



Innovative Technology Keeping Families Close

Technology organizations are having a creative impact on families at the Ronald McDonald House®

(Edmonton, Alberta - For Immediate Release, October 20th, 2016) Straight from your television screen and science fiction dreams - the Ronald McDonald House is finding interesting ways to incorporate technology into the lives of families with sick children.

“We see children who are isolated because of certain treatments, or who have made friends in the hospitals with children who can’t leave their beds,” says Martin Dugas, CEO of Ronald McDonald House Charities® Northern Alberta. “We knew we wanted to get these kids to the Magic Room for some fun and wonder – but we weren’t sure how to do that.”

Solving the Magic Room dilemma are Cybera, a not-for-profit technology neutral, Alberta-based organization, and Double Robotics, the creator of Double – the world’s leading telepresence robot.

Fans of the television shows Modern Family, The Colbert Report, Community, and many others might recognize Double. The robot is essentially a screen on wheels that can be controlled by an app so that anyone from a remote location can control the movements of Double.

Cybera has two Double’s and lent one of them to the Ronald McDonald House where creativity has reigned supreme on the many ways it connects families and friends.

Children can move Double around the Magic Room to look at all the toys, pick one out for themselves or a friend in the hospital. Once they have chosen a special toy Ronald McDonald House volunteer shuttle drivers bring it right to the hospital.

“I believe Double is actually called Mrs. Nesbitt some days when the kids get the robot all dressed up and bring her around the House,” says Dugas. “It is amazing to see the children’s faces light up when they connect with family members and friends across the country.”

Families have used Double to connect with grandparents, aunts and uncles to provide updates about their medical situations. Several children have provided their classes back home with a virtual tour of the Ronald McDonald House.

“It is amazing to see the happiness of children or adults who are able to visit with family or friends who are far away, or be able to move about in one building when they are physically restricted to another,” says Barb Carra, Vice President of Policy and Strategic Initiatives at Cybera.

Double has been a presence in the House for several months – and families are enjoying the connectivity and fun it provides.

“It’s the best feeling knowing that we are having a positive impact in what may be a very challenging time,” says David Cann, co-founder and CEO of Double Robotics.



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About Ronald McDonald House Charities® Northern Alberta

All Ronald McDonald Houses are independently owned and operated non-profit organizations. Ronald McDonald House Charities® Northern Alberta (RMHCNA) is the only facility in Edmonton and the surrounding area that provides temporary and affordable accommodation for families whose children are being treated in one of Edmonton’s medical facilities. Since 1985 RMHCNA has helped over 20,000 families. Website: www.rmhcna.org

About Cybera

Cybera is a not-for-profit technology-neutral organization responsible for driving Alberta’s economic growth through the use of digital technology. The goal of Cybera is to explore and champion new digital tools - including high-speed networking, cloud computing, and data analytics - that can help Alberta’s public, healthcare, education and entrepreneurial sectors be more innovative. It also supports technology learning and adoption among all Albertans - both young and old.

About Double Robotics

Double Robotics is the creator of Double, the world’s leading telepresence robot. We help remote workers, students and kids feel more connected to their coworkers, friends and families by giving them a physical presence where they can’t be in person. Double takes everything you love about video calls on an iPad and places that on a mobile base that puts the remote person in control. By combining cutting edge technology with an intuitive, elegant design, Double is the ultimate tool to enable remote experiences.