

MEALS FROM THE HEART BRUNCH/DINNER PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Thank you for your interest in our "Meals from the Heart" Brunch/Dinner Program. The Meals from the Heart program gives local businesses, community organizations, church groups, schools and families, etc., the opportunity to volunteer at the Ronald McDonald House of Long Island by planning and preparing a brunch or dinner meal for our resident families. Once you reserve a date to cook brunch or dinner at the House, our families will be counting on you to provide a delicious meal to sustain them while they are dealing with having a sick child being treated in a local hospital. Your generous spirit helps to keep them pushing forward through difficult times.

It is imperative that you read the "Meals from the Heart" Guidelines and Frequently Asked Questions documents before reserving a date to cook at the House. The documents contain essential general information about the House and information specific to your meal preparation.

- Please do not reserve a date on the calendar to cook until you are certain your group is ready to make this commitment.
- You are responsible for planning your menu and purchasing all required ingredients. In order to insure safety from possible food contamination, all items must be prepared on our premises. No items may be prepped or cooked at home and brought to the House. Utensils, bowls, pots, and pans are available for your use in our kitchen.
- Groups are limited to a total of 12 participants. If your group totals more than 12 people, you will need to split the group and schedule two dates. Volunteers to cook a meal at the House must be over the age of 16 years old.
- Please arrive at your scheduled tour/cooking time. Should you arrive earlier than your scheduled time, you may be asked to wait until the kitchen area is ready for use. Your kitchen time is limited to two and one-half (2 ½) hours, including preparation, cooking, and clean-up. Please plan to prepare items that can be completed within the allotted time.
- Participants are required to wear disposable gloves, provided by RMHLI. Long hair must be tied back.
- CANCELLATIONS:
 - If a scheduling conflict arises and you need to cancel your cooking date, you must cancel online at least 30 days prior to your reservation, using the link in your confirmation email. In addition, please send an email to cook@rmhlongisland.org, notifying us directly of your cancellation.
 - **Please Note:** If you cancel your reserved date with less than 30 days' notice, you are responsible for catering food for the meal from a restaurant for our families. We will be happy to provide a list of restaurants that have provided meals for the House in the past. Upon cancellation, you are required to email us at cook@rmhlongisland.org with the name and contact telephone number of the restaurant that will be providing the food to the House on your behalf.

MEALS FROM THE HEART BRUNCH/DINNER PROGRAM

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

WHO MAY PARTICIPATE IN THE MEALS FROM THE HEART PROGRAM?

Brunch/Dinner program volunteers should be over the age of 16 years old. Youth group volunteers, between the ages of 16 and 18, must be supervised by an adult. A youth group will not be allowed to cook if they arrive without an adult supervisor.

HOW MANY COOKS MAY VISIT AT ONE TIME?

Groups are limited to no more than 12 participants. This guideline has been carefully adopted to respect the comfort and privacy of our residents who use our kitchen facilities throughout the day.

WHAT DOES A MEALS FROM THE HEART VOLUNTEER HAVE TO DO?

Volunteers schedule a day and time to visit the House to cook. Part of the fun of participating in the program is planning what you will prepare. Once you have decided on your menu ideas, purchase all of the ingredients needed to create your meal and then visit the House to cook on your scheduled day.

Volunteers should stay in the kitchen with their group throughout the visit. Restrooms are located near the kitchen.

HOW DO I SCHEDULE A DATE TO VISIT THE HOUSE TO COOK BRUNCH OR DINNER?

Visit our online calendar to schedule your date at www.rmhlongisland.org/meals-from-the-heart/. Please keep your confirmation email.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I HAVE TO CANCEL A COOKING DATE?

If a scheduling conflict arises and you need to cancel your cooking date, you must cancel online at least 30 days prior to your reservation, using the link in your confirmation email. In addition, please send an email to cook@rmhlongisland.org, notifying us directly of your cancellation.

Please Note: If you cancel your reserved date with less than 30 days' notice, you are responsible for catering food for the meal from a restaurant for our families. We will be happy to send you a list of restaurants that have provided meals for the House in the past. Upon cancellation, you are required to email us at cook@rmhlongisland.org with the name and contact telephone number of the restaurant that will be providing the food to the House on your behalf.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN DURING MY VISIT?

Please check in at the House Reception Desk and complete the required paperwork. If you have scheduled a tour, you will meet your tour guide and start your House tour, ending in the kitchen. Prepare your food and serve it buffet style on the kitchen counter. Please bring aluminum pans for serving the food. We do not use food racks and sternos in the kitchen. Once you are finished cleaning up, you are ready to head home.

HOW DO I ARRANGE A HOUSE TOUR FOR MY GROUP?

We welcome you to tour the House prior to cooking. Please check “YES” on the sign-up screen when scheduling your date (“Do you want a House tour?”). Our tour guides are scheduled specifically for groups that are visiting the House. If you request a tour and later decide that you do not want a tour, please let us know by calling the House Receptionist at 516-775-5683 (ext. 130), and also send an email to cook@rmhlongisland.org at least three days prior to your cooking date so that the tour guide may be advised of the schedule change.

WHAT TIME DO I NEED TO BE THERE?

Please arrive no more than 15 minutes ahead of your scheduled time. If you arrive earlier, you may be asked to wait until your assigned kitchen is ready for use.

Groups should arrive for brunch preparation by 9:30 a.m. If requested, your House tour will be scheduled on your arrival at 9:30 a.m. Brunch should be ready around 12 Noon. Clean-up should be completed by 12:30 p.m.

Groups should arrive for dinner preparation by 3:30 p.m. If requested, your House tour will be scheduled on your arrival at 3:30 p.m. Dinner should be ready around 6:00 p.m. Clean-up should be completed by 6:30 p.m.

