



NURTURING A SUCCESSFUL CORPORATE PARTNERSHIP

A GLOBAL CASE STUDY OF RONALD
MCDONALD HOUSE CHARITIES AND
ROYAL BANK OF CANADA



Ronald McDonald
House Charities™
United Kingdom

30 years



Royal Bank
of Canada

WRITTEN BY TONY MORTON,
HEAD OF INCOME GENERATION, RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE CHARITIES UK

An overview

Securing and retaining the support of a corporate partner can be a vital step in safeguarding a charity's future. The bigger the partner, the greater the potential – in theory, at least. But whilst international businesses often champion their global perspective, international charities, on the other hand, tend to focus much more locally. So how can charities effectively scale the support of a global corporate partner? And what must charities do to keep the employees of a corporate actively engaged in a partnership? And whilst the benefits for the charity are easily measured in funds raised and hours volunteered, where does the corporate really gain?

In this article, the author explores a complex but flourishing international partnership between Ronald McDonald House Charities and Royal Bank of Canada and wonders whether this multi-dimensional model is a blueprint for other ambitious charities to follow. And for other businesses that may be curious to understand exactly where the benefits of such a partnership can be felt, we ask different stakeholders at RBC to give their viewpoint.

The international expansion of Ronald McDonald House Charities beyond US shores began in Toronto, so it's fitting that one of our most international corporate partnerships should have developed with Royal Bank of Canada (RBC), headquartered there. As part of this global partnership, we have worked together in the UK to support thousands of families who have children seriously ill in the hospital. In a nutshell, what does this partnership look like?

Like many global partnerships, it is complex and it operates on multiple levels;

- Volunteering activities are plentiful and varied in output
- Staff fundraise through challenge events
- Corporate donations originate from RBC's trading days
- Friends and family of RBC staff members contribute to the fundraising through the firm's international series of fun run events; RBC Race for the Kids. These events in Kuala Lumpur, Sydney and New York benefit local Ronald McDonald House Charities Chapters.

“We are delighted to be working with RBC, a firm that shares our passion to support local communities and see them prosper. Their amazing staff have been supporting us now for over three years in the UK and their efforts have had a big impact on the Houses they've helped and also on the families who stay in them”

Jon Haward, Executive Director, Ronald McDonald House Charities UK.

Where our global partnership started

RBC Capital Markets have been an important part of the family at Ronald McDonald House New York since 2003. In that time they have incrementally embraced the House and the Charity.

“Presently, RBC engages with the House twice a month through sponsoring and staffing of our families’ evening meals, they support our Family Room through their Foundation, and have given 10 years’ of annual support and leadership to an event called Skate with the Greats held at Rockefeller Center in partnership with the New York Rangers Hockey Club. Senior leadership from RBC is present as a member of our Executive Committee and Executive Board, and other employees are members of our Board of Associates (Junior Board) where members have been integral to the success of our annual Masquerade. RBC employees have run in our Marathon Teams, and 5 Borough Bike Tour Teams, and continuing the emphasis on fitness – we are beneficiaries from their annual Race for the Kids.

RBC is the ideal partner for Corporate Social Responsibility when we talk to other prospective corporate supporters as a model of how their engagement can benefit their employees through team-building, empathetic response development, and positive impressions of their employer through a volunteer experience.”

Ruth C. Browne, SD, President and CEO Ronald McDonald House New York



RBC staff serving up success at Ronald McDonald House New York

Appetite for Volunteering

RBC staff have an enormous appetite to share their talents and spare time to make a real difference and here at Ronald McDonald House Charities UK we have worked hard to ensure that in return for their support, RBC staff are invited into the heart of our charity so that they get to see, hear and feel the importance of the facilities that we provide.

As a global and well connected bank, RBC foster the exchange of ideas between regions so that the best-suited ideas can seed and take root in new locations. This ethos and approach to our partnership was present from the outset and an ideology, as a charity with a global reach, we embraced and continue to nurture.

