

“Coming Full Circle”

A Family's Story

When Lyndsey Howell was a Texas Tech student she spent a couple of years volunteering at Ronald McDonald House Charities because she “always had a heart for sick children.”

She studied human developmental psychology and wanted to be a physician's assistant working with sick children.

At the Ronald McDonald House, she did clerical work and also took shifts at the Ronald McDonald Family Rooms at Lubbock's two largest hospitals.

Lyndsey didn't know that her **passion to serve** would bless her young family in the future.

When she gave birth to twins Carter and Carson four years ago, **Carson was hospitalized** eight weeks at University Medical Center with Jejunum Atresia, a rare and dangerous genetic disorder.

“The pain of having a sick child is like **no other pain in the world,**” she said.

But the Ronald McDonald Family Room at UMC was a **haven** for Lyndsey and her husband Christopher.

“ICU is an overwhelming space with monitors and your baby attached to all of it with all those wires,” said Lyndsey. “The **family room is where you can decompress** and visit with families in the same situation and pray for each other.”

“Having a baby is **supposed to be a happy time** – this bundle of joy. But when you have a sick baby it's not that at all. I was there every day in ICU and you can only see your child for **three separate hours a day**. I was also home with a twin and you could not take a sibling to ICU.”

“My husband would sit with Carter in the family room while I would sit with Carson,” said Lyndsey.

Carson fought the defect until he was eight months old with several hospital readmissions for complications from the disorder.

It was a **devastating experience** for the young Howell family, but it would have been worse without the family room to **keep her close to her baby**.

Lyndsey said the Ronald McDonald House staff and volunteers are amazing and help these **families and their children** get through the **toughest times of their lives**.

“People are so open and comforting and loving. They are nice and supportive people. They are so great,” she said.

After college, the Howells moved to Albuquerque for a short time before moving back to Lubbock.

That's when they got involved with the Ronald McDonald House Charities again before the twins were born.

Christopher served on the charity board and the couple has been guest chefs many times at the Ronald McDonald House, which provides places for families who live outside of Lubbock to stay while their **children are getting treatment** at Lubbock hospitals.

Lyndsey said she particularly likes to make stew during the winter, because it's great comfort food for families going through such a stressful situation.

It's her way of continuing to give back to an organization that she once served and **came full circle** to **serve her when she needed it most**.

