



Aloha

From Our House to Yours

www.RonaldHouseHawaii.org

March 2011

Newsletter of Ronald McDonald House Charities® of Hawaii

Emjay returns nine years later



Randy & Alia Tesorio with children Emjay (left) and Rozalia, are heading home after their stay at the Ronald McDonald House.

This is a happy story about a boy named Emjay and his family, the Tesorios. Despite being born with a significant birth defect, Emjay has thrived, and his future looks even brighter.

Randy and Alia Tesorio were just about ready to check out of the Judd Hillside Ronald McDonald House and fly back home to Maui with their two children when they took a few moments to share some of their thoughts with us. Back home on the Valley Isle, Randy is a twelve-year Costco Wholesale employee, and Alia is a child-care provider and licensed masseuse.

Their perspective on staying at the House may be a little bit different than most, as they had stayed here previously back in 2001 when their son Emjay was born with a cleft palate. In addition, Alia's mom Carol had stayed at the House some 19 years ago when Alia's sister Kuuipo was born prematurely. "That made it easy the first time we stayed here because my mom told me about this place," said Alia. "She told me 'don't worry, everything is going to be ok.' And she was right."

What seemed to strike them was that it felt so much the same this time around. "The energy is so beautiful here," Alia remarked. "We feel so welcomed. It's comfortable. It's really clean. You provide everything. It was the same way nine years ago too. It feels the same as it did then, almost like it was just yesterday."

On this visit, Emjay, now nine-years-old, had bone-graft surgery to strengthen his jaw line. "They took bone from his head and put it in the right side of his jaw," explained Alia. "As he grows, we go through different things at different times. Some

of the cosmetic surgery must wait until he is fully grown."

But Emjay hasn't let his ongoing medical treatments knock him off course. He is a happy fourth-grader at Wailuku Elementary School where he was recently selected as "Student of the Month". He loves playing baseball, basketball, and especially football, the sport in which he was voted Most Valuable Player on his team.

"Now that Emjay's had his bone graft, he isn't scheduled for any other major treatments for a while," shared Randy. "For the next five years, he probably doesn't have to do anything, which is good because he gets kind of scared when he has surgery. But we're interested in doing something to save his teeth in the long run too."

"He speaks very well," added Alia. "We have been very fortunate that we were made aware of available speech therapy and physical rehab for Emjay. He was out of speech therapy before he hit kindergarten. He's in regular ed classes."

But the real reason Randy and Alia stopped by to chat was that they wanted to tell us what staying

at the Ronald McDonald House has meant to them. "It's hard when you are away from home. You guys have done so much for us, and it isn't just financial," Randy told us. "It's really beautiful here. It's so homey and the volunteers are awesome. The kids love it. I'd like to say thank you very much. We are very blessed to have people like you folks that really care."



Emjay and sister Rozalia took one last ride on the slide before returning to Maui.

Wish List

Gift Cards

Walmart
Costco
K-Mart
Target
Sam's Club
Longs Drugs
Supermarkets
Gasoline gift cards
Prepaid phone cards
Movie Tickets

Household Items

Non-stick pots & pans cookware
Paper towels
Ziplock bags - gallon
Garbage bags (yard & kitchen)

Food Items

Sugar
Cooking oil
Fresh fruits & vegetables
Frozen meals (microwave)
Individually wrapped snacks
Assorted canned goods

Miscellaneous

Rolls/sheets of "Forever"
postage stamps
Xerox paper (8.5 x 11)
Office supplies

A Message from our President



Jerri Chong

Ronald McDonald House and the assistance it provides for families with seriously ill children is, in fact, a shining reflection of a community that really cares. It is solely because of the involvement of individuals, businesses, foundations, and other groups that we have been able to serve nearly 22,000 people and provide more than 93,000 nights of lodging for them since our opening in 1987.

How does everything come together in order to address the needs of these families? Well, it really all boils down to partnerships. Partnerships of every size and shape, working day in and day out, with the common vision of helping. Some of these partnerships are more obvious than others, but all are so important.

We believe that we are entering into a partnership with donors when they entrust their contributions to us with the understanding that we will put it to work to achieve their intended purpose. It's the same for volunteers who give of themselves while getting back the priceless feeling of satisfaction.

Kapiolani Medical Center for Women and Children is another example of a partnership that works. We help each other achieve our common goal of assisting vulnerable kids and families, and together we are more effective than we would be separately.

The partnerships and friendships all help in different ways. For instance, so that we never have to turn a family away, Outrigger Hotels provides us with rooms to use when we have an overflow of families.

Of course, the most important collaboration of all is an unwritten agreement that we enter into with each of the children and families themselves. For our part, we do everything we can to provide for their basic needs while they are on Oahu. All that is left for parents to do is concentrate on guiding their beloved son or daughter through the often terrifying maze of medical treatments and recovery.

So you see, every step of the way there are people from all walks of life extending a helping hand to those that need it. As we prepare to mark our 24th anniversary on March 27, we appreciate you so much for being an important part of our caring RMHC-HI Ohana.

Happy Meals = Helping Families

We can't wait to share the news!

