Aloha
From Our House to Yours

Special 12-page Edition, September 2007 | Newsletter of Ronald McDonald House Charities® of Hawaii

Jerri Chong

2007: Milestones, a Whirlwind of Activities

A Message from our Executive Director

Ronald McDonald House on Judd Hillside

Aloha,

The year 2007 continues to be truly remarkable! First and foremost, it marks the 20th Anniversary of Ronald McDonald House in Hawaii.

For two decades now this beautiful home on Judd Hillside has been serving families with seriously ill children. Over the years, literally thousands of people have called it their "home-away-from-home" while they were in Honolulu for a child's needed medical treatment.

Actually, the effort to create a Ronald McDonald House in Hawaii started 25 years ago, in 1982, when a group of concerned citizens began work on the project. The group was comprised of parents of previously hospitalized children, medical personnel, business people (including McDonald's), and representatives of groups such as the Junior League of Honolulu, the March of Dimes, and the hospital Auxiliary of Kapiolani Hospital.

Their work, and the support of nurses, social workers, insurance companies, and so many others showed the community that there was an overwhelming need in Hawaii for an affordable, temporary, place of lodging and support for the families required to fly to Honolulu for a child's medical treatment. Based on this need, the capital campaign to fund the project was hugely successful.

Our 20th anniversary celebration held on March 27 brought together an incredible group of special people. Members of our community that worked so hard to get the House started back in the mid-80s - giving countless hours and dollars to the project, and turning the House into a very personal mission - returned to the fruit of their labor and joined several visiting families that had stayed at the House over the years. It was a humbling and very touching occasion and one that we'd like to share with you through the photos on pages 5-8 of this Special Edition newsletter.

Another huge highlight this year has been the success of our new Ronald McDonald House on Oahu Avenue. The new House adds seven more beautiful and functional guest rooms to the ten rooms at our Judd Hillside House, and means that we are able to serve our families better than ever before. On pages 10-11 of this issue, take a peek at this latest addition to the RMHC-HI system.

Our Oahu Avenue House started as a vision, as do all great creations. Then, after a four-year process of research and planning, raising the funds, identifying the property, and meticulous remodeling, our newest Ronald House began immediately to help meet the needs of Neighbor Island and Pacific Island families with seriously ill children.

The Oahu Avenue House

This has been a major undertaking, and it would have been impossible without the enthusiastic support of the community. Hundreds of people stepped forward in a big way to help make our expansion a reality. We at RMHC-HI feel honored to be the ones chosen by the community to turn its compassionate intentions into practical help for families-in-crisis.

Wish List

Gift Certificates

Wal-Mart
Costco
K-Mart
Sam's Club
Longs Drugs
Safeway
Gasoline Gift Cards
Pre-paid Phone Cards

Household Items

Laundry detergent
Fabric softener
Non-stick pots & pans cookware
Paper towels, napkins & plates
Toilet paper (individually wrapped)
Ziplock bags
Aluminum foil
Plastic food storage containers

Food Items

Rice
Saimin
Sugar
Flour
Cooking oil
Frozen meals (microwave)
Individually wrapped snacks
Miscellaneous canned goods

OTHER WAYS TO LEND A HAND

- Make a donation by check or credit card using the enclosed envelope.
- Drop your change into House collection canisters at cash registers and drive-thru windows of McDonald's Restaurants.
- Buy your daily newspaper at McDonald's – every paper sold there results in a contribution to RMHC-HI.

Kona Event Reunites Ronald House with Former Guest Families

The first of several neighbor island reunions, held in conjunction with Ronald McDonald House Hawaii's 20th Anniversary, took place Sunday, August 26 in Kona. The event which was held at the Kona Outdoor Circle Educational Center & Sadie Seymour Botanical Gardens reconnected the House with families from West Hawaii that had stayed there over the years. It was also a great opportunity for families with so much in common, and all living in the same community, to meet. There were games, food, plenty of aloha, and a good time was had by all!

Next, families from East Hawaii are being invited to a November 3 reunion in Hilo. Details are available by calling (808) 973-5683 x225.

Shortly after her premature birth in 1990, Kapiʻolani Ann Kualaau spent several weeks at Kapiolani Hospital's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit until she grew strong enough to return home to Kona. Her parents, Wendell and Teresa, stayed at the Ronald McDonald House during her hospitalization. Wendell, still emotional when recalling memories of that difficult period so many years ago, said "We will never forget all the aloha and support shown by the wonderful people at the House." And yes, the family's positive experience at the hospital had something to do with the name she was given!

Nothing like good food, good friends, and good fun on a Sunday afternoon for Dan Mersburgh.

