

## Friends Turn Into Family at Ronald McDonald House Houston

For many people, Ronald McDonald House Houston brings the comfort of Home to critically ill children and their families but it also brings a bond with other families that cannot be replaced. Children get to meet and play with other children who are going through similar illnesses and parents have other parents who can relate.

Lori and her daughter Arianna have lit up the Holcombe House since first arriving this Summer from Missouri. Arianna, like most other 8 year old girls, loves American Girl dolls, arts & crafts and playing dress up.



"Having a place to be and having fun things to do is helpful, but the most amazing thing is having a friend," Lori said. "Arianna met Maddie and they immediately bonded. Maddie is almost the same age as Arianna and the two girls have been going through very similar cancer treatments for years."



The two girls first met the week Arianna arrived and have been inseparable ever since. They run in and out of each other's rooms, share clothes and find new places in the House to play with their dolls. They even turned the downstairs playroom and tree house into a fort for their matching American Girl dolls. Arianna has two brothers who are living back at home and said that being able to have a friend like Maddie at the House makes her not be as sad about being away from her brothers. Of course Lori is so excited that Arianna and Maddie have become great friends, and she is also thrilled that she found a great friend in Maddie's mom, Robyn.

"The other wonderful piece of staying at RMH Houston is Maddie's mom, who is in a very similar situation," said Lori. "To have someone to talk to and compare treatment notes with is amazing. It makes the

time go by so much quicker when you have someone you can relate to or just have coffee with, and the House gives us that special place to do it."

Even when Maddie and her mom returned home to another state for a short break, Arianna and Lori kept in touch with them. Arianna was sending Maddie pictures of the dancing and happenings during Southwest night at RMH Houston, and Maddie was sending Arianna pictures from her day at the beach, both wishing they could be back together.

Lori said they were offered an apartment in Houston but turned it down because they wanted the compassion and social aspect of the Ronald McDonald House. She and Arianna were eager to meet friends in a brand new city, and Arianna's favorite part of living at RMH Houston is that it's so comforting and she gets to have a little more independence.

“She doesn’t get a lot of control in her life; she has to go where the doctors tell her to go, she has to do what they tell her to do and eat what they tell her to eat,” said Lori. “Giving her a sense of freedom where it’s safe and secure is something I’m so happy for her to experience.”

Ronald McDonald House Houston truly turns friends into families. Please help support these special friendships by [clicking here](#) to make a donation today. Every penny counts to help families like Lori and Arianna feel comfort during a frightening time!