In our last issue we announced that nationally, McDonald's Restaurants were now donating a penny to their local RMHC chapters for every Happy Meal and Mighty Kids Meal sold throughout the year. Well, our friends at McDonald's of Hawaii have taken this fundraiser to a whole new level by recently deciding to contribute five cents for each sale instead—and do it for 365 days!

Those nickels will really add up and make a big difference in our ability to serve the children and families.

Thank you McDonald's for choosing RMHC-HI as your charity of choice. Thank you McDonald's customers for your continual support of our mission through participating in special promotions like this one and by dropping your change into the handy collection boxes near cash registers.



In loving memory



Frankie Chung

The RMHC-HI Ohana was shocked and deeply saddened by the recent passing of Frankie Chung, long-time Board member and passionate advocate for children.

Frankie, who also owned and operated five McDonald's Restaurants on Kauai, was tireless in his efforts on behalf of RMHC-HI.

Frankie came to Hawaii from Hong Kong with the idea that if he learned everything he could, and if he worked as hard as he could, he could make a success of himself in his new country.

While learning English, Frankie started as a crew member at McDonald's some 30 years ago, and in 2010 reached his dream of being an owner-operator. His devoted efforts as Chair of the RMHC-HI Fundraising Committee helped the organization reach its funding goals even during times of economic downturns.

Frankie touched the lives of countless people and he will be greatly missed by the RMHC-HI Ohana, his colleagues and friends.

Around the House

by Nikee Wainit, Manager of House Operations

We are sometimes asked how we select the families that stay at the Ronald McDonald House. The answer is that we set basic guidelines, but there is no formal selection process on our part.

Instead, when it comes to identifying families that need our services, RMHC-HI works closely with some very important partners—the local hospitals, medical practitioners, social workers, and insurance companies, who refer virtually all of our incoming families. It's the best way to ensure that no family "falls through the cracks," not realizing that RMHC-HI is here to serve them.



Between our 17 guest rooms and the partnership we have with Outrigger Hotels to take any overflow, it's all but certain that Neighbor Island and Pacific Rim parents will have a comfortable bed to crawl into after spending the day by the side of their sick or injured child.

Parents are sometimes so rushed and so upset, that their own needs are the last thing they think about. In fact, some folks arrive on Oahu with their child and little more than the clothes they are wearing. So it's really important that they know we are here for them.

I can't tell you how conscientious and effective our referral partners are. They really care. In fact, many of them have paid visits to the Ronald McDonald House to get a good feel for the place that they send so many

families. For us, it is a great opportunity to show them in-person all the many ways we lighten families' burdens.

Visiting the House to get a better understanding is not something that our neighbor island referral partners can easily do, so we travel to their islands periodically to visit and re-acquaint them with our services and our strong desire to help their clients while they are on Oahu for a child's medical treatments.

When you look at the big picture, it's easy to see that the work we are able to accomplish at RMHC-HI is really made possible because of a multitude of compassionate people in the community, all taking seriously the needs of our precious children and families and working together with us on their behalf.

Change collection campaign underway

Aloha Petroleum and its customers are stepping forward for Hawaii's keiki

Aloha Petroleum, Ltd. is collecting cash donations at its Aloha Island Mart locations on Oahu and the Big Island and participating Shell stations through March 31 to support RMHC-HI. Customers just place their spare change in the collection boxes. Last year, the promotion raised more than \$7,200! Mahalo!



A Special **Mahalo** to these newspapers for their ongoing support of RMHC-HI:

*Honolulu Star-Advertiser/Midweek
The Maui News
Hawaii Tribune-Herald
West Hawaii Today
The Garden Island
Pacific Daily News (Guam)*

These reliable news and information sources are all extremely committed to supporting the communities that they serve. RMHC-HI is honored to be teaming up with them to assist families in those communities!



McHappy Day—November 19, 2010

It was live TV!

Steve Uyehara went live from the Waiakamilo McDonald's with Melanie Okazaki of McDonald's and RMHC-HI's Gene Davis to talk about McHappy Day on Hawaii News Now Sunrise. During November, McDonald's customers bought "helping hands" for \$1 each to assist RMHC-HI.

SAVE THE DATE!

It's the 20th on the 20th

It's easy to remember the date for this year's RMHC-HI Golf Classic. It's our 20th Annual tournament, and will be held on July 20, 2011 at Mamala Bay Golf Course on Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam.

Get your team together. If you aren't able to play, please consider donating prizes or even volunteering. For more info call us at 973-5683.



The Fifth Annual Share a Night Gala

Honoring Don and Marion Murphy
November 21, 2010 — Sheraton Waikiki Hotel

Nearly 750 people turned out to honor Don & Marion Murphy for their outstanding support of RMHC-HI. The couple, proprietors of Murphy's Bar & Grill on Merchant Street, has been holding an annual Christmas toy drive and party for the families staying at the Ronald McDonald House since the House first opened in 1987. They also have a long history of helping University of Hawaii athletics.

The enthusiastic crowd relished the opportunity to let Don and Marion know how much they are appreciated by people from all walks of island life. Most of the time, the Murphy's prefer to stay low-key and are very humble about the contributions they make to the community, so it's not often their friends get the chance to pay tribute to them.