The competition for top prize is fierce at the Jun-Ken-Po contest.

Logan McClure, after surgery in 2000, and enjoying the afternoon in the sun at the RMHC-HI Kona Family Reunion in August. Parents Jim and Sally brought the whole family and shared memories and updates with old and new friends.

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

Congratulations on helping families for 20 years. Enclosed is my gift to Hawaii's RMHC.

♡ $250 ♡ $150 ♡ $100

♡ $75 ♡ $50 ♡ Other - $_____

♡ My check/payment is enclosed

Please Charge my:

♡ Visa ♡ MasterCard ♡ American Express

Please Print

Name_____

Address_____

City _____

State _____ Zip Code _____

Card Number _____

Expiration Date _____

Name on Card_____

Your Signature _____

♡ *Skip my acknowledgement and save the funds for your programs. I know my gift is appreciated and being utilized well. My cancelled check/credit card statement will serve as a receipt (all gifts of $250 or more will be sent a written receipt in compliance with current tax requirements).*

Caring Hearts, Caring Friends at the House That Love Built

Something Ronald McDonald House guests often tell us is that they are so grateful to have other families nearby that understand what they are going through and to share each other's uncertain journeys. Often, this bonding is so strong that families stay in close contact for years after meeting here.

The House brings people together from all over the world and from every walk of life. It is the common experience of having a seriously ill child that transcends all, and allows people to see how similar we all really are.

This incredible power recently brought two families together from very different places, and with very different stories.

The Walker family from the Big Island and the Marlatts from California recently stayed at the House, both with premature babies at Kapiolani Hospital. Although they are from diverse races, cultures and places of origin, they formed a strong and immediate friendship, and by helping each other through their difficult times, they found the strength to endure their own situations.

Their stories in short: The Marlatt's expected one-week Kona vacation turned into a three-month stay at the House when Heather Marlatt delivered their baby boy Austin three months prematurely. It was extremely fortunate that, despite suffering from bleeding of the brain and undergoing heart surgery, Austin responded so well that the family was able to return to the mainland the first week of July, expecting Austin to lead a normal life.

At the same time, the Walkers, along with doctors, fought incredibly hard to save the life of their tiny baby girl Kiya but in the end, Kiya's little heart wasn't strong enough and she passed away on June 26.

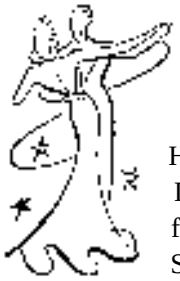
For the two families, it was difficult to say good-bye after becoming so close and sharing so many of each other's emotional highs and lows. They decided they wouldn't say "good-bye." Instead they vowed to stay in touch and to remain close, across the miles.

To the entire staff of the Ronald McDonald House Charities of Hawaii,

Thank you very much for the wonderful place you provided us with during these past two months. We feel truly blessed to have had the opportunity to house here through this challenging time for us. Every single one of you has left a lasting impression on us with your kind and gracious ways. We will always remember all we've gained throughout these short two months we were able to spend with our little girl, Kiya-Leshay. We've gained "a new family," new friendships and most of all the love and support that guided us through each day. We will be ever-so-grateful for this heartfelt experience and we will always remember your kind generosity.

With much appreciation,
Kelsey, Dee, K-J. and Tre Walker

Above, the Walker family visiting baby Kiya in the hospital.
Left, Heather Marlatt shares hugs with Dee Walker and Dee's two sons, K-J and Tre, before parting ways.



Star Light, Star Bright, a Holiday Delight

Coming Sunday evening, December 2!

Hurry and reserve a table or seats at our 2nd annual RMHC-HI Gala. The event scheduled for December 2, will honor one of Hawaii's most caring and loved families, the Sullivans. The Sullivan family has been active in the community in business and philanthropy for decades. Maurice J. "Sully" Sullivan, the late patriarch of the family, chaired the successful capital campaign to create the first Ronald McDonald House in Hawaii. Joanna and the Sullivan children followed his lead and continued his legacy, remaining active supporters of the House over the years. Join us in honoring the Sullivan family and celebrating our 20th anniversary. Call RMHC-HI at 973-5683 x239 to make your reservation or for more information.

Last year's event honored founding board member Kitty Lagareta. It was an emotional evening filled with the spirit of caring and the joy of life. (Photos below)

UH President Dr. David McClain and wife Wendie with honoree Kitty Lagareta and colorful "friend"; Guests enjoy a breathtaking sunset and ocean views at the start of the evening; Anita Hall and Nueva Vida provided music for dinner and dancing under the stars at the elegant affair.
Bottom Row: It was a magical, fun-filled evening for families from the House. Meredith, Tishelle, Trinette and House Manager Shawn never left the dance floor; Dr. Jay Cambra and wife Veronica Kaneko of McDonald's Restaurants of Hawaii with one of the beautiful IONA Contemporary Dancers.

