Aloha From Our House to Yours
www.RonaldHouseHawaii.org
October 2008
Newsletter of Ronald McDonald House Charities® of Hawaii

Maui couple's patience is richly rewarded

Andrea Ciro and Kalei Riggs of Makawao, Maui are two of the few guests who have had the occasion to stay at both Honolulu Ronald McDonald Houses. Andrea delivered premature twins in March and was originally lodged at the Oahu Avenue House, where most neighbor island parents with preemies stay during their newborn's hospitalization.

When Aidan, one of the twins, was eventually released from the hospital in June, they moved together into the Judd Hillside House and were joined by the twins' dad, Kalei, who previously had only been able to come to Oahu on weekends to be with Andrea. Together they waited for Alec, the second twin, to grow strong enough to go home. Finally in August, Alec was allowed to leave the hospital with the help of an oxygen feed. When both twins were eventually cleared to leave Oahu in September, the family bid farewell to their home-away-from-home. Below, Andrea shares some vivid memories of her early experiences while staying at the Oahu Avenue House, and during the time she, Kalei and the boys spent as guests at the Judd Hillside House.

"The Crystal Houses of Manoa" *by Andrea M. Ciro*

March, 2008

It's 10 pm. The front door code buzzes me in and I enter into the beautiful, low-lit, front foyer that is filled with the sounds of the garden's waterfall through the screen door. I walk down the hall towards the kitchen where pots and dishes clang and the smell of frying fish fills the air. The shuttle has just returned from its evening drop-off and several house mates are making late dinners, common after a whole day spent at the hospital visiting our children.

"How are the babies?" Chelsey asks. With one question, we begin to gather in the kitchen, one by one, sharing our daily updates on our children. I share my current status on both of my micro preemie twin boys, Alec and Aidan, whom were delivered at 26.5 weeks and Chelsey, a young single mom from the Big Island, gives me the details of her preemie son. Marilyn, 34 weeks pregnant and counting, joins us for a glass of milk and we find out how she's feeling and what news the doctor had for her today about returning home. Tiare and Bronson talk story of their faith in beating the odds the doctors gave them for their son.

Andrea Ciro while staying at the Oahu Avenue House

Wes, our weeknight manager, enters and places on the counter several bags of pasta, bread, and salad from the dinner made by volunteers at the Judd Hillside House.

We say good night and I find myself upstairs in my room: alone, quiet, and anxious with anticipation of how my babies are doing throughout the night. Before I try to sleep, I pray for my sons to survive and to be given the chance to live healthy, normal lives. Though neither my family nor my friends are near, and I only see my partner on the weekends, I feel safe and I feel blessed.

June, 2008

It's Sunday evening at Judd Hillside and Kalei and I bring baby Aiden downstairs in our green laundry basket packed with pillows, blankets, pacifier and toys. The kitchen is alive as families and volunteers serve themselves dinner. Aiden is quick to become the topic of conversation and we proudly share his story with all the listening ears. Some are shocked that, although his original due date wouldn't be until June 21, he had actually been born nearly three months ago. Now we can finally enjoy one son, as we patiently wait in this wonderfully supportive environment for our other son to grow strong.

Alec

Aiden

September, 2008

Now here we are, months later, making final preparations for our transition back home with our two beautiful, alert, healthy, baby boys and I think about my long difficult journey. Like a powerful and clear crystal rock, my faith in one thing has not wavered nor has it left us vulnerable for even a moment: this magnificent, gracious house on Judd Hillside. It has given us shelter, food, friendship, comfort, love, tranquility, and the ability to be present by our babies' sides, every fearful, joyous, miraculous, healing step of the way.

The entire Ciro-Riggs family shortly before going home

A Message from our President

Jerri Chong

Aloha!

The past few months have been punctuated by several very exciting events and activities in support of the children and families that we serve through our Ronald McDonald Houses and Family Room. You will find photos and additional information about them elsewhere in this newsletter, but I wanted to spotlight just a few of the many exceptional people that made them possible. They would be the first to admit that their visions and hard work to set up the occasions would not be fruitful without the support of our full community. Every single person's support is crucial. Thank you so much to all who participate in fundraisers benefiting RMHC-HI!

