



**RMHC**  
of the Southwest

April 2026

# around the **HOUSE**

3413 10th Street • Lubbock, TX 79415 • 806.744.8877  
RMHCsouthwest.com



## ***A SECOND STAY, A SECOND HOME***

When Maria and Armando Riojas welcomed their son Thomas at just 22 weeks, they found themselves once again navigating a long NICU journey—eight years after their daughter Scarlett was born prematurely. Returning to the Ronald McDonald House, the family found comfort in a familiar place that provided stability, support, and a sense of normalcy during an uncertain time. With Scarlett by their side, embracing her role as big sister, the Riojas family created meaningful moments together at their “second home”, the Ronald McDonald House. Today, they are grateful to have Thomas home, growing stronger each day and surrounded by love. *Read more inside*

# From the Desk of the President & CEO



## What makes a house feel like a home?

It's a question I come back to often. Especially when I see families arrive carrying the weight of long days, difficult news, and everything that comes with having a child in medical care. In those moments, what they need most isn't just a place to stay. They need a place where they can take a breath.

A home.

At RMHC of the Southwest, that feeling is created in ways that may not always be seen, but are deeply felt.

It's a warm meal waiting at the end of a long day. It's a quiet room where a parent can finally rest. It's siblings laughing and playing, even if just for a little while. It's a cancer warrior finding rest and comfort after a long day of testing or treatment.

**And none of that happens without you.**

Every donation becomes part of that care. Your generosity turns a space into something more. It provides comfort when families are running on empty. It creates moments of relief in the middle of uncertainty. It allows families to stay close to one another and focused on what matters most.

Families may never know your name, but they feel your impact every single day. They feel it in the meals, the rest, the peace, and the sense that they are not alone.

That is what you make possible.

**Thank you for showing up for our children and families. Thank you for helping create a place that offers comfort, connection, and care when it is needed most.**

Because of you, this House is more than a place to stay.

It's a place that feels like home.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Emmanuel Ramirez". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Emmanuel Ramirez  
President & CEO

## Board of Directors

Brian Payne, MD, *Board Chair*  
Briana Vela, *Board Secretary*  
Amber Hook, *Board Treasurer*  
Paul Dannevik, *Board Chair-Elect*  
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Shannon Bates

Bill Cohen  
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Garrett Kennedy  
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Melissa Piepkorn, MD  
Chris Snowberger  
Russell Tippin  
Camie Wade  
Misti Welch  
Logan West  
Todd Williams

# The Riojas Family



**“Overnight our life changed.”**

The morning Maria Riojas went to the hospital, she knew something wasn't right. At 20 weeks pregnant, she was just one day away from an appointment that would determine whether preventative measures were working to keep her baby in utero a little longer. Instead, that afternoon, her water broke—and everything changed.

This wasn't unfamiliar territory for Maria and her husband, Armando. Eight years earlier, their daughter Scarlett had been born at just 23 weeks. It was a journey they had hoped not to repeat.

**“God had other plans,” Maria said.**

At 22 weeks, their son Thomas was born, weighing only 1 pound, 2.5 ounces. He was rushed to the NICU, beginning another long and

uncertain road for the Riojas family.

**“Both Scarlett and Thomas were really early, really tiny. We had long journeys with both of them,” Maria shared.**

But in the midst of uncertainty, one thing remained constant: the Ronald McDonald House was there. Eight years after their first stay—145 nights when Scarlett was born—the Riojas family returned, welcomed once again with open arms.

Though the House had changed in appearance over the years, the feeling inside had not. And, this time, Scarlett got to experience the House in her own way.

**“Scarlett loved the House. She was really sad that we had to leave it.”**

Maria and Armando worried about how the stress of Thomas' condition might affect Scarlett, but she quickly became a bright light to staff and volunteers—and an eager helper to her parents.

**“Scarlett loves being mom's helper. And Thomas is her baby.”**

During their stay, the family spent holidays together at the House—Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's—finding moments of normalcy in an otherwise overwhelming time. From Trunk or Treat to Santa's Village to a Texas Tech Tailgate

in the parking lot, they got to experience fun together thanks to the generosity of our community. Scarlett even got to celebrate her Halloween birthday with donated costumes she adored and special presents from the Toy Closet.



From warm meals and a place to do laundry, to quiet moments watching football together and the support of thoughtful donations—like a high chair, a Boppy pillow, and even a hands-free breast pump—the House met needs both big and small for the Riojas Family.

**“It really does help to have such amazing donors,” Maria said. “Being away from home during an emergency is stressful enough without worrying about basic needs. Because of their generosity and kindness, the House was able to do that for us. We really appreciate it.”**

Today, Thomas is home, growing and surrounded by love. “He's doing really well. He loves being held and loved on,” Maria said. “We're so thankful to have him home with us.”

