

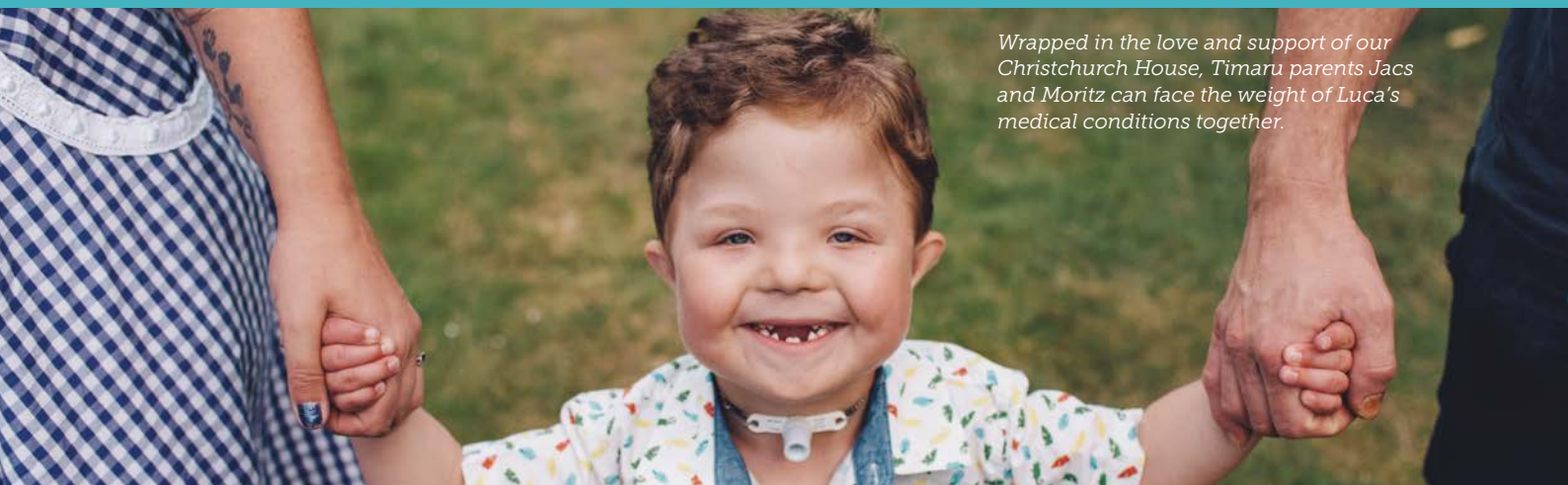
# Silver Linings

Autumn 2017 / Newsletter #58



SOUTH ISLAND

## Keeping families close



*Wrapped in the love and support of our Christchurch House, Timaru parents Jacs and Moritz can face the weight of Luca's medical conditions together.*

## Little Luca loving life

When Luca entered the world at just 810 grams, he could fit in the palm of his father's hand.

For first-time Timaru parents Moritz Fassbender and Jacs Smith, what is usually a time of joy was clouded with worry and uncertainty. Now almost 4 years later, countless operations, hospital stays and 246 nights at our Christchurch House, Luca has defied the odds to not only survive, but thrive with his family by his side.

Luca's mum Jacs began experiencing contractions early in her pregnancy, sparking a decision for her to be admitted to Christchurch Hospital where she gave birth to Luca on April 2, 2013, at just 27 weeks.

"It was such a shock and so scary not knowing what was going to happen," says Jacs. "Looking back on it now I still get emotional and always wonder why we had to go through it all."

It is hard to believe Luca's tiny body presented 24 different complications in the early days of his life, including difficulty breathing, feeding, and digesting.

As Luca's lungs were not fully developed, he had a tracheotomy, meaning there is a tube in his throat to help him breathe. He also had a colostomy bag, and Jacs says it seemed like every time they took a step forward with Luca, they took ten steps backwards.

But Jacs and Moritz say it was the way Ronald McDonald House South Island wrapped them in love and support which allowed the family to face the weight of Luca's medical journey together.

Jacs, Moritz and Luca's Nana were able to stay at the House, just moments away from Luca in the neonatal unit at Christchurch Hospital.

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**Above:** Together, this tight family unit can overcome any challenge. **Top right:** It's hard to believe this chubby cheeked dude was only 810 grams when he entered the world. **Bottom right:** Jacs and Moritz with Luca at 6 weeks old.