Special mahalo to everyone associated with the 17th Annual RMHC-HI Golf Classic on July 17. A golf event such as this (which raised more than $100,000!) takes literally thousands of hours of hard work by the many dedicated people including board members, staff, and volunteers, along with the support of local businesses. Mahalo to our Golf Committee led by board members Bruce Yanagihara and Dennis Pang; the nearly 200 golfers that played in our event; and the more than 150 volunteers from the community who gave their time to make the event successful. Among this year's Golf Classic heroes are McDonald's Restaurants of Hawaii; Golden State Foods; Outback Steakhouse Waipio; and Christopher James and Kaimana Kea Jewelers. See a complete list of the Platinum Sponsors on page 7.

Also in July, Jenai Wall, the President and CEO of Foodland Super Markets, Ltd., celebrated her company's 60th anniversary and the grand re-opening of the Market City Foodland by staging a fabulous event with all the proceeds going to RMHC-HI! More than 60 people from the community volunteered their time to support RMHC-HI by working at the event, and it raised $27,000!

A month earlier, June Jones held his annual celebrity golf tournament on the Big Island and donated $10,000 of the proceeds to RMHC-HI.

July 27 on Maui, Gwen and John Henry, who stayed at the Ronald McDonald House back in 1995, organized an all-star concert that generated more than $2,000 for RMHC-HI.

Jenai Wall presents the proceeds from Foodland's 60th Anniversary event to RMHC-HI

It is both humbling and inspiring to feel the Aloha and to receive help from so many good people across our island community. I know the children and families that reside with us feel exactly the same way. On their behalf, thank you for your continuing support!

RMHC-HI Board of Directors:

Brian Takeda
Chairman

Richard Rand, Esq.
1st Vice Chair

Frankie Chung
2nd Vice Chair

Beth Lum
Secretary

Doreen Griffith
Treasurer

Sara Isonaga
Mi Kosasa
Patrick Lim
Dennis Pang
Donna Ribellia-Abreu
Ken Silva, Chief (HFD)
Paul Takayesu
Bruce Yanagihara

Artist Wyland visits Ronald McDonald House

Visiting Manoa's Ronald McDonald House this summer, the world-renown artist and environmentalist Wyland conducted an informal art class for the kids and shared his own story of having a club foot as a child. He told them the experience actually led to his painting skills, as well as his compassion for the planet's environment.

"Art can play an important role in building better kids. It's a shame to see that they're taking art out of schools," Wyland said. "We need to get more of it in there, especially in Hawaii, where art and the culture are so connected. You're going to see me working really hard to keep art as part of school curriculum."

Wyland brought special folders and drawing books for the kids.

Wyland said he wanted to meet the kids staying at the House because "you get more out of giving than you do doing things for yourself, especially when it comes to supporting Ronald McDonald House. Everybody should give a little bit to this House because at the end of the day, they are helping to make a world of difference for these kids. So any small thing that I can do, I'm going to do it."

The artist was on his way to be the official artist of the Summer Olympics in Beijing, China and complete his 100th and final "Whaling Wall." His new project? "Empowering kids to be ambassadors for the planet."

From Our Mailbox

An amazing five-month journey

Kaylee Ann James
February 14, 2008 & July 14, 2008

God made her so that we could believe in miracles again. Thank You for contributing to our miracle.

Love Always,
Dennis, Angie, Kierah & Kaylee

Angie and Kaylee at Kapiolani's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit

Dennis and Kaylee shortly before returning to Kwajalein

Dennis and Angie James were guests at the Judd Hillside Ronald McDonald House earlier this year. The Kwajalein family flew to Honolulu when Angie gave birth prematurely to twins, Mia and Kaylee.

Sadly, Mia's heart and lungs were not strong enough for her to survive, but beautiful little Kaylee did make it, and now, along with Kaylee's four-year-old sister Kierah, Angie and Dennis are back home treasuring their "miracle baby."

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

I want to step forward for the families. Enclosed is my gift to Ronald McDonald House Charities of Hawaii.

