, energized and empowered others in their home community to do the same. At Ronald McDonald House it's the simple things that put some joy and normalcy back into families lives during a chaotic and traumatic time. Our Wish List is updated regularly as we meet new challenges and address the unique needs of our families. From cleaning supplies, to craft supplies, from food in our pantry to toys in the Magic Room, from the forgotten toothbrush to the larger budget items. We strive to offer the best possible support for families and all the little things that make Ronald McDonald house a home. Over the last six years these individuals have organized a massive wish list drive that has an in kind value of more than \$33,000 in memory of June Penney & Maxine Penney. This year's award for Community Engagement goes to the **Penney Family from Arnolds Cove.**

• **Outstanding Corporate Philanthropist Award** **McDonald's NL – Owner/Operators**

This company is proud to give back to the communities they serve. Their unwavering commitment to families is evident through their support for RMHC each and every day. Their generosity knows no limits and they work with employees, suppliers and customers to make helping sick children and their families a priority. They display a long tradition of giving back to the communities where they live and work. We consider them our founding and forever partner. RMHC NL opened its doors to families in 2012 with the encouragement and support of McDonald's Restaurants of Canada Limited, McDonald's Owner/Operators in our province and their supplier network. They provide vital support for our families through:

- 10¢ from the sale of every Happy Meal, McHappy Day
- -in-restaurant coin collection boxes
- And in 2018 a new line of RMHC Cookies and at point of kiosk round up donations from customers.

In addition, members of the McDonald's Family also serve as volunteers on our Board of Directors, committees and participate in many local events, including our Red Shoe Walk for Families. The McDonald's Family is our largest corporate partner and we are deeply thankful for the continued partnership of every crew person, manager, owner/operator, and customer who help us keep families close. This year's award for Outstanding Philanthropist - Corporate goes to McDonald's Newfoundland and Labrador Owner/Operators. **Trevor Morris, Doug Bennett, Ken and Loretta Scott, Keith Roberts and Genny McCarthy, Chris and Debbie McCarthy, Penney and Rob McDonald, Barry and Mary MacKinnon, Paul and Paula Rogers, Jeremy and Jane Cleveland and Patrick Rioux.**

• **Outstanding Individual Philanthropist Award** **Dylan Gibbons, St. John's, NL**

Philanthropy is the desire to promote the welfare of others. This young university student believes so much in the programs and services of RMHC that he became a Family Service volunteer. During his volunteer time, he saw firsthand the importance of keeping sick children close to their families and how keeping families together is part of providing family-centered care. After thoughtful consideration he decided to make a very generous cash donation which, given his age and still a full time student in university, stood out as exceedingly extraordinary and incredibly inspiring. He is a shining example of true philanthropy. This individual has a genuine concern for the wellbeing of others and in his own words, believes deeply in the mission of Ronald McDonald House, which makes him a deserving recipient of the outstanding philanthropist award. This year's award for Outstanding Individual Philanthropist goes to **Dylan Gibbons**

• **Outstanding Philanthropist Young Hero Award** **Gabe Flynn, Labrador City, NL**

Ronald McDonald House Charities Newfoundland and Labrador recognizes outstanding young individuals through our Young Hero Program. These young boys and girls do not let their age discourage them from making a difference in the lives of sick children and their families. For the past 7 birthdays this individual has asked for a very special birthday present from his friends and family, he asks for money, not for the latest video game or toys, but to donate that money. In addition, to money from his birthdays, he has found other creative ways to be able to make a difference including a book, at age 8, titled *Not Too Small to Help* the proceeds went to charities, in his community, including Ronald

McDonald House. As well, there is money from chores, and not just your ordinary type of chores. In 2018, he washed dishes at an event for over four hours, and then he donated the \$500 he earned to RMHC. His most recent contribution in 2019 was an \$800.00 donation from selling wooden ornaments he created. His donations total over \$4,000 to Ronald McDonald House. His generosity also extends to other charities including organizations that provide clean drinking water. His mother was not surprised that he wanted to donate all his money to charities. When he was three, at Christmas, he would wrap food and drinks from their pantry to give to the boys and girls that needed it. This Young Hero truly reflects philanthropy and Dr. Jack Hand's passion and commitment to helping sick children and their families. This year's award for Outstanding Philanthropist – Young Hero goes to **Gabe Flynn of Labrador City.**