"We couldn't believe it when we arrived, all the other families are so supportive. I don't know what we would have done without the House – it would have cost so much to stay somewhere else."

Moritz was able to work from Christchurch to be closer to Jacs and Luca, as they took things one day at a time during their initial five month stay at the House. Jacs says staying in the House allowed them to solely focus on Luca, rather than grocery shopping, cleaning or cooking meals.

"When you get back from a long day at the hospital it's such a relief to have this amazing meal waiting for you," Jacs says of the Family Dinner Programme.

Then at the end of 2013, Luca's family received the best Christmas present of all – they could finally take their baby home to Timaru.

However this was only the beginning of Luca's journey with us.

Jacs says day-to-day life managing Luca's medical conditions can sometimes be stressful, but she beams with pride when talking about her extraordinary son. "Every milestone Luca reaches makes it all worth it – he gives me a different perspective on life and makes me appreciate everything so much more."

To the amazement of Jacs and Moritz, Luca began walking last year, something they did not think would happen. Not long later, the little fighter began speaking, and has even learned 50 different signs to use to communicate.

"He is the most amazing kid – he's so sociable and loves playing. He's a fighter and that's all he's known, he takes everything in his stride."

Luca still has a few more hurdles to climb – the family hopes his trache will soon be removed so he can breathe on his own. "The next challenge will be removing his feeding tube, but that may be more of a challenge," says Jacs.

Luca's family believes their little fighter is not done surprising them yet, and knows Ronald McDonald House South Island will be by their side every step of the way.

*In 2016, 39% of families who stayed with us had children receiving neonatal care in Christchurch and Invercargill hospitals.*



## From the Chairman, Paul Deavoll

At Ronald McDonald House South Island, our purpose for 2017 is simple: continue keeping families close so they can focus on what matters most – their child.

When a child is seriously ill it impacts the entire family. Each day is often filled with stress, hospital appointments and worry.

We can only provide free accommodation, home cooked meals, love and care to these

families because of people like you, so thank you for choosing to continue to walk beside us in 2017.

This month we farewell our CEO Matthew Mark, and thank him for his dedication and compassion towards our families, volunteers, and staff over the last three years.

We have a busy year ahead with the Annual Appeal, Christchurch and Queenstown Supper Clubs, and of course facilities full with families.

On behalf of the Ronald McDonald House South Island Board of Trustees, I look forward to working together to provide the best support we can for Kiwi families.

Your support really does make a difference.



# » House Happenings «

- 1.** Check out superstar sibling **Addison**, a 4-year-old cutie who is the best big sister to baby Willow growing big and strong in Christchurch neonatal unit. She's keeping the volunteers and staff on her toes!
- 2.** After 110 nights at our Christchurch House, we were so happy to see the **Gaffney family** going home. Brave Saoirse (6) says she can't wait to come back and cook dinner for our families!
- 3. Fill the Box!** We were overwhelmed by the number of Santa's little helpers who donated presents and gift cards so families and cool cats like Johnny Walker had an awesome Christmas!
- 4.** Savings superstar! Christchurch youngster **Corban** came into the House to present his jar of savings as a donation. His mum gave him three jars, one for spending, one for saving and one for giving – and he chose us!
- 5.** We're on the move! **Miles Toyota** have provided us with a new vehicle for our Christchurch House! We are so grateful to these long-time supporters.





# A fond farewell

It is with hearts full of gratitude that we farewell our CEO Matthew Mark, who is leaving the organisation after almost three years of compassionate and steady leadership.

Matt will officially step down at the end of March, before he begins his new role as Christchurch City Missioner.

“Since 2014, Matthew’s leadership has

significantly contributed to ensuring we provide the best service to the families of children undergoing hospital treatment,” says the organisation’s Board of Trustees Chairman Paul Deavoll.

From dressing up in a chicken suit, cooking dinner for the House with his family, the RMHSI team praise Matt for his hands-on approach to leadership. “It has been an

absolute privilege to lead such a passionate and dedicated team focussed on looking after families within our communities as they experience some of their most challenging times,” says Matt.

“My sincere thanks to each of my team, our board members and our supporters; it has been an honour to serve alongside each of you, thank you.”

