Nonprofit Provides Secure Wi-Fi to Families with Sick Children

"We would have liked to have installed Wi-Fi years ago," says Pauline Malone, office manager at Ronald McDonald House, Monash Chapter. "Wi-Fi was requested by almost every family that stayed with us. People rely on the internet to stay in touch with family and friends, especially in times of stress, and not offering Wi-Fi access left a big gap in our services. But we thought offering Wi-Fi would overwhelm our internet connection and be difficult to manage. But now, with a Fortinet Wi-Fi solution running smoothly across our facility, we can offer much better support for families of seriously ill children."

Ronald McDonald House Monash provides accommodation to families with children who require treatment within Monash Children's Health Network. The House caters for families from all over Victoria and Australia but prioritizes families from rural or remote parts of Victoria and interstate. Some families stay just one night, others can be there much longer.

Located on .3 hectare of land, the House is adjacent to Monash Children's Hospital in Kanooka Grove, Clayton, Victoria, enabling easy access by parents. Ronald McDonald House Monash consists of 15 bedrooms, including two self-contained units, and communal areas: kitchen, large dining room, lounge, TV rooms, laundry, children's playroom, and barbeque area.

Opening in 1993, the number of families staying at the House has increased annually to in excess of 450 families per year. Many return for multiple visits and the longest-stay family was nearly three years.

Since its inception, the House has always received overwhelming support from the local community to help keep doors open to families when they need support the most. Organisations, schools, and community groups have become true Friends of the House and continually help with generous in-kind and financial donations. Both Fortinet and Intellect IT are proud sponsors of this wonderful service.

> *"Staying in touch with family and friends in time of stress has been a great comfort. We strive to make a difficult time for families more manageable and the support we have received from Fortinet and Intellect IT has made a huge difference."*
>
> – *Pauline Malone, Office Manager at Ronald McDonald House, Monash Chapter*

Details

Customer: Ronald McDonald House, Monash Chapter

Industry: Hospitality

Location: Clayton, Victoria, Australia

Fortinet Partner: Intellect IT

Limited Wi-Fi Outdated

"We installed a limited Wi-Fi solution a number of years ago to support our staff in the main office," says Malone, "and that worked well enough. But as we grew over time—and as the internet became more popular—our old Wi-Fi couldn't keep up. We had more staff, more space and more families. And they all wanted Wi-Fi access."

"As a charity, we didn't have any budget for an upgrade so we spoke with Intellect IT, our managed services provider who had been donating pro bono services to help support our back-office applications," continues Malone. "They said they would see what they could do."

"Ronald McDonald House is a wonderful organisation and they do great work," says Stephen Allan, director of Intellect Information Technology, a Melbourne-based IT consultancy and services company. "We had been working with them for a couple of years and were impressed with their dedication to families and providing the best services they could. When they asked about Wi-Fi, we knew it would represent a significant enhancement in the overall experience that they could offer to families and improve outcomes. We are a Fortinet Partner and made a few phone calls."

Fortinet Support

"This was one of the easier decisions I have made," says Jon McGettigan, Fortinet's senior director of Australia, New Zealand, and South Pacific Islands. "Stephen presented us with a brief proposal for a suite of FortiAP access points and a FortiGate enterprise firewall. We were happy to oblige. In addition, we donated our FortiGuard Security Services to help keep their security up to date."

Installation and configuration presented no challenges. "We worked with their electrician to run the cabling—there was no need for electricity as the FortiAP access points are PoE [power over Ethernet]," explains Allan. "In fact, we couldn't have asked for better site. We were able to install a total of eight access points to give 100% coverage including all the bedrooms, common areas, and the office facilities. And because the FortiGate firewall contains a number of traffic-management features, RMH was able to manage their increased user load with minimal impact on their overall internet traffic requirements."

No-stress Management

From a management point of view, the Fortinet Wi-Fi solution takes minimal input from Malone and her team. "I just sit back while it does all the work," she says. "Every once and a while we change our password logins for security reasons, but we have had no technical issues what-so-ever. An added bonus, of course, is that our Wi-Fi system is fully secured by the Fortinet Security Fabric. So, when families log onto our Wi-Fi, they can rest assured that they will have a safe and secure experience."

For families staying at Ronald McDonald House, safe and secure Wi-Fi access has had a major positive impact. "We can answer 'yes' when they ask about Wi-Fi coverage," concludes Malone. "Staying in touch with family and friends in time of stress has been a great comfort. We strive to make a difficult time for families more manageable and the support we have received from Fortinet and Intellect Information Technology has made a huge difference. We are appreciative of their time and material donations. But more importantly, their efforts have gone a long way in supporting families in their time of need. And for that we are especially grateful."

Business Impact

- Safe, secure Wi-Fi provides comfort to families under considerable stress
- Fast Wi-Fi access for staff enables them to use their own devices at work
- Minimal management overhead enables management to focus on family support

Solutions

- FortiAP
- FortiGate
- FortiGuard Security Services

"Every once and a while we change our password logins for security reasons, but we have had no technical issues what-so-ever. An added bonus, of course, is that our Wi-Fi system is fully secured by the Fortinet Security Fabric. So, when families log onto our Wi-Fi, they can rest assured that they will have a safe and secure experience."

– Pauline Malone, Office Manager at Ronald McDonald House, Monash Chapter

F:::RTINET®

December 17, 2019 3:41 PM

C:\Users\cyan\Documents\Creative Services - Misc\Document Edits\CS - McDonald House\cs-ronald-mcdonald-house Folder\cs-ronald-mcdonald-house