



Aloha

From Our House to Yours

Newsletter of Ronald McDonald House Charities® of Hawaii

Volume III, Issue 2, May 2003

Around the House

By Kristi Koga

The Tradition of Helping Families Continues

Taking care of families and their lodging needs during a very critical time is what our cornerstone Ronald McDonald House program is all about. For more than 16 years we have had 10 bedrooms at the Judd Hillside House to offer our families. We have also had the luxury of offering Outrigger Ohana Hotel rooms for families with short stays or during overflow House situations. Now, with the addition of the Dole St. House and its eight guest rooms, we are fortunate enough to be able to provide three distinctly different types of housing options for families. Placement of families to the appropriate location is critical for our operational success as well as for the comfort of our guests.



Ronald McDonald House at Judd Hillside

The Judd Hillside House, which typically runs at over 80% occupancy, provides families of outpatient children with a large facility to stay at during treatment. Lydia and eight-year-old Crystal Ngirchchol from Saipan are typical Judd House guests. Crystal is undergoing weekly chemotherapy treatments at Kapiolani Medical Center and is required to stay on-island until her treatments are complete. While at the House, Crystal can rest and relax in the playroom, spend time on our guest computer e-mailing her friends at home, or play with the other outpatient children at the House. Crystal also receives tutoring from a volunteer while she is here, and is able to participate in the many activities that volunteer groups provide for our children.

Crystal enjoyed the Wailupe Elementary School Chorus as they delightfully entertained the families and passed out Easter baskets for all the children in the House. Crystal also eagerly participated in the Faberge egg decorating activity provided by Eileen Tokita. Crystal's radiant smiles and pleasant demeanor let us know that although her stay here may be medically difficult, we have succeeded in providing her with a "home-away-from-home". For more about Lydia and Crystal, see page 5.



The Wailupe Elementary School Chorus brings Easter Season Aloha to the families.

The Dole St. House has a totally different feel and atmosphere. Running at 86% occupancy so far this year, the Dole House lodges families with inpatient children. Most of our Dole House families have premature babies or children undergoing surgery and who will be hospitalized for most of their stay. Parents like Melissa Frazier from the Big Island, and Carleen Pimental from Kauai, can stay at the Dole House while their newborn children are inpatient at the hospital. The moms go early in the morning to stay at their child's bedside and come home later on in the evening to eat, shower & sleep. You will often find them in the



Ronald McDonald House at Dole Street

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A Message from our Executive Director



Jerri Chong

Mother's Day at the Ronald McDonald House in Hawaii was quiet this year. There were celebrations taking place, but most occurred at hospital bedsides, in the neonatal and pediatric intensive care units, or in the children's wards of Honolulu's major hospitals. Still, these moments, these special connections between mother and child, were laced abundantly with laughter and joy, and warmed with love and hope. For the moms staying at the Ronald McDonald House, every day is Mother's day - a celebration, a precious gift never to be taken for

granted. We honor these mothers, for the way they live each day, with courage and grace, dignity and compassion.

Someone once told me that we're conditioned to think our lives revolve around great moments. That this is how people define their lives and catalog their memories. But a wise person (a mother, I'm sure) noted that great moments often catch us unaware—beautifully wrapped in what others may consider to be just an ordinary one. Our special moms at the Ronald McDonald House, faced with the uncertainties of a child's serious illness, have learned to cherish all the moments, and treasure even the most ordinary. For them, these moments are the building blocks of everything special and important in their lives. They define the bonds that hold families together.

To all moms, at the Ronald McDonald House and in our extended Ohana throughout our island community, Happy Mother's Day, today and every day, from the House that Love Built.

RMHC Salutes Moms!!!



Shear and Shear Alike

When the Aina family of Ewa Beach checked their son Nicolas into Kapiolani Hospital for Women & Children for his first round of chemotherapy they didn't know exactly what to expect. As all such families do, they slowly became aware of the routines of hospital life, what family strengthening and patient support tools were available, and how to access them. And it wasn't long before a hospital staffer let them know about the RMH-Family Room.

When Nicolas, Randy and Mom Cathy were warmed by the aloha of the Family Room they made a decision to find a way to help the facility so that it could be there for many more families such as them in the future.



The Ainas present RMHC's Gene Davis with proceeds from their hair cutting event.

"We began popping in to grab a snack and Nicolas found that he could check his E-mail a couple of times a day," said Randy Aina, Nicolas' dad, at the recent check presentation. "We saw how valuable the Family Room is."