## New kid on the block

We are so excited to welcome Jemma, our new Fundraising Advisor to the RMHSI family! Jemma came to us from GirlGuiding New Zealand and has a passion for getting the community behind our cause. “This entails organising volunteers to help out at our fundraising events, empowering community groups and schools in their own fundraising adventures, and of course, organising the Annual Appeal!”



For more information on volunteering at one of our fantastic events like the Annual Appeal on May 12, contact **Jemma** on 03 377 3311 or email [jemma@rmhsi.org.nz](mailto:jemma@rmhsi.org.nz)

## Superstar volunteers!



## Mother and daughter making a difference together

Brenda and Allana are a mother and daughter team set to make a difference to the lives of our families – and have a little fun along the way.

Allana began volunteering at our Christchurch House almost three years ago, helping our resident ‘Mary Poppins’ Kathy Oakes with housekeeping.

We have many families checking in and out of rooms every day, housekeeping volunteers play a huge role in keeping our facilities spic and span, says House Manager Zucchi Leonard.

Not long after Allana began volunteering her mum Brenda decided to join her, and now the pair are a permanent fixture at the House.

“We love the people here everyone is so friendly,” says Allana. “Spending time with the families is very special too.”

*“We love the people here, everyone is so friendly”*

**Want to become a superstar volunteer like Allana and Brenda? We have volunteering opportunities in both Christchurch and Invercargill. Call 03 377 3311 or email [admin@rmhsi.org.nz](mailto:admin@rmhsi.org.nz) today!**



# » What's going on « Down South

The latest happenings from the Ronald McDonald Family Room, Southland Hospital

"We will always treasure those initial few weeks of bonding time, and it is thanks to RMHSI that we could have that opportunity."



"We had prepared ourselves for a lengthy stay in the hospital... or an expensive stay in a hotel. To be able to stay together as a family during the girls first few weeks, and not have to worry about the expense of accommodation or the stress of travelling was amazing."

Holly Murphy and her partner Adam from Gore stayed in the Family Room while their twin girls Briar and Rose were growing big and strong in the neonatal ward.

## Crunch, Munch, Scrumdiddlyunch!



Remarkables Primary School has produced this unique children's cookbook packed with recipes all members of the family will love eating and making!

At just \$35, and with a portion of book sales going to RMHSI, what are you waiting for?

Order your copy today!  
Visit [www.rmhsi.org.nz](http://www.rmhsi.org.nz) or email [communications@rmhsi.org.nz](mailto:communications@rmhsi.org.nz).

ONLY  
\$35

### RYAN'S ROCKY ROAD SLICE

#### Ryan L

This recipe has been used and adapted for whichever dried fruit we have in the house. The boys love crushing up the biscuits and choosing different coloured marshmallows.

- 50g butter
- 200g dark cooking chocolate
- 15 arrowroot biscuits, crushed by hand
- 1 cup mini marshmallows
- ½ cup dried apricots, chopped
- ¼ cup raisins
- ¼ cup craisins

Line a slice tray with baking paper and grease.

Melt butter and chocolate on a low heat to combine, being careful not to over-heat.

In a large bowl combine crushed biscuits, mini marshmallows, apricots, raisins and craisins. Mix well.

Add melted chocolate/butter mixture to the dry ingredients, mix well and press into the slice tin.

Refrigerate for at least 1 hour or until slice is completely set. Cut and serve.

**TIPS:** Add chopped nuts and thread coconut  
- Kelly & Harry C

Great Grandma had a great nougat slice, full of dates, walnuts & apricots. This is full of goodness - Chloe R



### SARAH'S ENERGY BALLS

#### Sarah and Pippa B

Our family love these energy balls smothered in dark chocolate, shared with us by Nonie MfD.

- 100g prunes
- 100g figs
- 100g raw cashew nuts
- 50g slivered almonds
- 20g cocoa
- splash of orange juice

Mix ingredients in a food processor on high until combined. If the mixture is too crumbly add a little more juice while processing.

Roll a small portion of mixture in your palm to form bite-sized balls.

Lay balls on baking paper and chill.

For a treat, coat balls with melted dark chocolate and chill.

**TIPS:** Coating balls with white chocolate and coconut is also delicious!

Have fun and create 'pops' with your balls by placing them on small cupcake sticks - Mokaia M

Try adding goji berries, blueberries and ground almonds - packed full of brain power and energy - Zaryd S



# » Out & About «

Take a peek at the latest good sorts across the South Island who are busy holding amazing events to help our families!