In July 2015, Jordan Lorch, Director – Global Head of Equity Client Strategy at RBC Capital Markets, visited our old Ronald McDonald House at Guy's and St Thomas' in London. Jordan had been volunteering at the Ronald McDonald House in New York, witnessing what the Charity was doing globally and was keen to get his London colleagues involved. He suggested serving dinner for our families, something that happens more frequently in Ronald McDonald House programmes in the USA. After a few discussions, 'Takeaway Tuesday' was created, a monthly opportunity for the families to not have to worry about cooking dinner and just enjoy a pizza delivery in the House. 'Takeaway Tuesday' became so popular that when our new 59-bedroom Ronald McDonald House at Evelina London Children's Hospital opened in spring 2017, Jordan developed the initiative into a fortnightly delivery of Domino's Pizza or Nando's.

Often Jordan and other RBC employees personally deliver the food and chat to families about their day, offering their support. 'Takeaway Tuesday' is a simple idea, but it offers something extra special for the House residents. The evening brings a degree of normality, a chance for the families to take time off from the stress on the wards, allowing them to relax, unwind and talk to other families who are going through a similar difficult experience. Peer support can make a huge difference to families with children in hospital, so social events like these are vital.

In 2018, RBC provided dinner for 1,416 families staying in the Evelina London House.

“Ronald McDonald House Charities is a charity that understands and helps drive our passion for community. Our relationship extends well beyond UK shores into RBC locations in North America, Asia and Australasia. This successful partnership has evolved organically at an individual staff member level as well as at a corporate partner level.”

Jordan Lorch, Director, Global Head of Equity Client Strategy, RBC Capital Markets



RBC volunteers mingle with families at an Evelina House Takeaway Tuesday

Volunteering with Impact

"Volunteering gives RBC staff a very strong sense that they're making a positive contribution to their communities, says Jordan. "The support enriches RBC colleagues with a wide range of valuable experiences, often providing a fresh perspective on their own circumstances. We like our work to have a real, immediate impact, and a lasting one too. And there's plenty of benefit for the volunteers themselves; building relationships with colleagues, engaging in teamwork, enjoying a shared sense of purpose, and giving back. Teams and individuals alike return to the workplace feeling enriched. Through the volunteer exercises, colleagues grow as ambassadors of the firm. Many activities offer leadership opportunities for individuals to shine. We volunteered over 1000 hours to Ronald McDonald House Charities in the UK in 2018 – and none of this was planned or prescribed – it has grown organically and the individuals involved have had the opportunity to steer this engagement as they've seen fit. I'm positive that in most cases, volunteers return to their day to day roles as more valuable assets to the firm" added Jordan.

Since spring 2018 staff from RBC, organised by Susanne Fogg, have been busy giving their time to redecorate and theme bedrooms in our Camberwell House, which supports King's College Hospital London. The RBC team committed a budget of C\$550 to each room, buying all the equipment and furnishings for seven bedrooms. As part of a longer-term reinvestment programme for the House, the redecoration project has helped to reduce Charity expenditure whilst creating a bona fide team building activity for RBC staff that provides a lasting and tangible legacy for families to experience.



"The results have been absolutely incredible. Our families have been amazed by the love, care and work that has gone into each room"

Jane Wells, Operations Consultant, Ronald McDonald House Charities UK



A make-over team in action at the Camberwell House

RBC staff have fulfilled over 400 volunteering hours at the Camberwell House and many more have been spent designing the décor and planning the materials needed, which would have taken place during their own personal time. Their attention to detail has created a 'home away from home' that allows families an escape from the stress of the hospital ward. RBC staff have created places where the families can relax in a lovely room that feels a bit special; homely, bright and fresh.

Ronald McDonald House Camberwell is not the only London House to benefit from support from the RBC Makeover Team. The team have also been busy building a breakfast bar area in an unused corner of the lounge in our House at Moorfields Eye Hospital. The new area will mean we can provide dining facilities and free tea and coffee for those families who need a break away from the hospital but are not staying with us overnight. It is a chance for them to eat as a family and meet and share experiences with other families in a more relaxed setting than the hospital and be stronger together. It's also an option for our resident families who want to use the day room to eat breakfast together and have a sense of routine, just as they would at home. Again, the team planned all the work and paid a budget of C\$550 to buy the materials.

