

Help give families special moments to celebrate ♥



Chantelle and Enzo Vanasse

Your donations to our home away from home mean so much to our family. Enzo and I thank you in advance for keeping families close at Ronald McDonald House Charities® Manitoba. May you have many special moments to celebrate with those closest to you.

Chantelle Vanasse

Donate below with enclosed envelope or online at rmhmanitoba.org/how-you-can-help



✂

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

Province: _____ **Postal Code:** _____

Email: _____

Donation: \$30 \$50 \$100 Other: _____

Payment Details: Visa MasterCard

Cheque (made payable to Ronald McDonald House Charities® Manitoba)

Card # _____

Name on card: _____ **Expiry date:** _____

- Please send me information on volunteer opportunities.
- I have left a donation to Ronald McDonald House Charities® Manitoba in my will.
- I would like to speak to someone about leaving a donation to Ronald McDonald House Charities® Manitoba in my will.

Mail this form to:

Ronald McDonald House Charities® Manitoba
566 Bannatyne Avenue
Winnipeg, MB R3A 0G7

Website: www.rmhmanitoba.org
Email: info@rmhmanitoba.org
Phone: 204-774-4777

Ronald McDonald House Charities® Manitoba respects your privacy. We do not sell, trade or release our mailing list or any part of the information we collect to any other party or agency.

Tax receipts are issued for donations of \$20.00 or more.

Charitable Organization Number:
10412 5323 RR0001



My 11-year-old son is a miracle baby and my hero. He has endured endless painful procedures and needed to be resuscitated more than once. In his short life, he has had over 15 surgeries since birth.

Vincenzo (Enzo) was delivered two weeks early after doctors discovered he was affected by gastroschisis, a birth defect causing his intestines to stick outside his stomach. When it was time for him to be delivered, we left our home in Brandon, MB and traveled about two and a half hours to Winnipeg's HSC Children's Hospital to begin Enzo's journey.

Once my baby boy was born, he went through a 13-hour surgery. After five long days, I was finally able to hold him which gave me renewed strength. A nurse told us we could stay at Ronald McDonald House®, a short walk away from Enzo, while he healed. We could not believe it would cost us only \$10 per night. When we walked into Ronald McDonald House, our jaws dropped. We didn't expect such a wonderful, comforting place and instantly felt at ease. For the next four and a half months, Vincenzo was treated at HSC's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit while we stayed in our new home away from home.



Chantelle and three-month-old Enzo at Ronald McDonald House (2005)

Because of his gastroschisis, Enzo wasn't able to eat solid food and lived with an ileostomy bag from the time he was six-weeks to three-years-old. At this time, doctors decided to remove his narrowed and malfunctioning large intestine. He could now live without his ileostomy bag.

Enzo endured many challenges after this, including stunted growth. Due to bacteria overgrowth in his digestive system, it was difficult for him to absorb nutrients. At 10-years-old, he looked thin and frail. It got to the point where his hair was starting to fall out because he was so nutrient-starved. In grade four, he was wearing the same clothing sizes he had been wearing in kindergarten.



Chantelle and three-year-old Enzo at Ronald McDonald House (2008)

Last September, Enzo was fitted with a feeding tube. After initial complications, his condition improved and he started growing again. We celebrate every time he moves up to a larger pant size.

Enzo has also been affected by bleeding ulcers from old surgical wounds and has had to have many blood and iron transfusions to keep his levels up. After being on an all-liquid diet last fall in hopes of curing his ulcers, we tried reintroducing solid food to his diet. This ended up causing an obstruction which required another surgery. However, it was discovered an ileostomy bag needed to be put in place again, otherwise the surgery would be fatal.

With no warning or preparation, Enzo ended up waking up with a bag attached to his stomach. My soon-to-be, 11-year-old boy was devastated. This happened at a time when he was about to enter those already difficult, teenage years.

With everything Enzo has been through, he always manages to look on the bright side. When he stays at Ronald McDonald House, his energy and spirits are lifted, especially having a place for his family to be with him during the difficult times. He loves it and feels he can be himself here and act like a kid. He is one of the strongest people I know, but having an ileostomy bag back on was hard for him.



Enzo getting his hair cut by MC College RMH volunteers (2015)

Enzo was in for a big surprise when the staff and volunteers of Ronald McDonald House celebrated his 11th birthday in March with a festive birthday party. It was wonderful seeing him happy, surrounded by family and friends. They think about the little things like that and words can't describe how thankful I am to have them in our lives, supporting us through our many challenging times.

Since Enzo was born, our family has spent countless days together at Ronald McDonald House. Over the last 11 years, Enzo's siblings often stay with us at the House to support him while he receives treatments. He says he feels stronger with all of us by his side.

With meal programs, free laundry services, shower facilities, parking and meaningful programming, Ronald McDonald House Charities® Manitoba has always been there for us and we can always depend on them. I hope Enzo can get to a point where he can eat and live life without regular hospital visits, but until then, we couldn't ask for a better place to stay together as a family.



Enzo and sister, Chené, at Grey Cup Festival thanks to generous RMH donors (2015)

I have no idea where we would be without Ronald McDonald House Charities® Manitoba. We ask that you please give what you can to support over 600 families needing to use Ronald McDonald House each year, as well as between 23,000-25,000 annual visitors finding comfort in the Ronald McDonald Family Room®. Every little bit helps keep families like us close when they need it most.

We all cherish special moments with our family. With your help, you can give families the opportunity to celebrate life and heal together.

Chantelle Vanasse



Enzo celebrates his 11th birthday with family and friends at Ronald McDonald House (2016)

Turn over to see how you can help.