To show support of Nicolas and raise money for the RMH Family Room, Randy held a public humiliation session at his Edward Enterprises office, allowing dozens of friends and colleagues the opportunity to hack off a piece of his thick hair—in exchange for a donation that ultimately would be split between the RMH Family Room and Kapiolani Hospital.

The results: dad has a new "do" and the Family Room received a \$1,100 contribution. Nicolas seemed amused, a little bit embarrassed and no doubt encouraged by the show of parental love, and the support of so many others.

"The Family Room is just a welcome place for us to be," he said.

Thank you Cathy, Randy and Nicolas!!



As TV cameras roll, Cathy helps Randy get "air conditioned".



Around the House continued from page 1

evenings sitting around the living room chatting about their day, sharing about the progress of their child, and giving each other support and inspiration. The atmosphere is sometimes quiet and serene, and other times filled with chatter and laughter. Though different from the Judd House, it is still warm and comforting for anyone walking in.



Eileen Tokita shows an avid Shawn Munoz the art of egg decorating.

Katrina Hakkei and her mother Marella, former guests at the Ronald McDonald House, are typical guests booked at an Outrigger Ohana Hotel. Katrina has stayed off and on at the House for chemotherapy treatments over the past 3 years. Once her condition was stable, she was then able to fly in from Kona for scheduled follow-up appointments. The Ohana Hotel suits her perfectly since her one or two-day appointments require her to stay just overnight on Oahu. The Ohana Hotel also serves as an overflow facility if both Houses are full, or if a parent or child is too sick to live within a community setting.

We are so thankful for their assistance!

Collectively, our lodging options can make anyone feel like they can come "home" after a long day at the hospital. *Mahalo to the managers and volunteers who make all of our facilities comfortable and pleasant!*



Open Your Heart...Make a Difference

The month of May is a special one for remembering loved ones. We celebrate and honor our moms on Mother's Day for all the love, wisdom, sacrifices and support they selflessly bestow upon us throughout the years. These are the qualities we see in mothers here at the House everyday. Then on Memorial Day, we remember those who fought bravely for our country and other loved ones that are no longer with us but who are held close to our hearts. This includes the beautiful and courageous children that have been part of the RMHC family and have sadly passed away, unable to win their battles. They will never be forgotten.



In loving memory of Abby

Angel

Grant Camacho
Abby Borja
Baby Boy Cabral
Baby Boy Aurello
Westin Kaili
Kaipo Baligad

Heaven's Recent Arrivals



Heaven Date

February 6, 2002
February 28, 2002
April 5, 2002
April 5, 2002
August 2, 2002
February 9, 2003

Below are letters from families touched by the trauma of having a seriously ill child who have chosen to remember their loved ones by making a gift in their honor to RMHC. These letters alone would have been gifts, as it reinforces how RMHC does make a difference to families. And you can help make it happen, too! Your gift in memory or in honor of a loved one, maybe a mom, is a wonderful gesture that will keep on giving to help RMHC families.

Yes, enclosed is my gift to RMHC in memory of the children and to honor and support those who continue their fight.

\$250 \$150 \$100
 \$75 \$50 Other - \$_____

Please Print

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip Code _____

My check/payment is enclosed

Please Charge my:

Visa MasterCard American Express

Card Number _____

Expiration Date _____

Name on Card _____

Your Signature _____

----- Please clip and mail to RMHC, P.O. Box 61777, Honolulu, Hawaii 96839-1777 -----

January 27, 2003

To the wonderful people at the Ronald McDonald House:
Please accept the enclosed donation in memory of our son, Gregory Audritsh, who would have been 13 today.
It's hard to believe we would be the parents of a teenager!

Every year at this time we remember Gregory's birth and we celebrate his life with a cake (a tradition begun when our son Alexander was 2 and insisted that we celebrate a birthday with a cake!) We play beautiful music by Mozart, who shares Gregory's birthday. And, we remember with gratitude the effect that the people at the Ronald McDonald House and at Kapiolani had on our lives.

Please pass our gratitude along to the people who are there now. Know that the comfort you offer today will affect the lives of those you touch for many years to come.

Love,
Donna Audritsh



Drawing by Sarah Audritsh, age 7.

Aloha Everyone,

I am enclosing a little something that I would like to give to the Ronald McDonald House in memory of my husband, Abel Mattos, Jr.

You were there for my daughter and son-in-law Kathleen and Preston Mendoza when their son (my grandson) was in Kapiolani Hospital's NICU.

P.J. is a year old now and is progressing very well. We appreciate all that you do for those in need. You can use this donation to get something from your wish list.