## A Stunning Day at the Polo

We were blown away by the positive energy of the 350-strong crowd who attended 'A Day at the Polo' 2016 – the perfect way to end the year in style! Guests enjoyed a stunning day at the Tai Tapu Polo Club filled with riveting polo matches, laughter, food, and fun. This year guests were treated to a beautiful sit-down luncheon and cocktails on the green by Eaton Drink Co. What more could you want?

» Thank you to all our supporters and table buyers, we can't wait to see you again this year! **A Day at the Polo 2017 will be held on December 9, 2017.** To secure your table at this perfect end-of-year function contact [robyn@rmhsi.org.nz](mailto:robyn@rmhsi.org.nz).



## Fashion for a cause!

Once again the M Factor Fashion Show is set to take over Christchurch with fabulous fashion!

Don't miss out on this fabulous evening of fashion and fun for the whole family, set at the perfect spot, **The Foundry on Saturday April 1, 2017.**

Designers on show include Soeur, Augustine, Annah Stretton and many more! **Tickets are \$75 VIP, General admission \$55 and students \$30. Tickets are available from [www.ticketmaster.co.nz](http://www.ticketmaster.co.nz).**

## Christchurch – Our Underground Story



Baby Benjamin enjoying 'Christchurch – Our Underground Story'.

**Have you ever wondered what goes on beneath our feet?**

In this wonderful lift-the-flap picture book, you and your little ones will explore Christchurch's hidden city. Find out where our water comes from, where it goes when you flush the toilet, and everything in between!

As part of the SCIRT team local Chartered Civil Structural Engineer and first time author Phil Wilkins has created this labour of love to inspire those young enquiring minds about the world of engineering, although we are sure both young and old will learn something new.

With all net proceeds going to RMHSI, you are directly supporting our facilities by purchasing this book!

**'Christchurch – Our Underground Story' can be purchased for \$20 by visiting [www.rmhsi.org.nz](http://www.rmhsi.org.nz) or emailing [communications@rmhsi.org.nz](mailto:communications@rmhsi.org.nz).**



# MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

## Events for Ronald McDonald House South Island 2017



### APRIL

#### M Factor Fashion Show



**Saturday 1 April, 7:00pm**  
**The Foundry, Christchurch**

This April the M Factor Fashion Show is set to take over Christchurch with fabulous fashion! Tickets will be available from [www.ticketmaster.co.nz](http://www.ticketmaster.co.nz) from February 13.

### MAY

#### Ronald McDonald House Appeal

**Friday 12 May**

Keep an eye out for our street collectors in Canterbury and Southland on Friday May 12!

### JUNE

#### Christchurch Supper Club



**Friday 9 June**

A must-do experience! Christchurch's restaurants, unique venues and chefs collaborate with us to create a mystery dining experience. Book your table of eight now to avoid missing out! Email [robyn@rmhsi.org.nz](mailto:robyn@rmhsi.org.nz).

### JULY

#### Host-a-Roast



**The month of July**

Ready, set, Host a Roast! Invite your family and friends over for a roast in July. Every \$20 donation your guests make will go directly to helping us keep families close.

### OCTOBER

#### Queenstown Supper Club



**Friday 27 October**

A must-do experience! The Lake District's restaurants, unique venues and chefs collaborate with us to create a mystery dining experience. Book your table of eight now to avoid missing out! Email [robyn@rmhsi.org.nz](mailto:robyn@rmhsi.org.nz)

### NOVEMBER

#### Cup Day pins



**Tuesday 14 November**

Spend a few hours at the Races with the generous punters, collecting money for the House and distributing Cup Day pins. It's an easy job to do with friends, and volunteering includes free entry for the day to the Races. Email [jemma@rmhsi.org.nz](mailto:jemma@rmhsi.org.nz).

### DECEMBER

#### A Day at the Polo



**Saturday 9 December**  
**Port Hills Polo Club, Tai Tapu**

Watch heart-stopping polo matches while enjoying a two-course meal and a complimentary drink in the summer setting of a garden marquee. This event sells out every year – be in quick to secure your table of 10 guests. Email [robyn@rmhsi.org.nz](mailto:robyn@rmhsi.org.nz).



#### ROOM SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT

A West Coast company with its heart truly grounded in the community continues to provide practical support for our families and facilities.

