

# Ronald McDonald House Family Meal Program Handbook



This is the house that opens its arms.

That feels like home, that embraces the children, that comforts the parents.

This is the house where families meet to eat and sleep, to find their strength and dry tears, to look forward with hope to better years.

This is the House that Love Built

Sandra Wiersma & Holly Sullivan		Elaine Senesac
House Managers – Denver House		Assistant House Mgr – Aurora House
720.382.7215		720.324.2401
<a href="mailto:info@ronaldhouse.org">info@ronaldhouse.org</a>		<a href="mailto:esenesac@ronaldhouse.org">esenesac@ronaldhouse.org</a>

# Ronald McDonald House

Charities of Denver, Inc

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## Family Meal Program

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Families staying at the Ronald McDonald House often experience stress due to the illness or health status of their child. The Family Meal Program offers groups of volunteers the opportunity to extend needed support to these families by providing and preparing a meal at the House.

Location	Ideal Group Size	What time?	How Many?
Denver House	5-7 people	8:00 Weekday Breakfast	Breakfast – 35-40
		9:00 Weekend Breakfast	Lunch – 30-35
		12:00 Lunch	Dinner – 70-75
		6:00 Dinner	Approx. 75% will be adults
Aurora House	7-12 people	8:00 Weekday Breakfast	Breakfast – 35-40
		9:00 Weekend Breakfast	Lunch – 25-30
		12:00 Lunch	Dinner – 55-60
		6:00 Dinner	Approx. 75% will be adults

We ask our volunteers to understand that these numbers are strictly estimates. The actual number of people attending a given meal varies greatly, even when the House is full. This is due to a number of factors, none of which are predictable. We are therefore unable to give a more accurate estimate. Bear in mind, that whether the food is eaten at mealtime or as leftovers, it will be eaten and very much appreciated.

To help prevent food borne illnesses, all food must be prepared and cooked in our kitchens. Having the meal catered is also acceptable. Options also include ordering takeout. All food should be cooked in our kitchens, in a commercial kitchen, or packaged from a store. Feel free to be creative or prepare your own family favorites! Anything that can be stored and reheated easily for leftovers is best. In all cases, food must be packed and transported appropriately, with food safety in mind.

***As you plan your menu, please keep in mind:***

- The number and cooking experience of those in your group
- The size and layout of our kitchen, oven and refrigeration space, and time constraint
- The logistics of getting the food to the House in a safe manner (especially on a workday)
- The fact that you may be sharing the kitchen space with other family members
- Meals are served buffet style with you serving the families, with plastic gloves. This is best for cleanliness purposes!

You can arrive at whatever time you need in order to ensure that your meal is ready to be served at the scheduled time. The only exception is breakfast on the weekends. Our front desk does not usually open until 8:00 am. If you would like to arrive earlier than this for breakfast please call the House Manager at the respective House you are serving. This way we can make sure you can get in! 😊

Our kitchen is equipped with electric residential ovens, and stocked with basic equipment, pans, cooking and serving utensils. We do have dishes and silverware that you may use, but they do have to be placed in the dishwasher before you leave. **We ask that you bring paper plates and plastic utensils if you do not wish to use the regular dishes that we provide.**

Both Houses have BBQ grills that may be used, with advance notification, by our Meal Program groups. However, a group that chooses to use a grill is then responsible for thoroughly cleaning it when finished (the cleaning procedure is posted). We realize this is not an easy task, and as well is time-consuming. Some groups choose not to use the grill for these reasons.

The final task is cleaning the kitchen. Family members clear and clean their own tables. However, the volunteer group is responsible for everything else including packaging and labeling leftovers, washing all dishes, cleaning counters, sweeping floors, and emptying the garbage (unfortunately, it is the same everywhere, isn't it?). Most groups require at least an hour to clean up after they finish serving the meal. It is best for us if you can leave approximately six plates of your prepared meal in the refrigerator, covered with wrapping. This is the best way for our families to come and warm up a quick meal if they come home late from the hospital. It's also the best way to control germs! You may take all other leftovers with you and eat them yourselves. This way hopefully very little food will go to waste!

