



Ronald
McDonald
House®
Danville

news from the heart

AUGUST



PAYING IT FORWARD

I never thought much about pop tabs before. As a teenager, we would say the alphabet as we pulled on them, one letter for each flex of the metal. Little did I know how much pop tabs would mean to me.

On July 30, 2016, Declan was born. Weighing a teensy bit over four pounds and struggling to breathe, Declan needed more help. After a few heart-wrenching moments, we made the decision to send Declan on to the Janet Weis Children's Hospital. Watching the ambulance team wheel his incubator out of my hospital room and knowing I could not travel with him was awful.

I knew very little about the Ronald McDonald House of Danville before we arrived. As we checked in that night, it hit me how quickly our lives had changed. Even though it was just across the parking lot from the hospital, it felt like a world away. It was then I realized how exhausted I was just having a baby 24 hours ago. I struggled to briefly tell our story to the house volunteer as I was given an opportunity to relax and let the emotions out.

Over the next 16 days, the House became our "home-away-from-home". We fell into a routine of waking up and having breakfast in the common area before heading over to spend the day with Declan at the NICU. When we were tired, we didn't have to get in the car and drive two hours back to Bellefonte. The relief of not having to worry about driving back and forth or the expense of a long hotel stay is something I will never take for granted. All we had to worry about was getting to know our baby and listening to what his doctors were telling us.

We when finally got the word that Declan was ready to go home, no one was more excited for us than our RMHD family. We will never forget the kindness and care we found at the House when we really needed it.

~ Bendel Family ~

ALUMINUM TABS

The House recycles aluminum tabs to fund daily operations. Thousands of dollars have been raised from collecting these small tabs from items such as soda cans, soup cans, pet food cans and anything else with a pull tab.

The Bendel Family, now living in Ohio, still collects tabs as a way of giving back for the many gifts the House gave them. Their friends, family and local fire fighters help collect them so every year they have bags and boxes full of pop tabs to donate each year on Declan's birthday.

Mom likes to think these tiny little pieces of metal, so commonplace and often overlooked, have become a touchpoint for those connected to their family. Even though they are six hours away, they will keep saving them in the name of what the House represents.



And yes, Mom still says the alphabet as she pulls the tab free.

THANK YOU!

Your willingness to help critically ill children weather the crisis in their lives makes all the difference for their recovery. Their fears are eased by the comfort of knowing that their families are close by. Because of YOU we can enrich their lives by keeping families near the care they need when they need it the most.

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What if your donation could go further? What if you can make a larger impact?

Join us for **Double Your Impact** September 14th - 30th, where every dollar will be matched. That means your gift will go twice as far, helping twice as many families like the Bendel's. Your gift will be matched thanks to the generous support provided by Geisinger, Weis Markets, Pennsylvania Skill, MedImpact, Jersey Shore State Bank, The Williams Foundation, Stone State Entertainment and Brandlive to help support our families during this challenging time. Together they have donated \$21,750! Mark your calendars and plan to join us at www.rmhdanville.org to **Double Your Impact!**



**YOU CAN MAKE A
DIFFERENCE**

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"What is great about the House is what you do not see on the surface. It's a feeling of comfort and camaraderie you wouldn't get anywhere else. We met not just other NICU parents, but families who were making their fourth or fifth stay at the House for cancer treatments and surgeries. The strength and generosity of other families were inspiring to me and my family."

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