

Participation Requirements:

- **Meals from the Heart groups may include a maximum of twelve (12) volunteers.** Everyone who comes with your group will count toward this total and must be there to actively participate.
- **Meals from the Heart volunteers must be at least 13 years old.** There must be one adult volunteer (18+ years old) present and participating for every three minor volunteers (age 13-17).
- **All volunteers must be completely illness/symptom free (cold, flu, fever, stomach virus, etc.) for at least 72 hours prior to volunteering.**
- **Volunteers must wear gloves and hairnets/hair ties.** Participants must bring their own hair ties, and Ronald McDonald House Chicagoland & Northwest Indiana will provide gloves and hairnets.

Food Safety:

- **Cooking On-Site:** Your group will receive directions from a member of our Culinary Team to safely prepare, cook and assemble all the food in the House kitchen. Our Culinary Team will secure all needed groceries and ingredients in advance of your meal, so your group does not need to bring any food on your volunteer date.
- **Safety Practices:** Volunteers must practice good food safety hygiene, including frequent handwashing, eliminating cross contamination/raw foods, wearing hairnets/hair ties and gloves, etc. All refrigerated items should stay chilled as long as possible, and food in the kitchen should always be covered.

Meal Service and Clean Up:

- **Meal Service:** Meals are served buffet style to guest families. After service time we ask groups to pack the remaining food into individually sized containers for families to enjoy later.
- **On-Site Dining:** Though you may not see many families while you're at the House, know that the food you make is still eaten and appreciated.
- **Clean Up:** Participants are responsible for thoroughly cleaning the kitchen as part of Meals from the Heart volunteerism. Cleaning instructions will be provided by our House staff, and all volunteers are expected to stay until clean-up is complete.

Volunteer Expectations:

We strive to create a safe, welcoming and respectful environment for our families, staff and volunteers alike. As such, we expect volunteers to adhere to the following:

- Volunteers are to follow the leadership and direction of Ronald McDonald House Chicagoland & Northwest Indiana staff at all times. Failure to comply may result in immediate dismissal from our program location(s) and may hinder your participation in future volunteer opportunities.
- Bring compassion and respect to your volunteerism. Ensuring that we live our mission, "We provide essential services that remove barriers, strengthen families, and promote healing when children need healthcare" is of utmost priority.

- We welcome volunteers, staff and families of all backgrounds, races and religions. Please exclude any personal religious influences while on-site to ensure a welcoming space for all.
- We welcome you to document your volunteerism and take photos of your group hard at work! Please know photos or videos of Ronald McDonald House Chicagoland & Northwest Indiana families as the focal point or background of any photos or videos are not allowed.
- Volunteers are prohibited from exchanging personal information with or soliciting services to our families.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is there an age requirement? To ensure the health and safety of all volunteers, families and staff, as well as the food safety of the meals being prepared for our families, all Meals from the Heart volunteers must be at least 13 years old. There must be one adult volunteer (18+ years old) present and participating for every three minor volunteers (age 13-17).

What is the maximum number of volunteers per group? Meals from the Heart groups currently have a maximum group size of twelve (12) volunteers. If your group includes more than 12 volunteers, we ask that you divide your group and provide meals on different dates.

I have extra adults or children who want to attend, can they still come and watch without volunteering? No – everyone who comes with your group should be there to actively volunteer. Children or adults beyond the maximum group size of 12 volunteers cannot attend.

Can I volunteer if I am sick, have an illness or symptoms of any kind? We require all volunteers to be entirely illness and symptom free for at least 72 hours before volunteering. We cannot allow volunteers with an illness or symptoms of any kind to participate.

How long is my group expected to be at the House? Groups should plan to volunteer for 4 hours and 15 minutes. You will cook, do a buffet service line, and then complete all meal packing and clean up. The exact timing of each opportunity differs based on the meal selected when registering, so please review the details you received upon registration for a full, detailed list of the House/time expectation. *Please note – groups must clean up after serving our families, so all volunteers should expect to be at the House until all clean-up is complete.*

Do I need to bring my own dishes, serving utensils, plates, kitchen tools, etc.? The House provides all dishes, drinkware, cutlery, and kitchen equipment needed to prepare and provide your meal.

What does my group need to bring? Your group is responsible for bringing hair ties for your volunteers to wear while participating.

Is Ronald McDonald House Chicagoland & Northwest Indiana staff on-site during Meals from the Heart volunteerism? Yes, there will always be Ronald McDonald House

Chicagoland & Northwest Indiana staff present to answer questions, get you situated in the kitchen and ensure everyone is participating in a safe manner. In addition, a member of our Culinary Team will provide directions throughout your entire volunteer time.

How does Meals from the Heart at Ronald McDonald House: Lurie Children's differ from Meals from the Heart at the four other houses? Through Meals from the Heart at Ronald McDonald House: Lurie Children's Hospital, volunteer groups provide financial donations to support the program, and our Culinary Team takes care of planning the meal and purchasing all ingredients. The groups get a chef-led experience to make a meal for families staying at the Ronald McDonald House: Lurie Children's.

What are the financial donation amounts to participate in Meals from the Heart?

Donations for Meals from the Heart support the ongoing success of the program and ensure our House can offer families diverse meals each week. Groups receive a link to donate via credit card once a volunteer date is confirmed.

- A gift of \$800 provides lunch
- A gift of \$1,000 provides dinner

My group can no longer attend on our registered Meals from the Heart date, can I get a refund? If you reach out to reschedule more than two weeks out from your reserved date, then we will make every effort to move your group for a future date. No refunds will be issued if you need to cancel, and we are unable to reschedule groups within two weeks of your reserved date(s).

I still have questions, so who can I talk to for more information? If you have any questions about Meals from the Heart, these guidelines or your group's participation, please contact our Community Engagement team at volunteers@ronaldmcdonaldhousechicago.org.