Taylor, P.J. and Grandma Mattos

LOVE AND SUPPORT CROSSES MANY TIME ZONES



Crystal and Lydia

Meet the Ngirchechols, current guests at Ronald McDonald House Judd Hillside. Mom Lydia and 8-year-old daughter Crystal arrived here from Saipan in January to have Crystal's cancer treated at Kapiolani Medical Center. They were forced to leave Crystal's brother and sister at home with relatives. If that weren't enough separation, Crystal's dad, Ensin, who is in the U.S. Army, is presently deployed in Korea.

Treatment for Crystal's lymphoma lasts for a full year. Fortunately, she can stay outpatient most of the time during her treatments, so she stays with mom at the Judd Hillside House. This determined duo is thousands of miles away from the nearest relatives. "We're dealing with it," says Lydia. They stay in touch with e-mails and phone calls. "Calls are best. I love talking to anyone in my family—time zones permitting," she says.

Lydia, a self-described "military brat," is used to living in far-flung places. "I was born in Guam but our family traveled and lived all over, including a long time in North Carolina," she says. "My parents and brother still live there."

Nothing can really prepare parents for such a sudden and unexpected family crisis but one thing that always seems to ease the way is the support of the other families staying at the House. Lydia agrees. "The families I meet here at the House and at the hospital are all going through their own personal emergencies, so I have people to talk to that understand. And I have really learned a lot since this all began."

Lydia is glad that her daughter has an environment at Ronald McDonald House that is so child-friendly. "It's good for Crystal to have things to do like she does here and other kids to play with," says Lydia. And what does Crystal like best about her home-away-from-home at the Ronald McDonald House? "Arts and crafts!" she declared. "And playing games...and watching TV."

The cheerful youngster is excited because Grandma will be visiting from North Carolina soon and then later this summer, Crystal's 5-year-old sister Larrisa and 10 year-old brother Ensin will visit. Dad might even be able to get away so that the whole family can be together during at least part of Lydia and Crystal's term of treatment in Hawaii.

Lydia says she's too busy trying to do everything right to help with Crystal's recovery to spend a lot of time thinking about the future or the past. "Right now, I'm doing what any parent would do, taking whatever's next and concentrating on one day at a time." "But it's so good not to have to worry about a place to stay and not to feel alone."



"Mom cooks and I eat. We're a perfect team!"



Whether doing an art project, playing games with mom or helping RMH volunteers Ania Nowicki and Mariko Strickland bake cookies, Crystal brings a special enthusiasm.

Foundation and Corporate Support Friends

Our sincere thanks to the following foundation and corporate supporters in helping to meet our mission by providing grants and gifts to RMHC:



Channel 2's Manolo Morales, RMHC's Jerri Chong, Ronald, and Melanie Okazaki of McDonalds Corporation on World Children's Day

- ♥ A very special mahalo to **McDonald's Restaurants of Hawaii** (Veronica Kaneko, Director of Operations) and its Owner/Operators (Donna Abreu, Harold Hatanaka, Miles Ichinose, Robert Leopoldino, Victor Lim, Erlinda Rosario, Grelyn Rosario, Susan Smith, Diane Sumida, Glenn Waki, Francis Yamamura) for their on-going commitment to RMHC and the families we serve. Through their combined efforts and your participation in the Halloween Treat Pack and World Children's Day fundraisers, a total of \$35,309 was donated to RMHC.

Thank you too; to the McDonald's ohana who joined in McDonald's Clean Up Day at RMH. You did a great job sprucing up the House and the yard!



McDonald's Pat Lim on McClean-up day.

- ♥ **HCF – Hawaii Children's Trust Fund**, \$15,325 towards RMHC's Share-A-Stay program
- ♥ **HCF – Robert E. Black Fund**, \$14,500 for RMHC Organizational Capacity Building
- ♥ **The Hartley Foundation**, \$12,500 for RMH Judd Hillside's Driveway Retaining Rock Wall Project



Michael and Sandy Hartley present RMHC with a check.

- ♥ **Atherton Family Foundation**, \$10,000 for RMH Judd Hillside Facilities Renovation Project
- ♥ **Mary D. & Walter F. Frear Eleemosynary Trust**, \$10,000 for RMH Judd Hillside Facilities Renovation Project

- ♥ **The Reverend Takie Okumura Family Fund**, a gift of \$5,000 to assist with Dole Street House start up costs



Otis Elevator employees arrive ready to make a difference.

- ♥ **Otis Elevator Co.** matched employee gifts for a total of \$3,640 for RMHC programs. In addition, employees helped with maintenance projects at the Manoa House and provided a wonderful luncheon for our families.