♡ $250 ♡ $150 ♡ $100

♡ $75 ♡ $50 ♡ Other - $_____

Please Print

Name_____

Address_____

City _____

State _____ Zip Code _____

Email: _____

♡ My check/payment is enclosed

Please Charge my:

♡ Visa ♡ MasterCard ♡ American Express

Card Number _____

Expiration Date _____

Name on Card_____

Your Signature _____

♡ I'd like to make a monthly donation of _____ to the above credit card, effective _____

♡ *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).*

Around the House

by Nikee Wainit, Manager of House Operations

Aloha from The House That Love Built!

What a busy summer we have had at our two Ronald McDonald Houses and Family Room in Kapiolani Medical Center for Women and Children! We can now project that during 2008 we will assist more than 400 families that must travel to Oahu to seek medical treatment for their children that is not available on their home island. We also expect that this year we will see the Family Room receiving more than 8,000 visits from parents and family members of children being treated at the hospital (mostly Oahu residents).

As you can imagine, operating our two Houses (with a total of 17 guest rooms) and our in-hospital Family Room requires continuous re-supplying of food staples and heavily used household goods. It can be extremely expensive. That is why we always maintain a "Wish List" of things we need. Every item that we don't have to buy allows us to use those dollars to make repairs or meet increased energy costs.

That's why I wanted to draw attention to some of the innovative ideas by people in the community that are really helping us in this area. It would be so great if others are inspired to do the same.

- Hawaii USA Federal Credit Union encouraged their members to bring donations of Wish List items to their branches during the month of September. The effort was coordinated by Hawaii USA FCU's Lisa Chun.

- The folks at Thrifty Car Rental, led by David Green have adopted RMHC-HI during the second half of the year, with employees delivering Wish List items to us each month.

- "Moms on a Mission," led in this project by Roxanne Kimura, have chosen to concentrate on laundry items and cleaning products that the House uses on a regular basis. The group is providing Melaleuca products, an environmentally friendly line.

Inspiration for her group comes from Roxanne's own daughter, who passed away when she was six-years-old from a rare brain infection.

"Our aim is to supply all of the House's laundry and cleaning products, so that you can take them off of your Wish List," she told us.

- Jade Riley, a former guest at the House way back in the earlier years, has kept RMHC-HI in her heart. After delivering her baby prematurely, she called the Judd Hillside House her "home-away-from-home" while her baby recovered in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. Jade now operates a successful home-based business, and is "giving back" to RMHC-HI by contributing household goods from the Wish List monthly.

These are all wonderful projects. They will make a very real difference for the kids and families.

Mahalo to our Wish List Angels!

Check out our Wish List below. Can you or your group help too?

Wish List

Gift Certificates

Wal-Mart
Costco
K-Mart
Sam's Club
Longs Drugs
Supermarkets
Gasoline gift cards
Prepaid phone cards

Household Items

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

Miscellaneous

Roll/sheets of "Forever" postage stamps

Food Items

Cup noodles (microwave)
Rice
Sugar
Flour
Cooking oil
Fresh fruits & vegetables
Dairy products
Frozen meals (microwave)
Individually wrapped snacks
Assorted canned goods

Mahalo!

The Kung Fu Panda promotion at McDonald's restaurants has resulted in a $72,000 donation to RMHC-HI! Between June 6 and July 3, every Happy Meal sold generated a twenty cent contribution to the organization.

Above, RMHC-HI's Reenie Rea (second from right) accepts a $2,000 donation from the folks at Sam's Club. Above right, June Jones presents a check for $10,000 to RMHC-HI's Michelle Takahashi (left) and Candace Asam-Lopez.

In addition, ABC Stores has awarded RMHC-HI $10,000 and Friends of Hawaii Charities $5,000 to help the children and families!

Foodland's 60th Anniversary benefits RMHC-HI

The large crowd enjoyed entertainment, prizes and great food.

(Below) Foodland CEO Jenai Wall personally served up some of the gourmet food for those in attendance.

