

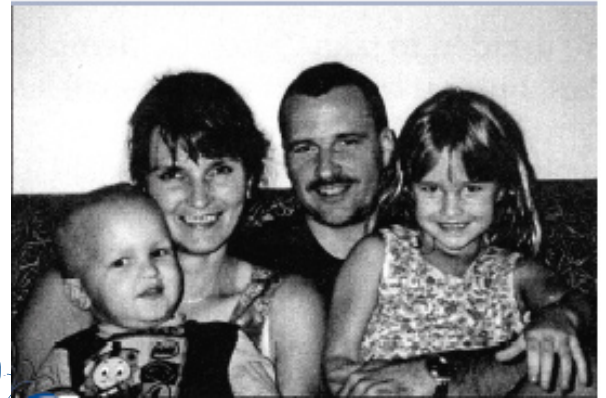


“The Ronald McDonald House made the situation easier for our family. It helped us make something normal out of this painful situation.”

Sherri and Mark Wing



We were devastated when we were told our two-year-old son Colton had a brain tumor and that there was little hope for recovery. Throughout our long ordeal, the Ronald McDonald House was there for us, helping us provide both of our children with as normal a life as possible throughout Colton’s final year.



Colton was a cute, happy little boy. He called his big sister Lauren “Sissy.” Mark called Colton “my buddy boy.”

We first noticed something was wrong with Colton when he began stumbling. After a month, our doctor said that he should be seen at Children’s Hospital of Buffalo. On Feb. 28, 2001, the doctors found the brain tumor. The diagnosis was shattering.

The practical impact on our day-to-day life was overwhelming as well. We lived more than an hour away from the hospital and we had a four-year-old daughter. [How would we be able to handle it all?](#)

The counselor at the hospital told us about the Ronald McDonald House.

While we wanted to stay at Colton’s side every minute, we realized that wasn’t healthy for us or for Colton. Sitting next to the bed with nothing to do but worry is very draining. At the Ronald McDonald House, we were able to get a good night’s rest away from the monitors and noise. If we were needed in the hospital, we could be there at a moment’s notice. And we didn’t have to make the long drive home after being in the hospital all day or all night.

[The Ronald McDonald House made the situation easier for our daughter Lauren. While it was possible for her to stay with family and friends, other people just can’t take the place of Mommy and Daddy. So she stayed with us at the Ronald McDonald House and loved it.](#) Playing with the toys in the house took her mind off what was happening with Colton. It was good for us to have her close by – it helped us make something normal out of this painful situation.

[The Ronald McDonald House sheltered us during this trying time.](#) Our extended family, friends, co-workers and people from church all wanted to know how we were doing. We appreciated their concern, but it got tiring to answer call after call after call. At the Ronald McDonald House, we could turn off our phone, but the staff would make sure that if the hospital telephoned, we’d get that call immediately.

Colton had to have surgery, which took more than eight hours. Our family came into Buffalo to be with us, and we were all able to wait in the comfortable surroundings of the Ronald McDonald House.

(over)

Colton was in the hospital for a month. The day he was discharged, we brought him to the Ronald McDonald House to see where Mommy, Daddy and Sissy had been staying while he was in the hospital. We introduced him to everyone and we cried when we left. It was like leaving a family we had become close with.

We decided to take Colton to Memphis, where they offered a different treatment. We knew it was a long shot, but it was the only chance we had. Colton was in Memphis from April until December.

Luckily, Memphis also has a Ronald McDonald House.

Mark helped out around the house by fixing things and even refinished wooden floors. He enjoyed being busy because it kept his mind off everything that was going on. There was nothing we could do but be there and pray, and that was hard for Mark. A father wants to fix his kid, but he was helpless. It was good for him to be useful around the house.

Much of Colton's treatment was done on an out-patient basis, and he could stay with us in the Ronald McDonald House. When he felt well enough, he loved playing with the toys.

If Colton saw his mom crying, he would say, "Don't cry, Mommy, Jesus loves us." He knew he had to be positive for Mommy, Daddy and Sissy.

We brought Colton home in time for Christmas 2001, and the doctors didn't detect any cancer. We hoped we might have a miracle.

Unfortunately, the tumor came back. At the end of March, we returned to Children's Hospital and our home at the Ronald McDonald House.

While he was in the hospital, Colton had a dream about butterflies. Mommy was there, he said, and it was raining.

We brought Colton home on April 12, 2002, and he died two days later. It was a Sunday morning, and it was pouring out, just like in Colton's dream. Now, every time we see a butterfly, we think of Colton and know he's free.



It was an unbelievably agonizing time for us, but the Ronald McDonald House eliminated so much worry and helped us have a good quality of life with Colton.

We still help the Ronald McDonald House any way we can. Colton had received a tractor for Christmas that he never got a chance to peddle. We auctioned it off and raised \$500 for the house. Mark continues to help out with repairs at the Buffalo house.

The Ronald McDonald House helped us through our darkest hours. Now we ask you to help by giving to the house. Your gift will help other families just like us.

Sincerely,

Sherrri, Mark and Lauren Wing

PS: Please keep help and hope alive by making as generous a gift as you can to the Ronald McDonald House. We thank you on behalf of the hundreds of families your gift will touch.