PERSONAL HYGIENE REQUIREMENTS?

All participants must wash their hands when they arrive in the kitchen prior to the start of cooking and wear disposable gloves provided by RMH-LI. Long hair should be tied back or a hat may be worn.

FOR HOW MANY PEOPLE WILL MY GROUP BE COOKING?

The number of residents staying at the House changes week to week, and generally averages 85 people. You should, however, call the House Receptionist at 516-775-5683, Ext. 130, to confirm the number of current residents a few days before purchasing food to cook or catering restaurant food.

WHAT SHOULD MY GROUP PREPARE?

You are responsible for planning your menu and purchasing the required ingredients. A good place to start is by thinking about the things that your own family likes to eat. Also keep in mind items you would enjoy when warmed in the microwave. Many families return to the House late at night and warm up leftover food from the dinner you prepared earlier in the day.

Dinner should include: a meat entrée, a potato, rice, or pasta side, a vegetable and/or a salad. Beef, chicken, turkey, and pork entrees, including stew, chili, and meatloaf, have all been successful in the past. Barbeque grills are available for use from May 1st through October 31st.

To help you estimate the amount of food you need to prepare, at a minimum for 85 people at dinnertime, we suggest you prepare:

Four (4) pans of the main entrée

Three (3) pans of potato, rice, or pasta side

Two (2) pans of vegetable and/or salad

At times of higher resident occupancy, more food will be needed.

All food should be served using disposable aluminum pans, provided by your group, approximately 21 inches x 13 inches x 3.5 inches.

For brunch, you should plan to prepare food for 50 people, regardless of occupancy numbers, because some residents are unable to return to the House at lunchtime.

For hot brunch items, breakfast standards like French toast and pancakes, or quiche and breakfast casseroles, work well. Ham, cheese and egg wraps or English muffin sandwiches and quesadillas are good for a crowd. Hash Browns, sausage/bacon, and salad make good sides. You might consider fruit salad and fresh baked muffins.

If you decide to provide a “continental breakfast” with no hot items, this could include fresh fruit, yogurt, granola, pastries, and wrap sandwiches. Tuna, egg and chicken salads work well, with some small fresh rolls, croissants, or bakery breads to make sandwiches. Assorted muffins are always a welcome addition, along with donations of milk and juice for our residents. Coffee, tea, and cold beverages are available at the House.

IS THERE SOMETHING ELSE WE CAN BRING FOR THE RESIDENTS?

Dessert and extra milk donations are always appreciated. If you plan to serve ice cream, please pack in ice to stay frozen for a few hours.

CAN WE PREP FOOD AT HOME, PRIOR TO ARRIVING AT THE HOUSE?

Groups MUST prepare all food on premises. No items should be prepped or cooked at home and brought to the House. This rule ensures safety from possible food contamination and is a guideline enforced through Ronald McDonald House Charities, which oversees every Ronald McDonald House. Store-bought/pre-packaged food or food prepared by a restaurant may be brought to the House.

ARE THERE ANY RESTRICTIONS REGARDING INGREDIENTS?

Please do not use any nuts, peanut oil, or any peanut-based products in your cooking.

HOW MUCH TIME DO WE HAVE IN THE KITCHEN TO COOK?

Your kitchen time is limited to about two and one-half (2 ½) hours, including preparation, cooking, and clean-up.

HOW IS THE FOOD SERVED?

There is no need to set tables. Meals are served buffet style in disposable aluminum trays, approximately 21 inches x 13 inches x 3.5 inches, covered with foil or aluminum covers, provided by the group. We do not use food racks with sternos. Please do not leave food in pots on the stove or in ovens to stay warm.

Please keep in mind that many families show up at different times during the day to enjoy their meals. We store “leftover” food in a “community refrigerator” so families may make a plate and enjoy your meal whenever they want.

Dinnerware and silverware are available in our kitchens. You are welcome to bring paper/plastic plates and silverware, for special seasonal or religious reasons, if you wish.

WHAT DOES THE RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE PROVIDE?

We have a fully stocked kitchen, including, but not limited to, utensils, bowls, mixers, pots and pans, and most basic kitchen supplies for your use to cook at the House. Dinnerware and silverware are available.

Participants are required to wear kitchen gloves, provided by RMH-LI. Long hair must be tied back.

WHAT ABOUT CLEAN-UP?

Groups are responsible for kitchen clean-up. Please use the grease disposal containers, found on kitchen counters, to dispose of any used oil from pans. Do not pour excess oil down the kitchen drains. Dishes, utensils, and silverware should be loaded in the dishwasher. Pots and pans should be washed by hand and returned to the storage cabinets and pantry shelves.

CAN I EARN COMMUNITY SERVICE HOURS?

The Brunch/Dinner Program is a good way to earn community service hours. When you arrive at the House, complete the Meals from the Heart program form at the front desk. Keep the yellow copy of the form that is given to you. This is your receipt, as well as acknowledgement of four hours of community service. We do not provide separate service letters.

ARE WE ALLOWED TO TAKE PHOTOS?

You are allowed to take photos in the general areas of the House and of your group while cooking. However, please be sure that you do not include any families who are staying at the House in your pictures.

WHERE IS THE RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE OF LONG ISLAND LOCATED?

Our street address is:
267-07 76th Avenue
New Hyde Park, NY 11040

Our contact telephone number is:
516-775-5683 (Extension 130 to reach Reception Desk)

WHERE SHOULD I PARK MY CAR?

There is a visitor's parking lot located to the right as you face the front of the House. The lot is utilized by our residents, volunteers and visitors, so parking spaces may be limited when you arrive. We ask that you carpool as much as possible. You may also park on the local streets in the neighborhood.

STILL HAVE A QUESTION NOT ANSWERED HERE?

Please send an email to cook@rmhlongisland.org.