## **Scheduling Your Dinner**

- Once you decide that you would like to host a meal at the House, contact the respective House Managers for available dates and to confirm the date that works for your group:  
Aurora - Elaine Senesac      720.324.2401      esenesac@ronaldhouse.org  
Denver – Sandra Wiersma/Holly Sullivan      720.382.7215      info@ronaldhouse.org
- Decide which House suits your group best.
- A site-visit prior to your first scheduled meal is encouraged so that you can have a better idea of what to expect when you come on the day you serve.
- A tour of the House for interested members of your group may be arranged in advance, to take place at the House on the date of your meal.

## **On Your Service Day**

- Make sure that no one in your group has any symptoms of illness, has recently been exposed to a disease or has a communicable disease. If this applies to anyone in your group, they should stay home and not participate in any food preparation.
- Children in your group must be supervised at ALL TIMES and must remain in the kitchen with you and not wandering throughout the House. ALL volunteers must be at least 13 years old. Please do not bring anyone under the age of 13 with you to the House on your serve day.
- When you arrive at the House, check in at the front desk. Everyone in your group must sign in and put on a visitor's badge. Carts or wagons for transporting food and supplies are available in the reception area.
- If you have any questions while cooking at either House, please ask the volunteer at the front desk for help. They will be more than happy to assist you! Sometimes they are not aware that it is your first time and may not offer the assistance up front, but don't be afraid to ask! 😊
- Once the food is prepared, set the food out buffet style. Refill the buffet as needed, keeping the buffet table and nearby floor area clean.
- Sit down and eat with the families (this is the best part 😊).
- The Ronald McDonald House does not affiliate itself with any particular religion. We ask that you DO NOT share your religious feelings, practices or beliefs with RMH families while you are volunteering.
- After about an hour of serving, (earlier if family members are no longer eating) start to clean up.
- Hand-wash any trays, pans, and cookie sheets, which are otherwise damaging to the dishwashers. Put all other dirty dishes and utensils in the dishwasher. Run dishwashers when full. If, during the course of the evening, you find a full, clean dishwasher, it would be greatly appreciated by the families if you empty it.
- You may leave leftovers for our families if you wish. You can put together 6-8 plates of food, cover, and place in the "house" refrigerator. Any extra you may take home and enjoy!
- No "potentially hazardous foods" (defined as foods in which bacteria are more likely to grow—(see the "Food Handling, Preparation, and Storage Guidelines")-- may remain on the buffet counter after dinner service is over.

- Wipe down the counter tops with disinfectant spray. Sweep the floor. Empty full garbage cans, place new liners in the cans and break down all boxes.
- Please return all equipment to its original location.

### **Special Reminders:**

- If you need to **cancel on the day of your dinner**, please call the front desk at the respective house and leave a message for the House Manager, as well as sending a cancellation notice by e-mail.
- Volunteers may not take responsibility for supervising or caring for children in the absence of a parent or guardian, either from the common areas or from the House premises.
- Volunteers should never enter a family's room for any reason.
- Children that come along to volunteer must be supervised by an adult at ALL TIMES.
- Before taking photographs, check with a staff person. A written release using our form must first be obtained from the parent of each child in a photograph. Photographs that will be used for any type of publication and any filming, requires advance permission and arrangements.

We appreciate your feedback. After your dinner date, please tell us about your evening at the House and any suggestions you might have that would improve the experience for our volunteers. Please direct comments to:

Connie Neville – Aurora House Manager  
720.324.2400 [cneville@ronaldhouse.org](mailto:cneville@ronaldhouse.org)

Sandra Wiersma or Holly Sullivan – Denver House Managers  
720.382.7215 [info@ronaldhouse.org](mailto:info@ronaldhouse.org)

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## **Food Handling, Preparation, and Storage Guidelines\***

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Please make sure each person in your group reads the following guidelines very carefully. Many of our children have a low tolerance for germs and bacteria; it is very important that everyone understands and follows these guidelines. Thank you.

