



Ronald McDonald  
House Charities®  
Northern Alberta



## **New Year, New Program to Support Families Travelling for Medical Reasons Support for Edmonton's Ronald McDonald House® Fuel Program Gains a New Partner**

**(Edmonton, Alberta, January 4, 2017) – For Immediate Release.**

That Watton family travels over 300 kilometers from the Lakeland Region to Edmonton each time their daughter Oksanah needs medical treatment or check-ups due to her heart transplant.

“The Lakeland Fuel Program is such a wonderful gift. I was born and raised in the Lakeland and I couldn’t think of a better place to raise our family. We received our gift card from Cenovus for our 3-day medical trip which meant more to us than a few tanks of gas. It was the gift of freedom – freedom to get to the appointments we needed, and freedom from the worry of money. It’s a little like they brought the hospital to us,” says Rebecca Watton, mother of Oksanah, who received two heart transplants in Edmonton.

At Ronald McDonald House Charities it is normal to have many of the families staying there be travelling for upwards of 3 hours.

“That travel time is not easy on many families,” says Oreen Skiba of RMHCNA. “Not only are the families stressed and under intense circumstances – the financial burden of physically getting to treatment can take a toll on their wellbeing.”

The Ronald McDonald House in Edmonton serves many of Alberta’s northern communities and want to ensure that travel isn’t an obstacle for families with seriously ill or injured children. In the past, when possible through donations of gas cards in the regional areas of Grande Prairie and Cold Lake, RMHCNA was able to provide some families with assistance to get back to Edmonton.

Recognizing a bigger and bigger demand, Cenovus Energy Inc. stood up to the plate to make sure the program was sustainable and more families would be able to get to Edmonton for treatment.

“It makes us happy to know that we are contributing to the well-being of families from around Alberta while an ill child is receiving treatment, which of course is a very difficult and stressful time”, says Leanne Courchesne, Group Lead of Community Investment for Cenovus Energy Inc. “Cenovus staff have also volunteered their time as part of a commitment made to support the Ronald McDonald House organization with more than just money. We want the communities where we live and operate to be better off because Cenovus is there”.

The RMHCNA Lakeland Fuel Program will be able to provide \$100 fuel cards to families in need of travel for further medical appointments. Families staying at the Ronald McDonald House in Edmonton or at one of their hotel partners will be eligible to access these cards.

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### **For more information or media inquiries, please contact:**

Ronald McDonald House Charities® Northern Alberta  
Kayla Gaffney  
Marketing and  
Communications Officer  
Phone: 780-217-3129  
Email: [kayla@rmhcna.org](mailto:kayla@rmhcna.org)



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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](http://www.rmhcna.org)