

MEDIA RELEASE

Brand new Ronald McDonald Family Room Officially Opens at the Institute of Mental Health (IMH)

*Providing a place of rest and respite for parents of children and adolescents
seeking or undergoing treatment at IMH*



Ronald McDonald Family Room at the IMH Sunrise Ward and Child Guidance Clinic

SINGAPORE, 17 JANUARY 2018 – Today, Ronald McDonald House Charities (RMHC) Singapore, with the support of the Institute of Mental Health (IMH) officially opened the doors of the brand new Ronald McDonald Family Room (RMFR) at IMH. This is the first Family Room located within a psychiatric facility in APMEA (Asia Pacific / Middle East / Africa).

Situated within the quiet sanctuary of IMH, the Family Room provides a place of rest and respite for parents of young patients seeking or undergoing treatment at IMH. IMH's Sunrise Wing cares for children and adolescents aged six to 18 years and sees approximately 5,000 outpatient visits at its Child Guidance Clinic and 400 inpatient admissions at its 20-bed ward annually.

Cosy and comforting with a home-like atmosphere, the Family Room is a place for a quiet break from the ward for parents, caregivers and siblings of patients. Families are free to have a drink, grab a bite or simply take a moment to rest, watch TV or utilize the free WIFI access provided. The RMFR at IMH is RMHC's second Family Room in Singapore.



Research has proven that staying close by allows parents to better communicate with their child's care team, and improves adherence to treatment plans. ¹

“A space such as this is particularly meaningful for families and their children at IMH. The presence of family and loved ones can be extremely reassuring to children or adolescents who are suffering from emotional distress. It is equally critical to take care of the families by giving them the necessary support to better cope with their child's recovery journey”, said Pamela Tor Das, President, RMHC Singapore. “When families walk through the doors of the Ronald McDonald Family Room, we want them to feel like they are no longer in a hospital, but rather in a room of a warm, comforting and peaceful home.”

A/Prof Chua Hong Choon, Chief Executive Officer of IMH, said, “We would like to thank RMHC Singapore for partnering with us to improve our services for patients and their families. While we do our best to treat our patients, we also want to help our caregivers in their roles as they often face challenges when looking after their loved ones. Over time, caring for individuals with mental health issues may take a toll on families. I am pleased that we can now enhance their experience at our hospital by making them feel at home while we care for their children. We are grateful that RMHC has stepped in to provide this much needed support for patients' families.”

The RMFR offers the following comforts of a home:

- Kitchen area equipped with a fridge, microwave ovens and water dispenser, with a variety of snacks and beverages provided
- Seating areas to dine, read or watch television
- Resting corner to relax, nap and recuperate
- Internet access
- Books

The Family Room at IMH is open to all families whose child is seeking or undergoing treatment at IMH Sunrise Wing. The room is open Monday to Friday from 9am to 7pm.

In 2016, with the support of RMHC Singapore, the Centre for Life and Academic Skills (CLAS) at IMH Sunrise Wing was established to provide a conducive learning environment for child and adolescent

¹ <http://www.hsj.gr/medicine/the-contribution-of-family-in-the-care-of-patient-in-the-hospital.pdf>



inpatients. IMH currently offers academic skills-based intervention in a classroom setting at CLAS for the patients, allowing them to continue learning at their own pace while recuperating in the ward.

Between 1989 and 2013, RMHC Singapore has helped more than 900 needy children with their medical, rehabilitative and surgical treatments costing more than \$5 million in grants. The five most common requests for funding from RMHC Singapore have been for medicines, nutritional supplements, handicap aids, leukaemia treatment and surgery. In 2014, RMHC Singapore committed S\$379,000 in its Grant Making Programme where funding was provided to support programmes of various hospitals and voluntary welfare organisations that directly improve the health and well-being of children in Singapore. A further grant fund of S\$140,000 was also awarded in 2015.

The RMFR and RMH are largely volunteer-run and volunteers do everything to ensure that the House or Family Room is always clean, tidy and welcoming for families. With the opening of the second RMFR in Singapore, RMHC Singapore will need 20-30 more volunteers to help manage the new facility. Those keen to help or to donate to its cause can contact them via their website www.rmhc.org.sg or +65 6778 1934.

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About Ronald McDonald House Charities® (RMHC) Singapore

Ronald McDonald House Charities® (RMHC) Singapore is an independently administered charity incepted in 1989 on a simple mission – to directly improve the health and well-being of children in Singapore. Prior to 2013, RMHC Singapore has helped more than 900 needy children in Singapore with their medical, surgical and rehabilitative treatment costs amounting to over S\$5 million in grants.

In January 2013, with the support of the Khoo Teck Puat – National University Children’s Medical Institute (also known as NUHkids), the Charity started a Ronald McDonald House™ (RMH) at the National University Hospital (NUH), to provide a "home-away-from-home" facility for families to stay in so they can be within close reach of their hospitalised child.

On 6 January 2016, RMHC® Singapore, with the support of the Khoo Teck Puat – National University Children’s Medical Institute (also known as NUHkids), officially launched the new Ronald McDonald Family Room™ at NUH that exclusively serves families whose children are receiving treatment in the Paediatric Intensive Care Unit and High Dependency (PICU/HD) ward of the hospital.

RMHC® Singapore funds its operations through the support of donations from the general public and well-wishers in Singapore through various fundraisers. Find out more: www.RMHC.org.sg.

About the Institute of Mental Health, Singapore

The Institute of Mental Health (IMH), a member of the National Healthcare Group, is the only tertiary psychiatric care institution in Singapore. Located on the sprawling 23-hectare campus of Buangkok Green Medical Park in the north-eastern part of Singapore, IMH offers a multidisciplinary and comprehensive range of psychiatric, rehabilitative and therapy services in hospital-based and community-based settings. The 2010-bedded hospital aims to meet the needs of three groups of patients – children and adolescents (aged below 19 years), adults and the elderly. Besides providing clinical services, IMH also leads in mental health research and training the next generation of mental health professionals in Singapore. For more information, please visit www.imh.com.sg.