



Local nonprofits work together for families

The YMCA and Ronald McDonald House provide respite to children and parents through activity

(June 6th, 2016 – Edmonton, Alberta) – A summer camp experience is a normal occurrence for many children, but those suffering from serious illness or injury, or their siblings, often miss out on this opportunity. This year the YMCA of Northern Alberta and Ronald McDonald House Charities® Northern Alberta are partnering together to provide children with the chance to experience YMCA Summer Camps.

YMCA Camps offer children and youth the opportunity to improve physical literacy skills through YMCA Healthy Child Development. Designed to spark their imagination, build confidence, independence and communication skills, camps include international activities, games, hands on learning, skill development, crafts, swimming, and more. Campers will be motivated to earn Value Beads throughout their week in camp by practicing the YMCA core values of Caring, Honesty, Respect, Responsibility, Diversity and Social Inclusion.

“This partnership was generously supported by the Al Shamal Shriners,” says Nick Parkinson, President and CEO of The YMCA of Northern Alberta. “The Shriners are dedicated to helping children affected by illness and serious injury, and have committed enough funds to send 50 kids from RMHCNA to a YMCA Summer Camp this summer.”

Throughout the summer, families with children staying at, or affiliated with, the Ronald McDonald House will be able to attend the many camp programs offered by the YMCA. This experience provides children living in stressful medical situations the opportunity to be a kid, just like any other kid. It also provides parents the ability to have their children experience some normalcy. Children undergoing treatment and their siblings are invited to participate in the program.

“We see the value in this partnership with every child who will laugh, run, and play with other kids their age,” says Suzanne Pescod, Director of Communications with RMHCNA, “To have the YMCA acknowledge the need for play and normalcy, and respond to it in this way, is incredible.”

Studies have shown that one of the most frequently mentioned factors affecting caregiver coping is their level of financial and emotional stress. By covering the costs of this opportunity and arranging easy transportation to and from the camps, parents are relieved a small piece of the burdens they face.