

Cooks for Kids General Information

Cooks for Kids is designed to help the 48 families who stay at the Ronald McDonald House while their children are undergoing treatment for life-threatening illnesses at area hospitals. After a long and often exhausting day at the hospital, families look forward to coming back to the House for a "home-away-from-home," cooked meal.

The Ronald McDonald House welcomes groups who are able to prepare a meal once and those who wish to make a commitment to regularly serve meals on a weekly, monthly or quarterly basis. Evening meals are served at 5:30 p.m. On the weekends, brunch is served at 11:30 both Saturdays and Sundays.

We ask that your group provides, prepares and serves a meal for approximately 90-95 people (for brunch we suggest preparing for 60-65). We estimate the cost for dinner to be approximately \$250-350. This can be offset by donations that you may seek, or if divided among your group of 10 to 12 people you may incur an individual cost of in the range of \$25 to \$35 per person. If you have any questions or would like to schedule a meal, please contact the Volunteer Director, Carynn Roehrick at carynn@rmhtwincities.org or 612-767 2788.

One volunteer note important for you to consider; all volunteers and guests unrelated to resident families must be 14 years or older to enter the residence. All youth volunteers between the ages of fourteen and eighteen must be accompanied and supervised by adults.

Meal Preparation and Serving Guidelines

1. Meals may be prepared in our community kitchen or off-site.
2. Please prepare food for approximately 90-95 people. Although 90-95 people may not actually attend the meal, many families come home late from the hospital and will help themselves to leftovers. The food you bring is not wasted, and if properly stored, will be eaten at a later time.
3. We suggest a group of 4-10 volunteers to set-up, and serve the meal. After the meal, we ask for your assistance in cleaning the kitchen. This would include putting any dirty dishes in the dishwasher, running the dishwasher and wiping down the countertops. It is not necessary to remove garbage or sweep floors, however we appreciate it if you have the time to do so. We provide paper/plastic cups, dinnerware

and napkins, however we do ask that you use our Corelle plates and bowls.

4. If there are leftovers, please put them in a storage container(s) (provided) and label them with the food description and the date. All leftovers can be stored in the "House" refrigerator or "House" freezer located in the Community kitchen where you will be preparing and serving the meal.
5. Evening meals are served at 5:30 p.m. and generally last about an hour. Brunch is served at 11:30. Holiday meals may be served at other times.
6. A menu will be posted in the House inviting the families to your meal. Please send your menu plans, via email or phone, to the Volunteer Director, Carynn Roehrick at carynn@rmhtwincities.org or 612-767 2788 at least two weeks before your scheduled meal date.
7. We do require that our meal groups SERVE the meal rather than allowing the families to fill their own plates. We also ask that you wear the plastic gloves while serving.
8. Because many of the children at the House are unable to fight off infections, we are very concerned about health standards. Please ensure that no one in your group has been exposed to chicken pox within the last 21 days or has had any communicable illness, such as mumps, strep throat, measles or other infections. In addition, please ensure that no member of your group has had any of the following within 24 hours: fever, upper respiratory infections, unexplained rash, GI illness. Anyone who has had any of the above illnesses should not prepare food or come to the House.
9. **Due to the children's illnesses here at the Ronald McDonald House, volunteers & guests must be at least 14 years of age. Adult supervision must be provided for groups of students age 14-18.**
10. Please read and follow the enclosed Food Preparation Guidelines.
11. NOTE: Our switchboard closes at 5:00 on weekdays and is not staffed on the weekend. If you need to contact the House Manager regarding any last minute change or problem, please call 612-805-3467

Food Preparation Guidelines

Hand washing is important! Lack of hand washing is the single greatest cause food borne illness. The most important times to wash are:

1. Before beginning to cook
2. When changing duties or working with a different food
3. Before and after using the restroom
4. After touching contaminated areas (i.e. face, door knobs, floors, etc.)
5. After completing cooking

Wash chicken, fruits and vegetables before cooking

Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold. Hot foods should be maintained at 160F or greater, cold foods below 50F. Foods should not be allowed to deviate from these

temperatures for more than half an hour without proper heating/refrigeration.

When possible, use thermal containers or coolers to transport. Wrapping hot foods in blankets also helps to maintain temperatures.

Prepare foods no longer than 24 hours in advance to minimize the opportunity for bacterial growth. This is especially important for meats and salads made with mayonnaise, eggs and cheese.

Refrain from preparing/serving meals if you have been exposed to or have any communicable diseases.

Carefully follow manufacturer's expiration dates on all food products.

Be careful to store all leftovers carefully and promptly (with lids that seal well).

Leftovers baked goods and chips may be left on the counter in sealed containers. All other leftovers should be refrigerated

Always prepare dinner for 95 - 100 servings and brunch for 60-65. Dinner is served at 5:30 pm. If this will be a problem, please notify a house manager at 612-805-3467.

Please call us if you would like us to turn on the ovens before your arrival.

Meal Ideas

Please do not feel that you have to plan for unusual dietary restrictions. Parents will monitor and adjust for any special diets. You should be aware of ingredients and be able to answer questions about these if asked. We ask that you provide a balanced meal; main dish, vegetable, side dish, beverage and dessert. Many groups choose to include salad as the vegetable or as an additional side dish. This list was compiled to offer suggestions. Please feel free to make other dishes. We recommend dishes that you typically make at home. If you like it, the families may also. When in doubt it is always nice to prepare a "kid-friendly" option.

Main Dish:

Chicken Dishes; Baked, BBQ, Hot Dish, Sticks, Little Drumsticks, etc.
Italian Dishes - Spaghetti, Lasagna, Manicotti, Chicken Alfredo. etc
Mexican Foods - Tacos, Casseroles, Burritos
Soups/Stews - Chili, Pea, Chicken Noodle, Vegetable
Beef Dishes - Meatballs w/ gravy, Hamburgers, Sloppy Joes, MeatLoaf, Roast, Stroganoff
Casseroles: Tuna, Spaghetti Pie, Tator Tot, etc.
Other: Ham, Pizza, Hot/Corn Dogs, Fish Sticks, Breakfast for dinner or Chinese Food

Side Dishes:

Potatoes - Baked Mashed, Twice-Baked, French Fries, Au gratin, etc.
Salads - Fruit, Vegetable, Tossed Greens, Pasta Salad, Cole Slaw, Potato and Pasta Salad, Tuna Salad, etc.
Jello - with or without fruit
Bread - Rolls, Garlic Bread, etc. Chips, Pretzels
Potato Salad, Cole Slaw, Pickles, Tuna Salad
Vegetables: Corn, Green Beans, Peas, Veggies & Dip, Pickles

Brunch Ideas:

Sandwiches: Variety
Soups or stews
Breakfast items: Pancakes, French Toast, Eggs, Bacon, Sausage, etc
Casseroles: Eggs, Cheese, Meats, Potato
Salads: Fruit, Lettuce, Pasta

Desserts:

Cookies, Cakes, Bars
Pies, Cobblers
Ice Cream Sandwiches, Ice Cream with toppings or in a cone

Drinks:

Lemonade, Iced Tea, Kool-Aid, Pop, Milk, Coffee