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RMHC-HI BOARD WELCOMES THREE NEW MEMBERS

Doreen Griffith, Beth Lum, and Dennis Pang have been selected as the newest members of RMHC-HI's Board of Directors. Griffith is Office Managing Partner at accounting firm Grant Thornton; Lum is Executive Vice President of Creative Fundraising Associates, Inc.; and Pang is an Insurance Broker with Dennis Pang and Associates.

In addition, the organization announced its new slate of Board officers effective July 1.

Doreen Griffith

Beth Lum

Dennis Pang

1987 HAPPY 20TH ANNIVERSAY RONALD McDONALD HOUSE® HAWAII 2007

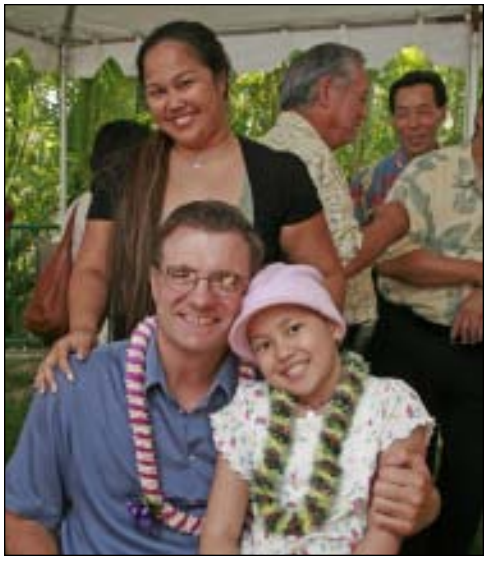
Spanning two decades, the Judd Hillside Ronald McDonald House has been a caring home-away-from-home for families during a most vulnerable time-when a child is seriously ill.

Since the House's opening, it has served more than 20,000 people and provided a total of approximately 87,000 nights of lodging. Although the vast majority of families served by the House have come from the Neighbor Islands, families from all over the world have called it their home-away-from home over the years.

The special gathering and anniversary celebration on March 27 brought back to the house many of the original founding board members, funders, and volunteers, as well as several extraordinary families that have stayed at the House over the years. One of the returning families was the Pickops from Kauai who stayed at the House shortly after it opened. Nalinee, an infant then, suffered from Infantile Botulism Poisoning. As they walked through the doors for the first time in nearly 20 years, Ed paused and said, "It still feels the same. I can still feel the warmth and aloha of this wonderful place." Ed and Nalinee spent the night at the House, talking story and sharing memories with other returning guest families, before joining the anniversary festivities the following day.

Those attending the celebratory event were treated to tours of the House and enjoyed photo displays and memorabilia showing the history of the House that Love Built. After a lunch catered by Sam Choy's, guests were given a preview of RMHC-HI's new public awareness TV campaign.

It was a day of nostalgia, happy reunions and celebration at RMHC-HI's 20th anniversary event.



Families Return to their "Home-Away-From-Home"

At the 20th celebration, one of our former guests Ed Pickop, became emotional and touched the hearts of those in the crowd when he spoke of his experience here at the House.

"I am so honored to be here today speaking on behalf of the countless families that have stayed at this beautiful house during their unexpected trips to Honolulu, and who fought side-by-side for their child's recovery. You just can't overestimate the value of being in the presence of other parents going through similar experiences. When we were going through Nalinee's crisis, we would have been dazed, confused, broke and utterly stressed out if we hadn't found out about the Ronald McDonald House. It immediately addressed so many of our basic needs that we were able to totally concentrate on our baby's care."

"This place was truly a Godsend for us. It's so humbling to realize that long before we arrived, the founders, many of which are here today, understood the need in the community and went to bat for families like ours. I know it wasn't easy to establish this Ronald McDonald House, and that it isn't easy to raise the money to continue to operate the program. So, on behalf of all who have benefited, please accept our sincerest thank you. Mahalo to the founders, the caring staff, the numerous volunteers, the major sponsors, and everyone in Hawaii who has made a contribution to the cause, big or small. I know it makes a major difference in the lives of many families at a time of great stress, and for some, a time of great sorrow. Thank God for the Ronald McDonald House. Thank God for all of you."