Annette Godsell, Executive Director Ronald McDonald House Charities Newfoundland and Labrador said, "Volunteers are the backbone of Ronald McDonald House in our house and in the community. We simply could not provide vital programs and services for families with a sick or injured child without the generous contribution of time from more than 300 volunteers in our province. This year's volunteer conference was themed Teamwork. It truly does take a large group of caring individuals all providing a wide range of skills, expertise and knowledge working together as one large team to keep families close at Ronald McDonald House. On behalf of the families that stay at Ronald McDonald House, we extend a sincere thank you to each and every volunteer."

Ronald McDonald House Charities® Newfoundland and Labrador helps keep families with a sick or injured child close to each other and the care and resources they need, when they need it most. Open 24 hours a day/7 days a week, Ronald McDonald House features many common areas including a large kitchen, family room, television room, resource center, home office, children's play areas and laundry facilities. Ronald McDonald House is open to parents, siblings and at times, extended family members of children receiving medical treatment in St. John's. It draws on a large pool of committed volunteers who help families feel at home.

www.RMHCNL.ca

www.facebook.com/rmhnl

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See photos below

2019 Helping Hand Award Winners



10-year Volunteer Recognition

Founding board members Theresa Rahal and Bill Budgell

(l-r): Christine Morgan (RMHC NL), Theresa Rahal (RMHC NL Board Chair), Bill Budgell (retiring Board Treasurer), Selina & Michael Carroll (RMHC Family) Annette Godsell (RMHC NL) Jennifer Fleming (RMHC NL)



**Family Services Volunteer Award
Tina Hand**

(l-r): Annette Godsell (RMHC NL), Jesse Hand, Amy Hand, Michael Hand, Tina Hand,
Jennifer Fleming (RMHC NL), Christine Morgan (RMHC NL)



Leadership Award

Stephen & Sherry King, Victoria, NL

(l-r): Annette Godsell (RMHC NL), Jesse Hand, Amy Hand, Sherry & Stephen King, Tina Hand, Michael Hand, Jennifer Fleming (RMHC NL), Christine Morgan (RMHC NL)



**Community Engagement Award
The Penney Family of Arnold's Cove**

(l-r): Annette Godsell (RMHC NL), Jesse Hand, Amy Hand, Linda Penney & Hannah & Mahalia Hepditch, Tina Hand, Michael Hand, Jennifer Fleming (RMHC NL), Christine Morgan (RMHC NL)



**Outstanding Philanthropist Corporate
McDonald's NL Owner/Operators**

Trevor Morris, Doug Bennett, Ken and Loretta Scott, Keith Roberts and Genny McCarthy, Chris and Debbie McCarthy, Penney and Rob McDonald, Barry and Mary MacKinnon, Paul and Paula Rogers, Jeremy and Jane Cleveland and Patrick Rioux.

(I-R): Annette Godsell (RMHC NL), Jesse Hand, Amy Hand, Ken & Loretta Scott (McDonald's, Bay Roberts, Carbonear & Conception Bay South), Paul & Paula Rogers (McDonald's Gander & Lewisporte), Tina Hand, Michael Hand, Tammy Murphy (McDonald's Kenmount Road Manager) Jennifer Fleming (RMHC NL), Christine Morgan (RMHC NL)



**Outstanding Individual Philanthropist
Dylan Gibbons**

(I-R): Annette Godsell (RMHC NL), Jesse Hand, Amy Hand, Dylan Gibbons, Tina Hand, Michael Hand, Jennifer Fleming (RMHC NL), Christine Morgan (RMHC NL)



**Outstanding Young Hero Philanthropist
Gabe Flynn**

(I-R): Annette Godsell (RMHC NL), Jesse Hand, Amy Hand, Gabe Flynn, Tina Hand,
Michael Hand, Jennifer Fleming (RMHC NL), Christine Morgan (RMHC NL)