Market City Foodland marked its 60th anniversary on July 25 with a sold-out celebration under tents set up in its parking lot. The food and drink sampling event also coincided with the store's Grand Reopening following major renovations. It generated $27,000 for RMHC-HI and treated the 500 attendees to a gourmet feast!

RMHC-HI staff pitched in to help Foodland plan and present the festivities. Following the successful event, RMHC-HI staff members (in white) joined some of the Foodland team for a photo.

RMHC-HI STAFF

Jerri Chong
President/Executive Director

Michael Ahakuelo
Volunteer Coordinator

Candace Asam-Lopez
Director of Development

Gene Davis
Public Relations Manager

Wesley Kim
Oahu Avenue House
Evening Manager

Rex Kobayashi
Maintenance Manager

Lana Matsuoka
Office Manager/Bookkeeper

Kanoe Paauhau
Judd Hillside House Manager

Reenie Rea
Development Specialist

Michelle Takahashi
Community Relations/Development Specialist

Nikee Wainit
Manager of House Operations

Thomas Gilbert, Mathew Mullarky
Jayleen Heaton
Weekend Managers

Augie T.'s "Day of Smiles" helps RMHC-HI

Radio personality and comedian Augie T.'s July 3 "Day of Smiles" featured a live state-wide remote broadcast (originating on Honolulu's 93.1-The Zone) from the Keeaumoku McDonald's, and its theme was helping Ronald McDonald House Charities of Hawaii!

Between songs, his live portions included interviews with people from the organization, and Augie T. continuously urged people on all the islands to go to a McDonald's and put donations into the canisters. The canister that Augie T. is holding in the picture (below, right) got jammed with $445.60 from customers, passers-by and Augie T.'s fans at the Keeaumoku restaurant, alone.

Maui mom Andrea Ciro joined RMHC-HI's Jerri Chong and Augie T. to speak on air about how much the Ronald McDonald House has meant to her family.

Andrea, Kalei and their son Aiden pose with Augie T., Jose Figueras and Holly Girl from "The Zone."

Maui Fundraiser A Big Hit

A group of local musicians put their talents together in a July 27 concert on Maui to help raise money for a Maui boy fighting cancer and for the Ronald McDonald House, where many neighbor island kids and families stay while seeking medical treatment on Oahu.

The boy is Jarren Patao, a 16-year-old Baldwin High School student who was diagnosed with bone cancer in February. Patao and his family stay at the Judd Hillside House on some of the trips they make to Oahu for Jarren's medical treatments.

Musicians performing at the Maui fundraiser were (front row, left to right), Jamie Lawrence, Jake Shimabukuro, Kathy "da Tita" Collins, Gail Swanson, and George Kahumoku, Jr. (Back row, left to right) Gilbert Emata, Andrew Molina, Marty Dread, and Jay Molina.

Jarren Patao

The concert, held at Baldwin's auditorium, was appropriate for Patao, who himself is a talented guitar player and pianist. Headlining the show were ukulele superstar Jake Shimabukuro and three-time Grammy winner George Kahumoku Jr.

The event raised over $4,000, which was split between Jarren's family and RMHC-HI!

John and Gwen Henry, owners of John Henry Photography in Wailuku, organized the concert fundraiser. They have their own connection to Ronald McDonald House, having stayed back in 1995 when their son James was being treated for a birth complication. Now 16, James is Jarren Patao's classmate.

(Above) John and James Henry at the Ronald McDonald House in 1995; (right) James as he looks today

17th Annual RMHC-HI Golf Classic

Mamala Bay Golf Course, Hickam AFB
July 17, 2008

Golfers lined up early to check in...

...and teed off at noon.

Tiny Tadani interviews RMHC-HI's Jerri Chong for OC16's "Tiny TV".

Terri Anne Otani displays her brand new $5,450 Rolex watch she won in a "closest to the pin" contest. With her is Jim Geiger of Christopher James and Kaimana Kea, the Rolex sponsor.

Nearly 200 golfers teed it up at the 17th Annual RMHC-HI Golf Classic on July 17 at Mamala Bay Golf Course, on Hickam AFB.

More than 150 volunteers from the community worked all day, and all over the course, to help make sure participants had a quality experience.