**Please stay at home if you are experiencing any of the following symptoms:** sore throat, runny nose, coughing or sneezing, watery eyes, fever, chills, unexplained rashes, general aches, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea **or if you have recently been exposed to or have** chicken pox, shingles, measles, tuberculosis, influenza, hepatitis, or any other communicable diseases.

1. **Wash hands often and well** (see attached guide): Clean hands are the most important food safety tool.
2. **Never touch ready-to-eat food with bare hands:**
  - Use serving utensils to handle food
  - Wear gloves (provided by the House), when doing food prep at the House

### **Important Rules for Using Gloves**

- Wash hands before using gloves, Change gloves that get ripped
- Change gloves that might be contaminated, keep in mind that your gloves become your second skin so keep them clean.
- Never wash or reuse gloves
- Change gloves between working with raw and ready-to-eat foods
- Throw gloves away after use
- Wash hands after taking gloves off

3. **Clean and sanitize all food preparation surfaces:**

- Before using
- In between preparation of different food items
- During final clean up

At the House, use the supplied disinfectant spray and paper towels to clean work surfaces, serving counters, and dining tables.

4. **Keep potentially hazardous foods hot or cold:**

- These are defined as foods in which bacteria are more likely to grow.
- These foods include:

Animal products (includes eggs, dairy products)

Cooked starches (rice, beans, pasta, potatoes)

Fruits and vegetables as follows: cooked vegetables, tofu, sprouts

such as alfalfa or bean sprouts, cut melons.

- Potentially hazardous food may be kept at room temperature for up to two hours while you are preparing it.

**5. Keep raw meat away from other food to prevent cross contamination.**

- Wash and sanitize surfaces that come in contact with raw meat.
- Use a separate cutting board for raw meat.
- Wash hands after handling raw meat.

**6. Prohibited foods are as follows:**

- Non-pasteurized juice and milk products
- Raw seed sprouts, such as alfalfa sprouts
- Undercooked meat, fish, or eggs
- Alcohol: No alcohol may be brought to the House, including the use of it as an ingredient in on-site food preparation.

**7. Know the ingredients of your dishes:**

- Some of our families may have questions or concerns of possible food allergies or sensitivities.

**8. Leftover Food Storage:**

- You may leave leftovers for our families if you wish. You can put together 6-8 plates of food, cover, and place in the “house” refrigerator. Any extra you may take home and enjoy!
- All potentially hazardous foods should be properly stored and not left out on serving counters. Families arriving after dinner will help themselves to the food that has been stored in the refrigerator.

**9. Washing dishes by hand (see attached guide):**

- Wash
- Rinse
- Air dry (may do final drying, if necessary, with paper towels)

\*adapted from the Washington Safe Food and Beverage Workers’ Manual

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**Washing Dishes by Hand\***

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1. Clean sinks and sanitize disinfectant spray. Rinse with clear water.
2. **Wash** dishes in hot, soapy running water.
3. **Rinse** dishes with hot, running water.
4. **Air-dry** for as long as possible.
5. If needed, finish drying with paper towels before putting dishes away.

\* Only items that cannot be washed in the dishwasher should be washed by hand.

All other items are washed in the dishwasher.

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**Menu Planning**

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As a general guideline, please consider providing the following menu items:

- Main dish (it is not necessary to provide both a meat and vegetarian entrée)
- Starch, if not included in the main dish
- Fresh green or vegetable salad and/or vegetable
- Fresh fruit
- Bread/rolls with butter
- Dessert
- Beverages (We have ice machines). Most groups bring 2-liters of soda or mix to make lemonade, Kool-aid, etc!

