

# 2<sup>nd</sup> Qtr 2022 **HOUSE** *around the*



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**RMHC**<sup>®</sup>  
of the Southwest

## Tragedy Saves a Life: Nikolai's Story

When Nikolai was just 8 months old, he was in a serious car accident along with his dad and aunt. Sadly, Nikolai's dad died, and his aunt was injured. Nikolai had no injuries from the accident besides a few scrapes and bruises. However, the tests run on Nikolai did show something unrelated to the accident; something was affecting his adrenal gland. The family was referred to Lubbock for further diagnosis. Nikolai was diagnosed with a neuroblastoma—a cancerous tumor along the sympathetic nervous system—and had surgery to remove it. During surgery, the doctors discovered another cancerous tumor and removed it along with two lymph nodes. Post-surgery, it was determined that the tumors removed were two different kinds of cancerous forms. Nikolai was diagnosed with Li-Fraumeni Syndrome, a rare genetic condition which gives an



individual a predisposition for a wide range of cancers.

Nikolai's mom, Krystal, said, "Our first stay at the House was a sudden, emergency trip to Lubbock. We had nothing with us. No toiletries or necessities for my baby. I was so grateful for the closets they had for us to pick and choose what we needed for our stay... after having our world shatter to pieces, it was nice to have the entire staff be so helpful in trying to make our lives a little easier."

As of March 2021, Nikolai is cancer free. Nikolai is doing great, growing, and getting back on track with

his milestones. His last scans in October of 2021 still showed him to be cancer free. Nikolai also turned two this past December.

### Upcoming Events

**July 28** - Quarterback S.A.C.K. Kick-Off Lunch with Coach Joey McGuire

**August 11** - 2nd Annual "Show Us Your Stripes" Golf Tournament

Join us [rmhcsouthwest.com](http://rmhcsouthwest.com)  
806.744.887

# Heroes in the House:

Volunteers & Donors are Heroes to RMHC Families!



*Betenbough Homes celebrating their 30th anniversary by donating to RMHC and bringing lunch for families and staff.*



*Texas Tech Football Players bring joy to the families staying in the House.*



*Medical Student Service Organization at TTUHSC getting a picture with Ronald after making a wonderful meal for families.*



*Covenant School of Nursing students have been volunteering their time as Guest Chefs.*



*Primrose School proves you are never too young to be a hero and raise money for RMHC of the Southwest.*



*Local National Guard members take a break from serving our country to serve a meal for families.*

## The Family Room at MCH in Odessa

In January 2022, Ronald McDonald House Family Room in Odessa received a donation of about 50 child-sized quilts created by Nadine Robertson. In the past eight years, Nadine machine stitched over 700 of these small quilts. With the help of her daughter and sons, she donated them to the Ronald McDonald Houses close to her home in Galveston, in Houston, and to the Texas Children's Hospital. Her son, who lives in Alpine, donated the last of the quilts to the Ronald McDonald House Family Room in Odessa after Nadine's death in late December of last year.



In the early 1980's, Nadine started hand stitching quilts for her children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren to commemorate marriages and births. She switched to machine quilting when she was in her mid-80's, making smaller quilts for children and babies. When one of her great grandchildren spent an extended period in a neonatal unit, he was given a small quilt to use but not to take home. Nadine thought that babies and children in hospitals should be given quilts that they could keep.

This incident inspired Nadine to sew quilts for children and donate them. Her legacy now lives on with the many children and families who have received her quilts across Texas.



# VOL NTEER for RMHC

*Just missing U*



Summer is here and RMHC needs your help to provide a moment of peace for families who have a child in the hospital. There is always a need for volunteers in our Family Rooms located in Covenant Children's, UMC, and MCH in Odessa. Family Room volunteers keep the Room open for our NICU and pediatric families in the hospital.

If you are looking to volunteer call RMHC at 806.744.8877 or visit [rmhcsouthwest.com/volunteer](http://rmhcsouthwest.com/volunteer).

## Booking Groups to Cook!

While many will enjoy vacation this summer, RMHC will be full of families. Sign up now to provide a home-cooked meal to families. Breakfast, lunch, and dinner meals needed!



## McDonald's Partners host "Night Out"

The Hiatt family enjoyed a special night out with our local McFriends.

Thank you to our McDonald's partners for providing a wonderful experience for the Hiatt Family!

### 3 Ways to Donate at McDonald's Restaurants

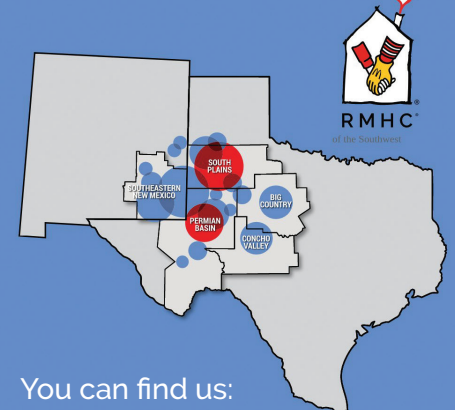
1. Round Up for RMHC
2. Donation Boxes
3. Every penny counts when you buy a Happy Meal!



## RMHC Board of Directors

- Steven Maddux, Board Chair
- Todd Hardin, Chair-Elect
- Brad Stuteville, Board Treasurer
- Jennifer Irlbeck, Board Secretary
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- Paul Dannevik
- Christi Felton
- Jacoby Madewell
- Brian Payne
- Robyn Snowberger
- Sunshine Stanek
- Libby White
- Sydney Witte

## RMHC of the Southwest serves 68 Counties!



You can find us:

- Ronald McDonald House in Lubbock (806.744.8877)
- Family Room in UMC Children's Hospital in Lubbock
- Family Room in Covenant Children's Hospital in Lubbock
- Family Room in Medical Center Hospital in Odessa
- Family Room in Midland Memorial Hospital in Midland

# Duffy Family

## Mary and Nora's Story

On October 10th, Destinee Duffy went into pre-term labor with her twin girls at 22 weeks. The Duffy family came to Lubbock from Muleshoe so that Destinee could be hospitalized, and they could give the babies more time in utero. At 25 weeks, Destinee gave birth to twin girls, Mary Rhyen and Nora Leigh Ray. The girls were tiny, weighing 1lb 9oz and 1lb 10oz respectively. Tragically, at 6 days old, Nora passed away.