On the course, golfers could indulge in everything from fresh made sushi to freshly blended margaritas. After their round, participants were treated to a dinner fit for a king, cooked right there on the course by the folks from Outback Steak House Waipio.

Everyone left with a slew of prizes, including some with a Las Vegas trip and others with neighbor island golfing trips. The event raised more than $100,000 for RMHC-HI!

Diane Perreira of Midas accepts the tournament's Grand Team Prize from M.C. Guy Hagi.

Hole-in-one this year!

Flanked by RMHC-HI's Reenie Rea (left) and Michele Takahashi (right) are Sam's Club's Ann Mata, "Mr. Hole-In-One" Shad Simbahon (holding his commemorative plaque), and Shana Santiago.

Congratulations to Shad Simbahon, an employee of Sam's Club Keeaumoku and golfer at the 17th Annual RMHC-HI Golf Classic, who scored a hole-in-one on the 16th hole! Shad says he didn't even realize that his ball had dropped in for an "ace" until his friends started yelling and laughing as they watched on with amazement.

As fate would have it, Shad has a deeper connection to our charity because in 2007, he stayed at a Ronald McDonald House in San Diego for three months while his daughter, Shayden, underwent heart surgery.

Mahalo to our Platinum Sponsors!

Builder's Home Supply
Christopher James/Kaimana Kea Jewelers
Crazy Shirts
DTRIC
GSF Hawaii
Horizon Lines
Island Insurance Companies
Lamb Weston
McDonald's Restaurants of Hawaii
Meadow Gold Dairies
Midas Hawaii
Outback Steakhouse Waipio
R.M. Towill Corporation

Volunteer Spotlight

Wanda Caldwell and Larry Thurman

By Michael Ahakuelo

Let's shine the spotlight on two extraordinary volunteers, Wanda Caldwell and Larry Thurman. Wanda and Larry live in Puna on the Big Island and actually fly between the islands just to be able to volunteer at the Ronald McDonald House Family Room at Kapiolani Hospital. On their trips, they have also managed to attend volunteer meetings, and even assist in special events.

The retired couple has been partnering as a duo and doing shifts at the RMH Family Room for over a year now, and Wanda says that neighbor island families they meet there are surprised to hear that she and Larry fly in from the Big Island. "You can see the sense of comfort and ease the families feel knowing that we are also from a neighbor island," she told me.

Larry, a cancer survivor, has been through his own surgeries, radiation, chemotherapy and physical therapy so he knows exactly what the children he sees at the family room are experiencing. Larry's heart is definitely into it. "I'm a sucker for the kids at the Family Room," he said. "And I enjoy socializing with their families." How did Wanda and Larry choose RMHC-HI? It was seeing the Ronald McDonald House public service spot on the television that did it. "We saw the TV ad and decided to contact RMHC-HI," said Larry.

Recently, Wanda and Larry planned their Honolulu trip and their volunteer shifts at the Family Room to coincide with Foodland's 60th Anniversary event benefiting RMHC-HI so they could volunteer at that too! "The Foodland event was great!" said Wanda. "It was really fun and I enjoyed interacting with the guests. They all were so supportive of the RMHC-HI mission."

Thank you Wanda and Larry, we at RMHC-HI and all the families that you help appreciate you very much!

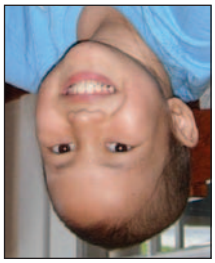
To become a volunteer, call 973-5683 ext. 241.

(Left) Wanda Caldwell and Larry Thurman as they help distribute wrist bands at the Foodland Anniversary fundraiser; (right) the couple during a shift at the RMH Family Room

Aloha From Our Home to Yours

is published by Ronald House Charities of Hawaii

A special mahalo to Ryan's Graphics for helping to bring this newsletter to you in color.



Ronald McDonald House Charities® of Hawaii
1970 Judd Hillside Road
P.O. Box 61777
Honolulu, Hawaii 96839-1777
www.RonaldHouseHawaii.org

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage Paid
Honolulu HI
Permit No. 635