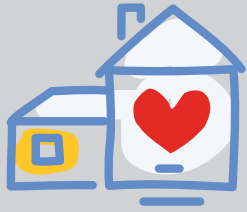


**Maria, Armando, Scarlett, and Thomas had a home away from home—twice—because of you.**

Your donations keep families together and feeling like they are at home when they have to travel for their child's medical care. Please give today to support kids like Scarlett, Thomas, and their families.

**P.S. The enclosed envelope makes it easy and free for you to send in your donation today. You can also visit [RMHCsouthwest.com](http://RMHCsouthwest.com) to give securely online.**

## Your Impact: January-March



**72**  
families stayed in  
the House



**251**  
total guest count



**27**  
nights at the House per  
family (average stay)



**223**  
families served in the  
Family Rooms

## RMHC Snapshots



*Left to Right, Top to Bottom: The Pickett Family, who stayed at the House for 468 nights, attended the Red Shoe Gala; O'Donnell FCCLA held a paper goods drive for the House; new Board Member, Todd Williams attended our Easter Eggstravaganza with his granddaughter; families have lunch in one of our Family Rooms; the Price Family, who stayed at the House 83 nights, donated proceeds from their 3rd annual golf tournament.*



**Ronald  
McDonald  
House®**

### Upcoming Rebrand

You may have already seen the updated logo and name that all Ronald McDonald House programs across the globe are transitioning to since last fall. We are moving from Ronald McDonald House Charities (RMHC) to Ronald McDonald House. It's a name that many people already call us colloquially and we hope it feels like "returning home" to a previous name. RMHC of the Southwest will be making the transition this coming October 2026. Even though our logo will change, the heart of our mission won't and we will still be caring for families with children who are ill or injured.



Our 2026 Employee of the year is **Roselva Ruiz**, Permian Basin Programs Manager. Roselva is well known for making the families and volunteers who visit her Family Room feel at home. Always ready with a listening ear, a warm smile, and a comforting hug, Roselva makes a big impact of the families we serve.

# Update on our Favorite Football Player: #45



Last year, we shared a graduation announcement for JJ De La Fuentes. JJ finished up his senior year and graduated from Lamesa ISD in May 2025, all while he was battling Osteosarcoma. JJ's family spent over 180 nights at the Ronald McDonald House while he received treatment.

JJ has been through a lot in the past year. He spent 268 days in the hospital. He had 32 rounds of chemo. He had a 45+ hour surgery that removed his sacrum. And, he has undergone countless hours of physical therapy. Through it all, JJ has shown his remarkable spirit and resilience. And, his family has been right there by his side.

JJ and his family were featured at our Red Shoe Gala this past February. You can hear his story in his own words by scanning the QR Code or checking out the pinned posts on our Facebook page.



At the Red Shoe Gala, we were also able to celebrate ringing the bell as JJ was declared cancer free.

We are grateful to the De La Fuentes Family for sharing a part of their life with us and to the donors who made caring for them possible. JJ still has a long road to recovery and we ask that you keep his family in your thoughts and prayers. We know that with JJ's attitude, anything is possible.



## What Makes the House a Home?



**The Design:** Built for families—bright, welcoming, and comfortable. From cozy rooms to shared spaces and a kitchen that brings people together, every detail is made to feel like home when it matters most.

**The People:** Love lives here. Families support one another, sharing stories and strength. Volunteers and staff ensure every moment is met with care and compassion.

**The Feeling:** Families arrive carrying so much—worry, uncertainty, fear. Inside the House, that weight begins to lift. They find support, comfort, and the reassurance that they are not alone.

**Want to see it for yourself?** Call (806) 744-8877 to schedule a tour.

# Red Shoe Crew



We'd like to introduce to our 2026 Red Shoe Crew. This group of amazing people will be spending their year bringing awareness, raising funds, and advocating for RMHC of the Southwest and the families we serve. We're so glad to have them as part of the RMHC Family!

Left to Right:

**Trey Robillard**

*Robillard Legacy, LLC dba McDonald's*

**Casey Keene**

*JPJ & Co Fence Staining*

**Andrea Parker**

*StarCare Specialty Health System*

**Trey Benton**

*Builders FirstSource*

**Kaitlyn Watson**

*Advanced Graphix*

**Pamra Culp**

*Rolls of Fun Photography*

**Michael Zimmerman**

*JSA Architects Inc.*

**Ismael Garza**

*UMB Bank*

**David Vaughn**

*ALLIANCE Credit Union*

**Kim Davis**

*2026 Red Shoe Crew Chair  
Kim's Paws and Claws*

**Lauren Briggs**

*Core Wellness*



**Quarterback S.A.C.K. Kick-Off Lunch**

Friday, July 31st  
Frazier Alumni Pavilion

Our 25th year of partnering with Texas Tech Athletics encourages RMHC and Red Raider fans to **Support And Comfort Kids (S.A.C.K.)**. Sponsorship opportunities available now and ticket sales coming soon!