Westland Milk Products have been the proud Room Sponsors of Room 1 since 2011, which CEO Toni Brendish says has been an incredibly rewarding partnership.

The company also generously donates a raft of dairy products for our families to use.

"Families and volunteers tend to bake up a storm in the House's kitchen, its lovely to

know those delicious cakes, biscuits and slices everyone enjoys are made using Westland products."

One family who has directly benefited from Westland's support is the Southerton family, who have stayed in Room 1 for over 121 nights since 7-year-old Isaac was diagnosed with leukaemia.

"Every family is going through so much during their time at the House; for us, knowing that the Westland Milk room becomes their home away from home is very special," says Toni.

Want to find out more about becoming a Room Sponsor? We have sponsorship opportunities in both Christchurch and Southland, call 03 377 3311 or email [ricket@rmhsi.org.nz](mailto:ricket@rmhsi.org.nz) to find out more.

Toni says she would highly recommend other businesses support RMHSI.

"When we tell Westland staff and clients how important the House is to the families from the West Coast in their time of need, they immediately understand the value of the partnership."



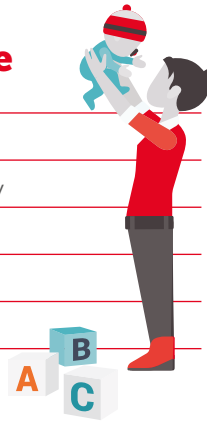
# » Our Families «

Families from all over New Zealand stay at our facilities while their children receive hospital care for many different reasons. Sometimes they stay for one or two nights, but some families can be with us for many months.

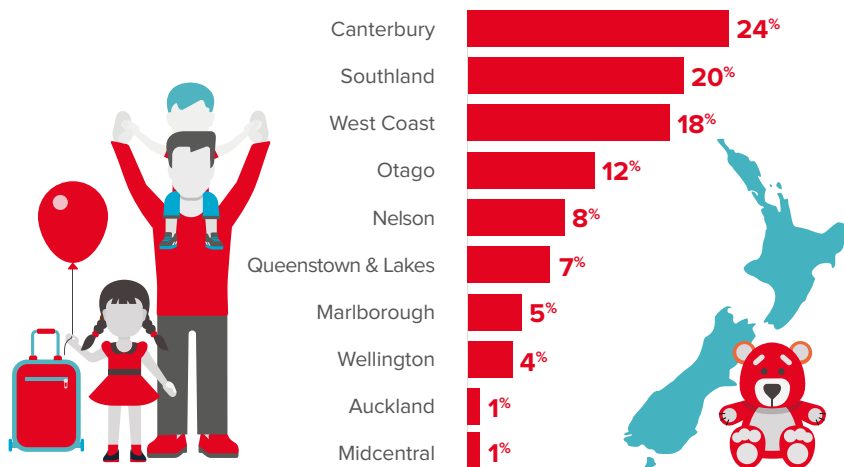
Here are our family statistics for 2016.

## Our most common diagnoses are

39%	Neonatal	4%	Orthopaedic
15%	Oncology	4%	Ophthalmology
11%	Ear, Nose & Throat	4%	Accident
9%	Gastrointestinal	3%	Cardiac
8%	Antenatal	3%	Neurological



## Our families come from



## New & renewed Room Sponsors

### CHARACTER BUILDERS



## Room Supporters

Longford Trust

Jones Foundation

Kate Wilton

Diana Smith, Mathilda, Beatrix and Freddie

## Trusts & Grants



## OUR PEOPLE:

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Paul Deavoll (Chairman)  
Kipp Alexander (Treasurer)  
Bruce Davis  
Mark Abbot  
Rob Aitken  
Janetta Skiba  
Stuart Leck  
Chris Youngman  
Dave Whalley  
Jock Muir

### YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

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Rebecca Biggs

### CEO

Matthew Mark

### HOUSE MANAGER

Zucchi Leonard

### FRONT OF HOUSE / ADMINISTRATION

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Debbie Rusbridge  
Mary-Ann Roberts

### FUNDRAISING AND COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

Ricki Jones

### PARTNERSHIP AND EVENT MANAGER

Robyn Medicott

### MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS ADVISOR

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### FUNDRAISING ADVISOR

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### ACCOUNTS ADMINISTRATOR

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### AFTER HOURS SUPERVISOR

Jan Nottingham

### FAMILY ROOM SUPERVISOR

Helen Walker

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