Over at Ronald McDonald House Tooting, located at St George's Hospital in London, the RBC Makeover Team donated around 50 hours of their time to re-landscape the garden, including creating a zen garden for families and their sick children to relax away from the hospital. Outdoor spaces like these are really important, as they allow siblings who are staying with us in the House, an opportunity to play and run around and 'be kids', away from the ward.

"It's really lovely when the sick children themselves are well enough to visit the House, breathe fresh air away from their bed on the ward and enjoy time in the garden with their family."

Rachel Tween, House Manager, Ronald McDonald House Tooting



Child staying in Ronald McDonald House Tooting enjoys the garden

Thanks to the RBC Makeover Team we now have a space where parents can go and sit outside for peace and quiet. The space and fresh air gives them time to reflect on what is happening and recharge before going back to visit their sick child in hospital. In addition to the building and decorating, RBC staff have regularly visited our Houses in London to help with gardening, deep cleaning and maintenance – all things that help keep our Houses feeling like a home for the families that we support.

We have been creative in our approach and offered RBC staff opportunities that meet the needs of both our partnership and our cause. We have created unique and authentic experiences that have actively engaged RBC in delivering our mission alongside us.

RBC Trade for the Kids

Throughout the term of our partnership we have witnessed the generosity and enthusiasm of the staff at RBC for our Charity. The origins of this now global trading day can be found in New York in 2015 where Ronald McDonald House Charities was one of three youth causes to benefit from a share of a seven figure gift. Two years later when London's trading floor staged their own event, RMHC UK was selected as one of three charities to receive a £150,000 gift. Then in 2018 when the event itself went global, Ronald McDonald House Randwick in Sydney was chosen as the sole Australian beneficiary. Meanwhile, the Charity's UK arm returned to RBC's London trading floor to join five other UK charities for an event that eventually led to USD 3.3 million in gifts to 40 youth charities.

"Families who have experienced the charity's support first-hand come to RBC's trading floors at events like Trade for the Kids to give our staff a powerful and lasting insight into the challenges they've had to overcome. And through fundraising opportunities like the Royal Parks Half, we're not only promoting wellbeing, we're also celebrating the charity's work with its supporters in wonderful sociable setting."

Graeme Pearson, Global Head of Research and Head of European Equities, RBC Capital Markets

DONATION OF
\$3.3M
TO 40 YOUTH
CHARITIES FROM
RBC GLOBAL
TRADING DAY



Ronald McDonald House Charities' families take to the phones at RBC Trade for the Kids in 2018

RBC Trade for the Kids enabled us to take our charity right into RBC and onto the trading floor. Four of the families we were supporting at the time engaged with the traders and told them in their own words what they were going through and how RBC's support had helped them. Trade for the Kids introduced RBC staff to mums, dads, siblings and stories of children battling serious illness.

“As an industry leader in Australia, Royal Bank of Canada has developed a reputation that extends beyond that of helping clients thrive; firmly embedded into their culture is a dedication to ensuring communities prosper. And there is no better representation of this deep institutional commitment than the local partnership with Ronald McDonald House Charities Sydney. To date, more than \$160,000 in funding has been generated through Royal Bank of Canada's internal and external efforts, ensuring seriously ill children and their families who rely upon our programs have a steadfast charity champion when they need it most.”

**Rachel McGregor, Development and Relationships Manager,
RMHC Sydney**

**Watch the RBC Trade for the
Kids video [here](#).**



RBC staff meet families who stayed in a Ronald McDonald House at Trade for the Kids 2017

Challenge Events Boost Fundraising

We were thrilled to hear that RBC Equities colleagues in London and New York would take on the challenge of the Royal Parks Half Marathon in London in both 2017 and 2018 to raise funds for Ronald McDonald House Charities. Bobbie Grubert and Ahmed Kachenoura, Co-Heads of US Global Equities were welcomed to the start line in Hyde Park by fellow Ronald McDonald House Charities supporter and Global Head of Research and Head of European Equities, Graeme Pearson. Clad in blue and gold, with many colleagues navigating the whole thirteen mile course together, Team Equities raised a total of £48,848.25 in 2018 for Ronald McDonald House Charities.