**Show Us Your Stripes Golf Tournament**

Monday, September 14th  
The Rawls Course

Put on your red and white striped socks and **swing "fore" the House**. This tournament sells out quickly so keep an eye out for team registration and sponsorship opportunities in June.

# Memorials & Honorariums

August 2025-March 2026

## In memory of:

**Gail Brock**

*Steve and Tresa Sparks*

**Joseph**

*Leslie Gattis*

**Cathy Abell**

*Jan Heckaman*

**Charlie Anderson**

*Mike and Sue Dye*

**Deborah Boyd**

*Rusty and Linda Andrews*

**Gary Brashears**

*Rusty and Linda Andrews*

**Waunettea Campbell**

*Roland and Renea Livesay*

**George Carkeet**

*Britt Robinson*

**Kenny Coats**

*Barry and Diane Altman*

**Lavetta Coleman**

*Emily Ratcliff and Linda Gaither  
with WestMark Realtors*

**Sharon Cook**

*Bud Caddell*

*Billy and Traci Cheek*

**Matthew Cruz**

*Renea Ruiz*

**Helen Louise Denison**

*Mark and Randa Altman*

**Sara Trippel Funck**

*Mike and Sue Dye*

**Borden Gray**

*Barry and Diane Altman*

**CeeJae Harkey**

*Mistie Cook Kahl with Cook's  
Garage*

**Haley Harvey**

*Heather Reneau with Watson  
Packer*

**Samuel Henderson**

*Rachel Henderson*

**David Howell**

*Roland and Renea Livesay*

**Dawl Johnson**

*Michael and Carla Flippin*

**Roger Alan Key**

*Caral McCall*

**Myra Lincoln**

*Harry and Pam Zalewski*

**Miquela Martinez**

*Estaban Sena*

**Joshua Martinez**

*Jeanna Morton*

**Matthew Mericle**

*Christian and Krista Mericle*

**Don Moreland**

*Jan Heckaman*

**Robert Munoz**

*Rusty and Linda Andrews*

**Brent Neal**

*Joann Neal*

**Jace Ortiz**

*Sara Fierro*

**Timothy Polasek**

*Jimmy and Teka Popnoe*

**Bryan Pope**

*Rusty and Linda Andrews*

**Gaylon Rhodes**

*Roland and Renea Livesay*

**Bonnie Smith**

*Jan Heckaman*

**Nikolas and Tina Soltero**

*Michael and Toni Soltero*

**Stacy Tullis**

*Roland and Renea Livesay*

**Don Veretto**

*Roland and Renea Livesay*

**Graham Davis Webb**

*Ron and Cindy Webb*

*Scott and Elise Marshall*

*Rory and Cindy McCrady*

*Ty and Abbey Webb*

*Barbara Fry*

*Jerrell & Donna Snodgrass*

*Jerry & Gale Webb*

**Steven Wheatley**

*Rusty and Linda Andrews*

**Charlotte Wilson**

*Steve and Cara Merrill*

**Rusti Wisian**

*Barry and Diane Altman*

## In honor of:

**Philip Poindexter**

*Michael and Carla Flippin*



Memorials and honorariums give tribute to your loved ones while supporting families who have a child receiving medical care. We are grateful to those who choose to show their love and respect for their family and friends through a gift to RMHC.

You can also honor your loved ones in a permanent way by donating for a memorial brick. These bricks are located in our front courtyard by our iconic Ronald McDonald Statue. Bricks are \$250 and allow for 3 lines with up to 20 characters on each line.

To make an enduring tribute to your loved one while supporting families with children receiving medical treatment, give us a call at (806) 744-8877.

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# Biggest Needs at RMHC of the Southwest



## Snacks

Snacks and ready-to-heat meals help keep families nourished when they are traveling between the House and the hospital or visiting our Family Rooms for a break. They're especially needed in the summer when we have more siblings and kids staying in the House while school is out.



## Guest Chefs

During the summer, we usually see a decrease in volunteers as college kids go home and families go on vacation. You can help fill the gap by becoming a Guest Chef. Guest Chefs provide the families in the House with a home cooked meal. Join us in providing warmth and comfort to families.



## Donations

Monetary donations help us keep our programs running. \$100 provides a family with a one night stay at the House. That means more time together when kids need mom and dad the most. Any amount makes a difference in keeping families together.

Learn more on our website: [RMHCsouthwest.com](https://www.RMHCsouthwest.com)