



Ronald McDonald  
House Charities®  
South East QLD

THE STAR ENTERTAINMENT GROUP

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## **Pregnant Rockhampton mum feels festive spirit thanks to gourmet Star experience for seriously ill children**

Pregnant Rockhampton mum Tina Ryan was one of many Ronald McDonald House families who gained some cheer this festive season thanks to a gourmet buffet experience and a sackful of toys that were delivered by The Star Entertainment Group last night.

Through its Treasury Brisbane and The Star Gold Coast properties, the company has proudly supported Ronald McDonald House Charities South East Queensland (RMHC SEQ) since 2014.

Mrs Ryan is currently 35 weeks pregnant and has been staying at the charity's South Brisbane House for more than a week while her pregnancy is monitored until she delivers.

As a proud mother of two sons already, both under the age of four, Mrs Ryan has had a history of complicated pregnancies.

During her second, she discovered that a blood transfusion required during her first pregnancy had unexpectedly created permanent antibodies in her system, which can attack a baby's red blood cells.

As a result, Mrs Ryan's second son was flown from Rockhampton to Brisbane on Christmas Day, the day after he was born, to receive a blood transfusion and extensive light therapy.

"As you can imagine, these two pregnancies have been quite stressful for our family," Mrs Ryan said.

"It has been such a weight off our shoulders to not have to worry about where we will be staying in Brisbane while I undergo monitoring for my third one, as I still have the antibodies in my system.

"But more than just lifting the financial cost by providing us with a place to sleep, there's so much for our kids to enjoy at the House, which helps take the emotional strain off our shoulders.

"There is a fantastic playground for the kids to run around in, and they're also enrolled in the supervised playgroups where they love learning arts and crafts and playing with the other kids.

"It's such a great facility as we'll be in Brisbane for a few more weeks. Once I give birth, our daughter will also move into the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit to ensure she's stable before we go home."

Likely to be at the House on Christmas Day, Mrs Ryan said she was delighted to learn about the special Christmas-themed Make-A-Meal buffet experience that lit up the South Brisbane House last night, courtesy of The Star Entertainment Group.

"With two young boys, it is sad that we won't be at home for Christmas with all our friends and family, but we were really heartened to be able to enjoy last night's amazing buffet," Mrs Ryan said.

"It meant so much to us to see that our kids still got to experience some semblance of Christmas with the gingerbread making activities and most importantly, Santa coming with all his toys! Not to mention, it was a real treat for us parents as we got to enjoy all the tasty food!"

RMHC SEQ CEO Dr John Gilmour welcomed the return of The Star Entertainment Group's chefs and team members for the company's sixth Christmas 'Make-A-Meal' event and 16<sup>th</sup> Make-A-Meal in total.

"In the last year, we have accommodated over 5,100 families across our three Houses and welcomed 32,700 individual visitors to our Family Rooms in Brisbane and on the Gold Coast," Dr Gilmour said.

“They come from all over with the largest region being central Queensland with more than 20 per cent; followed by the Darling Downs, Wide Bay Capricornia, Brisbane Metro and West Moreton, North Queensland, Sunshine Coast, NSW and ACT, the Gold Coast, and other states and overseas regions.

“There are currently over 70 families in residence at the South Brisbane House.

“These Make-A-Meal event brings joy and unites these families that are dealing with the most difficult of circumstances and we are truly grateful to The Star for their ongoing support, which over the years has provided meals and entertainment to hundreds of families who have used our facilities.”

Treasury Brisbane Chief Operating Officer Kelvin Dodt said over the past six Christmases more than 100 chefs and 30 stewards from the company had volunteered to help feed the families.

“We just want to help, especially at this time of the year,” Mr Dodt said.

“Providing community support is always important, but even more so over the festive season.

“Hospitality is our bread and butter, and putting on a Christmas feast means a lot to us at a time when we know these families yearn to be at home, with their children, and other loved ones.

“Led by our Treasury Brisbane team, our chefs produced a mouth-watering feast for the families and our workforce showed their support by donating toys for the children.

“Our support is part of our company’s wider commitment to the Brisbane community where we have been an active member for more than 20 years, and in the Gold Coast community for more than three decades.”

The Star Entertainment Group’s culinary team delivered a gourmet buffet of prawns, roast turkey, baked ham, and vegetables; and sumptuous desserts including trifle, hot apple crumble, and Christmas pudding with custard.

In addition to the Christmas fare, the families enjoyed gingerbread decorating with icing and lollies, and a special visit from Santa bearing the donated employee gifts.

In 2014, The Star Entertainment Group committed to raising \$3 million towards the construction of RMHC SEQ’s South Brisbane House and supporting the charity’s Family Rooms at the Gold Coast University Hospital.

Ahead of the South Brisbane House’s opening in November 2016, it also helped the charity reap significant savings of around \$140K in furniture and electronics for the House; and has made grants totalling \$210K towards the charity.

**The special Christmas-themed Make-A-Meal buffet experience took place on 17 December 2019 at the South Brisbane House.**

**Ends**

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**Ronald McDonald House Charities South East Queensland**

Ronald McDonald House Charities South East Queensland (RMHC SEQ) provides accommodation for the families of seriously ill or injured children requiring care in treating hospitals within Brisbane and on the Gold Coast. RMHC SEQ helps to preserve the family unit in the midst of physical, emotional and financial stress. It also gives parents the chance to draw hope and comfort from other families in similar situations, while being supported by dedicated and friendly staff and volunteers.

RMHC SEQ currently has three Houses in Brisbane; one at Herston beside the Royal Brisbane & Women's Hospital, one at South Brisbane directly opposite the Queensland Children's Hospital (QCH) and Mater Mothers' Hospital and a House in the QCH.