“The relationship that RBC shares with Ronald McDonald House is so special because it unites colleagues in North America, Europe and in Asia in the pursuit of one of the firm’s guiding principles: to help communities prosper. There is meaningful engagement at so many levels. Colleagues are able to collaborate and develop new skills as they volunteer their services in Ronald McDonald House kitchens, accommodation areas and gardens.”

Bobby Grubert, Co-Head, Global Equities, RBC Capital Markets



Jordan Lorch leads an RBC team in the 2018 Royal Parks Half presented by RBC

Piggy backing the Royal Parks Half Marathon, of which RBC are a Presenting Partner, is the UK’s Race for the Kids, part of a series of 17 races run internationally. Ronald McDonald House Charities is the leading charity partner in several of the runs including in Kuala Lumpur and New York.

“RBC have been a partner organisation with RMHC Malaysia since 2016. The funds that they raise for us through Race for the Kids has enabled us to establish six new Ronald McDonald Sensory Rooms.”

Mohd Nasri Nordin, General Manager, RMHC Malaysia

Ahmed continues with his training in preparation for the 2019 London Marathon where he will be joined by Jordan Lorch to once again take to the streets to raise money for Ronald McDonald House Charities UK.

Susanne Fogg, is a key ambassador for the Charity; organising fundraising and volunteering activities. In 2018 she pioneered the Stepathon Challenge, which turned out to be every bit as global as the bank's relationship with the Charity. This was all thanks to the 'virtual' stepathon format which united, yet pitched against each other, technology colleagues from around RBC's global network. Collectively, technology colleagues would make the 19 million steps between Ronald McDonald House Charities global HQ in Illinois to the RBC CyberJaya technology hub in Malaysia – all within a matter of weeks. They beat their 19.6 million steps target and walked an extra 4,000km and raised \$1,500 for the Charity in doing so. The StepathonChallenge helped to engage not just one team but several around the world. The event was an opportunity to recruit like-minded individuals across various locations and bring them together virtually to achieve a shared goal. Additionally it provided a platform to increase awareness of the partnership between RBC and Ronald McDonald House Charities.

“This was global challenge which on the one hand promoted wellbeing, but also gave a high profile to international fundraising endeavours which helped to inspire colleagues to serve their local communities in a creative way.”

Susanne Fogg, Executive Assistant, Global Technology Infrastructure, RBC

In 2018, Mike Hall Head of European Equity Sales, RBC Capital Markets took our partnership to new heights and territories when along with his son he tackled Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania. The challenge raised nearly £4,000 for Ronald McDonald House Charities UK.

“Last year I was able to experience first-hand the Ronald McDonald House Charities' support when my godson was critically ill in hospital. I'm delighted to say he survived and I was given the motivation to raise money for this brilliant charity and at the same time realise an ambition to climb Mt Kilimanjaro with my son. It was quite emotional to reflect at >19,000 feet in howling wind and -20C the effort we'd put in, the money we'd raised and what an amazing year this charity had delivered us.”



Mike Hall, Head of European Equity Sales, RBC Capital Markets, London

Serving up Strategic Insights as well as Meals

As we begin to look towards the future of our partnership together we were delighted to be chosen as the focal point of RBC's Hackathon 2018.

The initiative challenges RBC internship graduates to put their learnings into practice, using their business skills and working collaboratively to find the solution to a problem set by the Charity; how to help it stay ahead of the game to attract new donors and engage with young people under the age of 30 in a cashless society. This scenario is a real-time challenge for many charities, and as technology advances and society becomes more accustomed to information at their fingertips and less physical cash in their pockets, staying ahead or even up-to-date and relevant is critical.

But before they got to the problem solving, the team were invited to join us in our Evelina London House to volunteer and see for themselves the service we provide.