20 Years ago, Hawaii welcomed its first Ronald House

The People who made the Dream come true - Our Founding Board

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Each year, it seems that our annual golf tournament fundraiser couldn't get any better. But our experienced golf tournament committee headed by chair, Bruce Yanagihara, somehow outdo themselves everytime. This year's event raised $90,000 and again brought together support and sponsorships from many, many businesses, including McDonald's, Golden State Foods, Outback Steakhouse and Christopher James & Kaimana Kea Jewelers.

Thanks to the unprecedented number of volunteers, and the hard work of the entire RMHC-HI staff, the event went smoothly and made for a happy (and well fed) bunch of golfers!

A sunny day for our golfers at Hickam AFB's Mamala Bay course, a savory steak and chicken dinner from Outback Steakhouse and Gene Matsushige is the $5,000 Rolex watch winner!

The 2007 June Jones Foundation Quarterback Golf Classic

Exec. Dir. Jerri Chong receives check from June's Foundation. Kevin Kaplan, June, John DeFries of Hokuli'a, Burt Trembly.

The June Jones Foundation's third annual Q.B. Golf classic was held on Monday June 25, 2007 over the beautiful and challenging Hokuli'a golf course in Kailua-Kona. The tournament, which featured 21 six-man teams, generated $28,500 for Ronald McDonald House Charities of Hawaii.

Among the celebrity quarterbacks participating were Earl Morrell, Joe Theisman, Neil Lomax, Steve Bartkowski, Vince Ferragamo, Jim Zorn and UH's own Colt Brennan.

Hawaii's newest Ronald McDonald House

Ronald McDonald House-Oahu Avenue

A calm and beautiful setting awaits families experiencing the stress of being away from home and dealing with a child's serious medical condition. The opening of our Oahu Avenue Ronald McDonald House last year added 7 more guest rooms to the RMHC-HI system, bringing the total number of rooms for visiting families to 17. Since opening its doors in early 2006, our newest "Home Away From Home" has welcomed more than 160 families from the Neighbor Islands and the Pacific Rim area.

Mahalo!

to the major donors whose generosity made the Oahu Avenue House possible:

The Harry & Jeanette Weinberg Foundation • State of Hawaii • Frear Eleemosynary Trust • McInerny Foundation • HMSA Foundation
Samuel N. and Mary Castle Foundation • McDonald's Restaurants of Hawaii • Milici Valenti Ng Pack • Fred Baldwin Memorial Foundation

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2006 RMHC Hawaii Board of Directors

Volunteer Spotlight

A special, caring couple

This month we shine the volunteer spotlight on Sid and Nobu Oshiro of Mililani.

Nobu and Sid have been volunteering at Ronald McDonald House steadily for about 5 years. They are certainly earning their place in the Volunteer Hall of Fame. When not busy traveling or teaching ballroom dancing, they are always ready to step up and help with a project, no matter what it is. Often, during especially busy periods, the Oshiros are at the House several days a week, putting in long hours, but always cheerful and ready with a smile.

The volunteer assignments Sid and Nobu are involved with include helping with newsletters and bulk mail preparation; preparing materials for fundraisers and special events; coordinating holiday projects; and serving as assistants and hosts during special House functions. Their favorite project? "Boy, that's a tough one," says Nobu. "I guess it was when we were putting together the annual Christmas ornament for the first time."

Volunteering together means a lot to the Oshiros, who have been married for over half a century. "We like each other's company and enjoy working together," Nobu says. "We also like spending time with our friends and fellow volunteers the Asams and the Akamichis, working on projects at the House."

Sid and Nobu, celebrating their 50th Anniversary earlier this year

"We enjoy helping others that are going through a difficult time in their lives. It means a lot to us. Whenever we leave after we volunteer, it feels good and makes us happy—and we can't wait to come back and volunteer again."

"Sid and Nobu are amazing," says Michelle Takahashi, RMHC-HI's Community Relations and Development Coordinator, who has worked closely with the Oshiros over the years. "They do everything and anything. They bend over backwards to support us, and they give so generously of their time and from their hearts. They've taught us so much about appreciating life's gifts, and we're very grateful to have them as part of our RMHC-HI family."

In addition to their volunteering, traveling and ballroom dancing activities, Nobu says she and Sid like to go shopping. "Sid likes to shop for audio systems, and I love to shop for shoes and clothes," she says with a laugh!

There are a wide variety of volunteer opportunities available. Read all about volunteering at RMHC-HI on our web site, www.ronaldhousehawaii.org, or call Volunteer Coordinator Michael Ahakuelo at 973-5683, ext. 241

The Oshiros (front row) at our 2007 Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon

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