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## **Ronald McDonald House Charities of Central Texas “Shines Bright” with New Solar Panels Donated by Freedom Solar Power**

### ***Freedom Solar’s Renewable Energy Gift Will Increase Central Texas Ronald McDonald House’s Sustainability and Help Make Way for Expanded Services***

**AUSTIN, TEXAS—March 7, 2023** Austin-based Freedom Solar Power, a national industry leader in turnkey commercial and residential solar energy installations, has partnered with Ronald McDonald House Charities of Central Texas (RMHC CTX) by donating and installing solar panels to defray all of the organization’s out-of-pocket costs for a solar installation on the rooftop of its facility at 1315 Barbara Jordan Boulevard, adjacent to Dell Children’s Medical Center.

“Ronald McDonald House is one of Austin’s most revered charitable institutions, and we are honored to partner with them on this important project because we strongly support their mission to support families with a hospitalized child,” said Freedom Solar CEO Bret Biggart. “The compassionate care and resources they provide are vital to the physical and emotional well-being of children and families served by Central Texas hospitals. We have six team members that have personally benefited from Ronald McDonald House’s services.”

The 42 SunPower solar panels Freedom Solar donated and installed on the rooftop of the RMHC CTX building at Dell Children’s Medical Center have the capacity to produce 14 kilowatts (kW) of solar energy. Although no tax credits were used, considering an Austin Energy rebate and Freedom Solar’s donation, the new solar installation was completed with zero out-of-pocket cost to RMHC CTX.

“We are grateful to Freedom Solar for generously partnering with us on this project, which will improve our operational efficiency and, ultimately, enable us to serve more families with a hospitalized child,” said RMHC CTX CEO Carolyn Schwarz. “Every dollar we can save on operational costs is a dollar we can put into providing a comfortable place to stay and other compassionate services critical to families struggling with the trauma of a sick child. Additionally, this installation savings has allowed us to offer a brand-new Ronald McDonald Family room that will open at Dell Children’s Medical Center North campus and reopen the Ronald McDonald Family Room at North Austin Medical Center; all occurring this spring.”

RMHC CTX was built on the simple idea that, when a family has a sick child, nothing else should matter. The organization provides families the stability and resources they need while their children are hospitalized, so they can focus on helping their kids feel secure and optimistic and get well. Located steps away from Dell Children’s Medical Center, the Ronald McDonald House has 30 guest rooms to house families with a hospitalized child and provides other comforts, such as home-cooked meals, laundry facilities, internet access and play areas for siblings.

Ronald McDonald House serves thousands of families who travel to Austin for world-class pediatric medical care. Over the past 12 months, RMHC CTX has served 908 families, including families from three international countries; provided 9,609 overnight stays; prepared 549 meals for families; served 926 families at Ronald McDonald Family Rooms; given away 22,139 items from Happy Wheels carts; saved families \$1.85 million in out-of-pocket costs for these services; and on average served 85 families per month across Ronald McDonald House, Ronald McDonald Family Room, and the Healing Hearts Programs.

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The solar installation by Freedom Solar will contribute toward RMHC CTX’s ongoing legacy of progressive community leadership. Sustainability has long been a focus of the organization; built in 2007, their existing building at Dell Children’s Medical Center was the first solar-powered Ronald McDonald House in the nation. At that time, it was also one of only two Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Platinum-certified buildings in Austin and among the first LEED buildings in the southwestern United States.

As solar energy becomes more affordable and accessible, nonprofit and charitable organizations across the country are actively moving toward reducing their carbon footprint, both in infrastructure and practice. Solar provides more reliable energy for their volunteers and guests, while increasing net operating income. In addition to RMHC CTX, Freedom Solar has partnered with other Austin nonprofit organizations to help them go solar, including the Dell Foundation, Mothers’ Milk Bank at Austin, Riverbend Church and Westminster Manor, the city’s oldest and most established senior living community.

Freedom Solar is the only SunPower Master Dealer in Texas. SunPower makes the world’s most advanced, efficient and sustainable solar technology, designed and manufactured in the USA and backed by the solar industry’s best 25-year warranty for product, performance and service.

“More Austin-area nonprofits are opting to buy solar because of favorable Austin Energy rebates and solar incentives, as well as federal legislation that increased the investment tax credit (ITC) available under the Inflation Reduction Act, allowing nonprofit entities to be eligible for a 30% ITC for solar installation in 2022,” said Biggart. “The solar industry is based on integrity and respect for our planet and human life. As industry leaders, Freedom Solar is here to support all organizations that choose to go solar by ensuring the arrays installed are of the highest quality and continue to serve customers well for its full lifespan.”

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### **About Freedom Solar Power**

Founded in 2007, Freedom Solar Power is an industry leader in turnkey solar installations, providing high-quality, cost-effective, reliable solar solutions for residential and commercial markets nationwide. Headquartered in Austin, Texas, Freedom Solar also has full-service offices in 11 markets across five states (Colorado, Florida, North Carolina, Texas and Virginia) and has installed commercial projects in 27 states. A Tesla Powerwall Certified Installer and the only SunPower Master Dealer in Texas, Colorado and Florida, the firm has installed more than 191 megawatts of solar power since 2007, ranking as a top 10 solar installer in the US. In 2023, Freedom Solar Power ranked number 70 on the Inc. 5000 Regionals Southwest list, the most prestigious ranking of the fastest-growing private companies based in Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas. Freedom Solar has completed projects for numerous national and multinational corporate clients, including Whole Foods Market, Shake Shack, Office Depot, Holiday Inn Express, Home2 Suites by Hilton, The University of Texas at Austin and numerous automotive dealerships, such as Alfa Romeo, BMW, Chevrolet, Ford, Maserati, Subaru and Toyota. For more information, visit <https://www.freedomsolarpower.com> or follow @freedomsolarpwr on Twitter and @freedom\_solar\_power on Instagram.

### **About Ronald McDonald House Charities of Central Texas**

Ronald McDonald House Charities of Central Texas (RMHC CTX) works to improve the health and well-being of children and their families. Through the Ronald McDonald House, Ronald McDonald Family Rooms, Happy Wheels Carts and Healing Hearts programs, RMHC CTX provides compassionate care and resources to children and families being served by Central Texas hospitals. Ronald McDonald House programs offer access to quality health care and enable family-centered care, ensuring families are fully supported and actively involved in their child’s care. For more information or to donate or become a volunteer, visit <https://www.rmhc-ctx.org> and follow @rmhctx on Facebook and Instagram