

Last holiday season, Melanie Finnimore couldn't contain her excitement; she was five months pregnant with her first child.

On December 24, she went for a routine ultrasound, only to be told devastating news: a large cyst was found in her baby's neck. Melanie quickly travelled from her hometown of Portage la Prairie, Manitoba, to receive a fetal assessment in Winnipeg's HSC Children's Hospital.

The cyst was due to a rare condition known as cystic hygroma. Sadly, as time passed, the cyst continued to grow in size and complexity.

On April 7, 2015, with 17 doctors and nurses in the delivery room with her, Melanie's baby was born. She was delighted to have a new baby girl. Melanie named her Joy. "She brought so much joy into my life. People also call her a 'joy to the world'. She definitely lives up to her name." Melanie needed to be close to Joy while she received critical treatment, but didn't know where to stay. She heard about Ronald McDonald House Charities® Manitoba, the only organization of its kind in Manitoba to provide support and accommodations for families with sick or seriously injured children receiving care nearby. Melanie has stayed at the House since Joy was born.

Joy's condition turned out to be more complicated than expected. She stayed in HSC's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit for weeks. Her cyst continued to grow, reaching below her tiny belly. Three weeks after her birth, Joy received her first operation. It didn't end there.



People also call her a "joy to the world" and she definitely lives up to her name.

After five months of constant hospital supervision, Joy was allowed to join Melanie for day visits at Ronald McDonald House. "Normally, the hospital would have started us out with a two hour pass, but because we are close enough and in the trusted environment of Ronald McDonald House, they allow us to spend up to 10 hours at a time together."

Melanie has stayed at Ronald McDonald House for the past seven months and continues to be a guest. Can you imagine being so far from your home, family, work and friends for more than half a year?

Because of amazing supporters like you, Melanie has been spared from financial stresses like accommodations, parking, meals and more. Your donations are needed to support Melanie and Joy, as well as hundreds of families just like them.



Melanie is grateful to have the House. She believes it's given Joy a sense of normalcy and is essential to her healing process: "There's no amount of money in the world that equals what this place means to me. While staying here, Joy is sleeping better, eating better...this place has an atmosphere that's full of love and Joy senses that."

Special medical procedures helped temporarily improve Joy's condition, but her cystic hygroma continues to grow and spread.

Melanie is hopeful: "We don't focus on that. I'm just so thankful for this place.

Ronald McDonald House thinks of all the details you're not prepared for in the case of an emergency. It's really nice to have a washer and dryer, a kitchen for cooking, special programs providing home cooked meals, relaxation sessions, a private room and common areas where we can relate to other families."

Melanie says Joy needs at least 20 more operations. Ronald McDonald House will always be there for the Finnimore family when they need a place to stay.

This year, we operated at a full capacity, providing care, accommodations and meaningful programming to over 600 sick children and their families. Donations from generous Manitobans like you help keep them close—every little bit helps.

We ask you to keep Joy in your heart this holiday season and give what you can to bring a little joy to every family who is healing together.





Joy and I thank you in advance for your generous donations to Ronald McDonald House. We wish you a wonderful holiday filled with treasured memories and time spent with the ones you love.

Melanie Finnimore Melanie & Joy Finnimore



Keep Joy in your heart this holiday season.

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Tax receipts are issued for donations of \$20.00 or more.

Charitable Organization Number:
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- Please send me information on volunteer opportunities.
I have left a donation to Ronald McDonald House Charities Manitoba in my will.
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