Prohibited foods are as follows:

- Non-pasteurized juice and milk products
- Raw seed sprouts, such as alfalfa sprouts
- Undercooked meat, fish, or eggs

- Alcohol: No alcohol may be brought to the House, including the use of it as an ingredient in on-site food preparation.

Know the ingredients in all foods that you serve. Ingredients do not need to be displayed, however be prepared to verbally offer a list of ingredients in case of food sensitivities/restrictions.

Please provide paper plates and plastic utensils if you wish to use them. We provide napkins, regular plates, silverware, containers for packaging leftovers, basic cooking and serving equipment, cleaning supplies, and ice for beverages. If you wish to use paper goods you must provide them. Our equipment is also basic, so if you need something special you may want to bring your own!

## **Menu Suggestions:**

### **Entrées**

- Home-style/Comfort Foods (most popular)
- Macaroni and Cheese
- Casseroles
- Hot Dogs & Hamburgers
- Grilled Items
- Soup & salad bar
- Stir-fry
- Breakfast Menu
- BBQ Ribs
- Enchiladas
- Baked potato bar w/ all the toppings
- Chili
- Ethnic theme
- Turkey, Ham, Chicken or Beef
- Sandwich Makings (you can do lunchmeats or have hot fillings like meatball, philly, etc.)
- Your favorite family recipe
- Spaghetti, Tacos, and Lasagna are served most often so something different is most welcome!

***Catered Restaurant Dishes & take-out as well as purchased frozen entrées  
are possibilities.***

### **Side**

- Vegetables-cooked ; Raw vegetable Grilled vegetables

- Rice, Potatoes, Beans Chips, Dip, Salsa
- French Fries
- Mashed Potatoes with Gravy (a favorite!)

### **Salads/Fruit**

- Any salad or salad bar. Salads may be dressed or dressing may be served on the side.
- Fresh fruit platters (popular with the children and adults)

### **Bread** (if needed, remember butter)

- Rolls/Muffins/Loaves of Bread
- Garlic Bread
- Cornbread
- Focaccia
- Pita Bread

### **Desserts** (Families love desserts- especially freshly made)

- Cookies
- Cakes, Pies
- Cupcakes
- Brownies
- Ice Cream Sundaes
- Ice Cream Bars
- Crisps and Cobblers with Whipping Cream
- Root beer floats

### **Beverages**

- Bottled Water
- Juice, Punch
- Soda

## **Driving Directions to the Ronald McDonald House (Aurora)**

### **932 Potomac Circle, Aurora, Colorado 80011**

#### **FROM I-225**

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- Take the 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue Exit
- Go West on 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue
- Take your first right onto Potomac Street
- Go about 6 blocks to Potomac Circle (CU Law Enforcement Credit Union) and turn Right
- You will head straight to the House

## **Driving Directions to the Ronald McDonald House (Denver)**

1300 E 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue, Denver, Colorado 80205

#### **FROM THE SOUTH**

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- Take I-25 to the Downing Exit
- Go North on Downing
- You will be on Downing for quite awhile, and you'll eventually cross Colfax. You will need to take a left at Colfax and then your next right as Downing jags a bit at Colfax.
- Turn right at the stoplight at 21st.
- Then your first right into our driveway. It is the big brick building on the corner of 21<sup>st</sup> & Downing

#### **FROM THE NORTH**

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- Take I-25 south and get off at Park Avenue
- You can only go one direction off that exit
- Stay on Park Avenue until you reach Stout
- You have to take a left at Stout and then your next immediate right to follow Park Avenue
- Turn Left onto 20<sup>th</sup> (safeway will be on your left)
- Turn Left onto Downing. Take your first right on 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue. The House driveway will be the first driveway on your right. It is a big brick building!

#### **FROM I-70**

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- Take the Colorado Blvd. exit
- Go south on Colorado Blvd.
- Turn right at 23<sup>rd</sup>
- Turn left on Downing
- Turn left on 21<sup>st</sup>.
- Take your first right into the driveway.