"From there it became the scariest time of our lives," Destinee said. "Nobody really tells you the journey you go through going into the NICU. Watching her grow, letting her learn how to breathe on her own, and then having to teach her how to eat on her own, and to regulate her

own heart rate is not what we expected."

While Destinee was released from the hospital, it was a long journey for Mary in the NICU. Both parents wanted to stay as close to their daughter as possible while she was in the NICU and were moved into the Ronald McDonald House in Lubbock.

When talking about their stay, Megan said RMHC became "a home away from home."

Destinee added, "It was close to the hospital and saved us a ton of money. The food helped keep us going. Without it, we probably wouldn't have eaten very much. I couldn't have imagined being an hour and a half away every day. RMHC gave us time with our daughter."



When Mary was released from the hospital after 3 months, the family was excited about going home, if understandably nervous like all new parents. The journey continues to be tough on the family but it is also filled with love and joy. Mary is now 7 months old and reaching new milestones like grabbing and trying to roll over.

## Gracefully Emma

### Our Journey with Apert Syndrome and Facial Equality

The Watt's are an RMHC Family and have been so ever since their daughter, Emma was born. Emma has Apert Syndrome, a rare genetic syndrome. Emma's mom, Stephanie, recently wrote a book to share more about Apert Syndrome and Emma's journey. Read the excerpt below and find her book on Amazon:

"My name is Emma Grace and I have Apert Syndrome.

This book is a glimpse into my journey with Apert Syndrome, facial equality, and kindness. This is what makes me unique. I walk, talk, smile, and frown. So please don't put me down. I am no different you see, I am only trying to be me. I am curious about people and they are curious about me. I am a lovable kid who wants the world to see through my eyes. Come learn with me and how I live my life with Apert Syndrome."







*Congratulations!*

# RMHC Scholars

**Congratulations to RMHC of the Southwest scholarship winners.**

**Nathan Martin** was awarded the Dina Jefferies Leadership Scholarship and is from Haskell High School. Nathan will be attending Texas Tech University with a dual degree in Agricultural & Applied Economics and General Business. Nathan and his younger brother were both named CMN Miracle Kids through Hendrick Medical Center in Abilene. Nathan is on the Autism Spectrum and faces many challenges everyday. He is looking forward to services provided through the Burkhardt

Center for Autism Advocacy and Research at Texas Tech. Following graduation, he plans to return home to utilize what he's learned to grow the family restaurant and to employ more local workers and bring in fresh farm-to-table produce thus helping local farmers.



**Kayla Myers** was awarded the Janice Flemmons Scholarship and is from Reagan County High School. Kayla's ultimate goal is to attend veterinary school and she hopes to one day open her own clinic. On the way to veterinary school, she will be attending Texas Tech University to pursue a degree in Animal Biology. Kayla and her brother were both diagnosed at birth with Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy, a congenital heart disease. Kayla was later diagnosed with Sick Sinus Syndrome. Her brother underwent open heart surgery in 2012 when he was just 11 years old. During his time in the hospital, Kayla's family stayed in the Ronald McDonald House in San Antonio. Sadly, her brother passed away. Despite having a pacemaker implanted when she was just 13, Kayla has continued to enjoy extracurricular activities such as cheerleading, tennis and basketball. She has also served as President of National Honor Society and has been active in her church and other community activities.

# Quarterback S.A.C.K.!

**Kick-Off Lunch: Thursday, July 28<sup>th</sup> at the Texas Tech Club**

Join RMHC of the Southwest for their 21st season of Quarterback S.A.C.K.! Quarterback S.A.C.K. gives the community a chance to cheer on the Red Raiders football team while Supporting And Comforting Kids (S.A.C.K.).

The kick-off lunch will feature TTU's new football Coach Joey McGuire! Be prepared to get pumped for Texas Tech Football! Attendees will get an overview of the upcoming season and how our team is going to bring the "D" and get the S.A.C.K.s.

Tickets: \$30 per person; \$50 per couple; \$200 per table of 8.

Learn more about Quarterback S.A.C.K., get tickets to the luncheon and sign up to pledge at:  
[rmhcsouthwest.com/quarterback-sack](http://rmhcsouthwest.com/quarterback-sack)



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## Show Us Your Stripes!

**Second Annual "Show Us Your Stripes" Golf Tournament:  
Thursday, August 11<sup>th</sup> at Rawls Golf Course**

RMHC of the Southwest is back with a four-person scramble golf tournament to support Keeping Families Close! The tournament includes: prizes for winners, green fee, cart rental, lunch, beverage tickets, and RMHC's trademark striped socks.

\$750 per team; sponsorships starting at \$500

Join us at [rmhcsouthwest.com/golf-tournament](http://rmhcsouthwest.com/golf-tournament)



## Plans Today Will Help Families Tomorrow

RMHC of the Southwest is excited to share FreeWill with you to provide our community with an online tool to write your legal will, at no personal cost. Just as you've supported the future of critically ill children and their families, now you can support your own future – for free. Take 20 minutes today to complete this important task and protect the people and causes you care about.

**Get started today at  
[FreeWill.com/](http://FreeWill.com/)  
RMHCSouthwest**