"Spending time volunteering at the House allowed us to see the facilities and thoughtfulness provided. We saw the dedication and community spirit Ronald McDonald House Charities foster throughout the house, including the RBC Day Room, where a vibrant community space allows children and parents to gather overlooking the park nearby. As a cohort we were able to help the team maintain the facilities by aiding with gardening and assist with the overall upkeep of the premises. Experiencing a Ronald McDonald House first-hand formed a thorough understanding of needs, ranging from funding to home maintenance while brainstorming innovative solutions for a great RBC Partnership."

Dinushi Pieries, Analyst, Global Client Coverage, RBC Investor & Treasury Services

The problem-solving exercise gave graduates the opportunity to think strategically in teams, applying what they know about their own demographic opinions and preferences. They presented their projects to a panel of experts, made up of both RBC and Ronald McDonald House Charities UK staff and the results included prototypes for volunteering apps, fundraising loyalty and gaming solutions and more.

“I would have been really happy to see the winning teams’ ideas developed further and in fact we will be incorporating elements of their proposals into our marketing and fundraising strategies moving forward. The Hackathon also helped bring our Charity to life for a different audience that may not have previously had any contact with our work.”

Anne Ward, Head of Development, Ronald McDonald House Charities UK

The Hackathon not only supported the development of the RBC graduates but in turn helped to steer us towards future positioning of digital technology and how to engage with non-parent individuals under 30 years.



Moving forward, together

Our challenge moving into 2019 is to continue to grow as a partnership; offering more RBC staff opportunities to get directly involved, creating new and innovative ways to bring our partnership to life and most importantly supporting even more families with children in hospital.

Four key factors that have helped deepen engagement:

- To identify a common purpose between charity and corporate partner. In this case, both RBC and RMHC strive to make a positive, lasting impact on their communities.
- Be creative; RMHC recognises a huge appetite among RBCers to volunteer – but volunteer roles need to be served up in a variety of guises – not just meals, but other essential services too, gardening, decorating, maintenance and even strategizing.
- Be flexible; while the capital markets are open for business, time away from the trading desk to volunteer is often out of the question, so the timing of activities has to be flexible.
- Be present; Supporting the world's youth is something that resonates with RBCers across the globe, but to establish an emotional connection with staff that will truly drive commitment to the cause, former RMH residents bring their personal stories to the trading floor itself.

“I have met individuals from RBC personally and have been impressed by their passion for the Charity and the benefits they have seen from our partnership. I look forward to growing our relationship next year and beyond.”

Jon Haward, Executive Director Ronald McDonald House Charities UK

Over the last few years we have grown our partnership organically, nurturing each element and created a partnership that is exciting and scalable. We have worked with RBC to broaden the ways in which their staff can engage in volunteer activity, ensuring a wide variety of opportunities are available.

We will continue to work together to extend our relationship into other RBC locations globally. We will find new ways to engage as technology reduces the relevance of the space between us; connecting together, sharing stories and recruiting to the cause from afar. This is new territory for us to explore and we plan to explore it together.

If your business would like to support the work of Ronald McDonald House Charities UK, please email info@rmhc.org.uk.

About Ronald McDonald House Charities

Ronald McDonald House Charities (RMHC), is a non-profit, 501 (c) (3) corporation that creates, finds, and supports programs that directly improve the health and well-being of children and their families. Through its global network of over 275 Chapters in more than 64 countries and regions, and its three core programmes: the Ronald McDonald House, the Ronald McDonald Family Room and the Ronald McDonald Care Mobile, RMHC helps families with sick children stay together, and close to the medical care their child needs at leading hospitals worldwide. RMHC programs not only provide access to quality health care, they enable family-centred care ensuring families are fully supported and actively involved in their children's care. For more information, visit rmhc.org. Follow RMHC on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn.

About Ronald McDonald House Charities UK

Ronald McDonald House Charities UK provides free accommodation to families with seriously ill children in hospitals across the UK. Often, the best medical care isn't close to home, so parents will travel far in order for their child to receive the specialist care they so badly need. The Charity helps families stay together and support them through what is probably the most difficult time of their lives.

Ronald McDonald House Charities was founded in the UK in 1989 and is this year celebrating its 30th birthday.



Ronald McDonald
House Charities™
United Kingdom

30 years



Royal Bank
of Canada