- ♥ **The James and Patricia Schuler Foundation**, \$2,000 for breast pumps

SHARE-A-STAY FAMILY FUND

Kauai Family Fund

George N. Wilcox Trust, \$15,000

Elsie Wilcox Foundation, \$5,000

Hawaii Hotel Industry Foundation Kauai Charity Walk, \$2,500

Big Island Family Fund

HCF – Hartwell & Rebecca Carter Fund, \$4,075

HCF – Kukio Community Fund, \$2,500

Hawaii Hotel Industry Foundation Big Island Charity Walk, \$5,000

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Hawaii Pilots Association, \$5,000

Construction and Management Inc, \$1,000

KTA Super Stores, \$1,000

Servco Foundation, \$1,000

Vulcan Hawaii, Inc., \$1,000

Volunteer Today!

The new RMH Family Room has everything but depends on the human touch

There are volunteer opportunities and then there are VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES. For the right person, volunteering at the Ronald McDonald House Family Room can be the experience of a lifetime.



Jackie takes a reservation at the RMH Family Room.

The Family Room is open 7 days a week, 9 a.m.-9 p.m. and is supervised entirely by volunteers. Family Room volunteers are on the "front line" of assisting families whose children are being treated as inpatients at Kapiolani Hospital for Women & Children. Volunteers receive thorough training that prepares them for their minimum twice-monthly, four-hour shifts.

It takes commitment but the rewards are great for those seeking an opportunity to support and comfort families while they are dealing with a child's hospitalization.

One such person is Jackie Ralph. Jackie generously covers four of the four-hour shifts each month. She feels that

what she gets back from her hours of volunteer service makes her dedication more than worth it. "There have been some families that I met here that have touched me very deeply," says Jackie. "I go home with my heart opened."

Jackie says she is recruiting her friends and invites others to volunteer as well. "It's not difficult, but it's very fulfilling," says Jackie. "On Tuesday mornings I wake up excited to get here."

Jackie also owns and operates her own business, A Treasured Moment Wedding Service, where she plans and officiates hundreds of marriages each year. Even though business has been good, Jackie says she makes sure to block out her volunteer time on her schedule.

To find out more about becoming an RMH Family Room volunteer call Justine at 973-5683 x241.



Jackie makes sure the Family Room kitchen is ready for families.

Mahalo to Our Friends

- ♥ Violet, Jenny and Gina from Cinnabon at Kahala Mall Shopping Center for donating cinnabons on a weekly basis for our families.
- ♥ Kailua Community Church Youth Bible Class for donating household items from the wish list and \$100 from their pull-tab* collection and recycling efforts.
- ♥ Kainalu Elementary School Student Council collected pull-tabs* for the House.
- ♥ Pauline Keyes-Tanabe, Massage Therapist, who rubs out the stress and tension of the families.
- ♥ Eileen Tokita, Faberge Egg Decorator, who taught the families the art of egg decorating for Easter.
- ♥ Volunteer groups touch the lives of our families. Here are the most recent groups to give of themselves by preparing meals, baking goodies, cleaning the House, coordinating special activities during the holidays, planning arts & crafts projects and much more: Alpha Gamma Delta, Hawaii Association of Family and Consumer Sciences, Holy Family Group, Kamehameha Third Graders and Sixth Graders, Maile Church Girl's Club, Maryknoll High School Junior State of America National Club, Mid Pacific Dorm Students, Project Pure Light, Punahou Kindergarten, Honolulu Sunset Rotary Club, University of Hawaii Pre-Med Association, Wailupe Elementary School, Zonta and Z-Club.

* While Ronald McDonald House Charities of Hawaii encourages and appreciates the recycling efforts of the community on our behalf, we are no longer able to pick-up your collection of pull-tabs for recycling. If you or your organization would like to continue recycling pull-tabs we ask that you take it to a recycling center in your community and then mail the proceeds to Ronald McDonald House Charities of Hawaii. We appreciate and thank you for your continued cooperation. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to call Michelle at 973-5683 ext.240.

FROM OUR HOUSE TO YOURS, THANK YOU!

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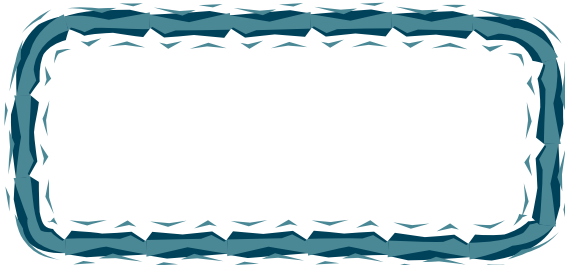
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 Chef knives, cutting boards
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