

# **Ronald McDonald House®**

## **Dinner Preparation Guidelines**

Thank you for agreeing to prepare a meal for the families staying at the Jacksonville Ronald McDonald House. Guidelines to assist you in your planning are below:

- In general, plan for 40-50 people. You may wish to call the morning you are scheduled to cook to get a more accurate number of guests at the House. Usually, dinner is served at 6:00 PM Sunday – Friday and at 5:00 PM on Saturday. You may arrive as early as you need to in order to prepare the meal.
- To help us maintain a quiet and relaxing environment for our families, please keep noise levels to a minimum and limit the size of your group to no more than eight people. Having too many cooks in the kitchen can be a little overwhelming for the families. Children who come to help must be supervised at all times and must be old enough to participate in the volunteer experience.
- Many of our guests are have compromised immune systems. Please do not prepare food or visit the House if you have been exposed to chicken pox or measles within three weeks of your scheduled evening to cook or if you have a cold or any other airborne illness.
- You are welcome to use our spacious kitchen. We have two ovens, microwaves, sinks and dishwashers. We require that all of the dishes used to prepare meals be run through the dishwasher.
- If you are preparing the meal at the House, all pots, pans and work surfaces should be cleaned before you leave. Serving food in plastic storage containers or disposable pans is very helpful since it reduces the amount of cleaning that needs to be performed after dinner. Please ask a staff member or the volunteer in the kitchen to check to see if disposable pans are available for your use.
- Cooks are required to wash their hands prior to preparing or serving food whether they prepare the dinner at the House or elsewhere. Please use extra care as you handle food and utensils. Volunteers must wear plastic food handling gloves while working in the kitchen at the House. They will be provided for you.
- You do not need to be at the House to serve your meal. If you are here at 6:00 PM, you may leave the meal on the island in the kitchen. The families will serve themselves. If necessary, you may deliver the meal early in the day and leave instructions for another volunteer to heat the dishes.
- The first priority for the families staying at the House is their sick child, and we cannot guarantee how many people will be present to eat the meal you prepare at 6:00 PM. However, be assured that the families appreciate your food and that it will be eaten at a later hour. It is always much appreciated when volunteer groups bring large plastic storage containers for leftovers. This allows our guests who stay late at the hospital to eat at a time that is convenient for them.
- If you are preparing dinner offsite, please deliver the meal in disposable containers or transfer the food to dishes that may remain at the Ronald McDonald House when you arrive.

- Upon arrival at the House, use the intercom at the front entrance to be let in. You will need to register at the front desk where you will receive a volunteer badge and complete a donation form.
- Menus are limited only by your imagination, but they need not be fancy. Families eat at different times, so the best meals are the ones that can be heated in the microwave easily or eaten cold.
- Fresh fruit, dessert and milk are always welcome additions to any meal. Providing soft drinks or tea is optional. Alcoholic beverages are not allowed. There are usually plenty of condiments and bread on hand, but please call ahead to be certain.
- Please call us if you will not be able to bring your meal as scheduled. If you have any questions, call Sandy Asher at 904.807.HOME (4663).