



**Ronald McDonald
House Charities®**
Bay Area

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RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE® AT STANFORD OPENS FIRST FAMILY-CENTERED MAKERSPACE

PALO ALTO, Calif. – Silicon Valley tech and community leaders joined Ronald McDonald House at Stanford staff, volunteers and supporters to celebrate the introduction of the first family-centered Makerspace at its Palo Alto campus Tuesday. The groundbreaking programmatic addition to the charity's 123-bedroom House offers families of critically ill children opportunities to design and create functional keepsakes and practical inventions to support their treatment experiences and enhance familial bonds.

"This new Makerspace will bring parents and children together to inspire imaginative and innovative solutions to address the unique challenges surrounding serious illnesses," says Ronald McDonald House Charities Bay Area CEO Annette Eros. "By exploring the opportunities the space provides, families can discover new ways to support their own healing during stays at the House."

The public ribbon cutting ceremony and Makerspace opening was the culmination of a months-long partnership with Maker Therapy founder Gokul Krishnan, Ph.D., whose recent introduction to the House helped identify and connect new approaches for his work with chronically ill pediatric patients using Maker technologies.

"I didn't know what Ronald McDonald Houses did until I walked into the Stanford House in January," Krishnan shared with guests. "But with my Maker Therapy experience in children's hospitals, I recognized immediately the importance of family-centered care, especially with pediatric illnesses. It was a clear "ah-ha" moment for me. Our partnership has resulted in the first dedicated space for a therapeutic Maker environment to serve families as a whole – parents, patients and siblings together."

The interactive activity hub includes an Ultimaker 3-D printer, magnetic circuits, a sound-enabled Nanoleaf light installation and customized workspace to help families carry their fun and functional ideas from concept through creation.

Krishnan's similar Maker applications in hospital settings, including Lucile Packard Children's Hospital Stanford, has resulted in patient-driven inventions including bedside pill boxes that

help administer nighttime medications with less sleep disruption; bell systems that alert in-patient teens to entering healthcare providers to preserve modesty and privacy; adjustable mood rings to express emotions; and comforting toys brought to life from dreams. Krishnan expects to see similarly practical and innovative projects underway at the new family-centered Makerspace at the House.

“Our House thrives on the support of our community and exceptional partners like Gokul,” Eros said. “This Makerspace presents exciting opportunities to further engage experts from our Silicon Valley business community as volunteers.”

Ronald McDonald House Charities Bay Area will follow its Stanford location’s Makerspace opening with the introduction of a mobile Maker kiosk at its 11-bedroom San Francisco Ronald McDonald House inside Benioff Children’s Hospital at Mission Bay in the coming weeks.

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About Ronald McDonald House Charities® Bay Area:

Ronald McDonald House Charities Bay Area (RMHC Bay Area) creates a supportive community for families of children receiving essential pediatric health care at local partner hospitals. The newly established Bay Area regional chapter provides comprehensive programming and services for more families and improves access to care through Ronald McDonald House at Stanford, San Francisco Ronald McDonald House, and two Ronald McDonald Care Mobiles. To learn more, visit www.rmhcbayarea.org.