The fact that the Gala honoring them would also bring donations to RMHC-HI, was the reason that they consented to be put in the spotlight.

Through the table sponsorships, auction, raffle, country store and donations, close to \$350,000 was raised.



Don and Marion Murphy



Veronica Kaneko and Joanna Sullivan



George and Jean Ariyoshi



Greg McMackin and Hugh Yoshida



Terri Chong, Bonnie Amemiya, Ernie Nishizaki, Jim Donovan, and Don and Marion



Don and Marion with cancer patient Ikaika Ko'omoa and his mother Iris. Mom and son both shared their Ronald McDonald House experiences with the audience.



Honorary Co-Chair Jim Donovan and wife Tracy



Honorary Co-Chair Ernie Nishizaki and wife Naomi



Honorary Gala Co-Chair Bonnie Amemiya and husband Keith

Mahalo to Our Shining Stars

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 McDonald's of Maui
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Her lucky number was called, and Sharlene Clephane won Michelle Wie's 2010 Kia Soul, donated by Kia Motors America.



Left to right, Kalowena Komeiji, John Komeiji, Daphne Park, Duane Kurisu, Wesley Park, Susan Kurisu, Robyn Osaki, Irma Ikawa, Kurt Osaki and Allan Ikawa.



Jennifer Hera entertained the audience.



Scholars help RMHC-HI

Hanalani School's National Honor Society visited the Judd Hillside Ronald McDonald House in October to do house cleaning and "green thumb" volunteering. The group worked hard then gathered for a picture.



OC16 Sports Director Dave Vinton visited the Judd Hillside Ronald

McDonald House on December 22 and presented RMHC-HI's Nikee Wainit with a donation check for \$2,050—the proceeds from the 2010 OC16 Senior Girls Volleyball Invitational.

The crew over at Toshiba Business Solutions—Hawaii really cares about the community!

Toshiba Business Solutions—Hawaii has again stepped forward to help Hawaii's children and families. Their recent donation of a palette of Wish List items to Ronald McDonald House added to the list of important support they have given to RMHC-HI since 2009. Other non-profits in Hawaii have also received assistance from this generous bunch.



RMHC-HI's Gene Davis (left) and Richard Atsatt (2nd from left) accepted the palette of Wish List items from Toshiba's Brandon Alcatra, Chris Moriwaki and Christine Vergara.

But it doesn't happen by accident. The Mapunapuna company has within its structure a committee called "Team Kokua," which is made up of employees and is in charge of corporate social responsibility projects. So giving back is built right into their business plan.

Team Kokua is led by Leigh-Ann Iha, V.P. of Finance and Administration. She says that they generate funds through fundraising events such as walks and plate lunch sales, as well as with internal fund drives. "What makes it work for us is that our employees are committed to giving that lit-

tle extra, whether it be time or money, which makes a big difference."

Their group even paid a visit to the Judd Hillside House to take a tour. "They were so impressed with everything there and what you do," Iha says. "We were happy to have selected your organization once again and we know that you will put everything to good use."



The Merchant Street tradition of Don & Marion Murphy's

Christmas event for RMHC-HI continued on December 8 with all of its wonderful touches. The Murphys got the downtown street blocked off and offered a scrumptious dinner for everyone. The families were driven down to Murphy's Bar & Grill in limousines, donated for the evening by Exclusive Limousine Service. There was an animated holiday movie shown on a huge screen set up on the street; a clown making balloon animals for the kids; freshly made popcorn; Santa listening to

Christmas wishes; and a long table with volunteers wrapping the toy donations. The Murphys also provided trolleys, which gave continuous tours of the downtown Christmas lights for all those attending.



Whenever she could, Marion Murphy broke away from her hostess duties to play with the children.

Family moved by House's support



Dropping off the Wish List items at the Judd Hillside House are grandma, Sokoseiha, and Leilani Hull.

About five years ago, Captain Sokoseiha Hull and his family stayed at the Ronald McDonald House in Missouri after their daughter Leilani, who was two days old at the time, stopped breathing. Captain Hull said his mother and wife cried when they realized the Ronald McDonald House provided food and a place over their head. It was a very emotional time for them. They are so grateful for what the organization has done for their family that they decided to donate Wish List items to their local Ronald McDonald House in Honolulu to express their appreciation.

Youngsters care about other Hawaii keiki



Nine members of the Maili Elementary School Student Council visited the Judd Hillside House on February 18 to present the organization with a check for \$500. The students raised the money by having a mini-carnival. The kids said that they wanted to do something to benefit children, especially sick children. "So we did our research and after we learned all about what you guys do, we wanted to choose RMHC-HI."

Brian Derby's Offensive Lineman Camp Food Drive for RMHC-HI

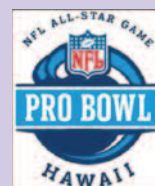


The boys at the camp not only brought the donations, they even loaded up the RMHC-HI van themselves.

Brian Derby has been conducting annual camps for offensive linemen for 15 years and they are free for anyone that brings food donations for RMHC-HI. "We suggest that they bring a ten pound bag of rice and some canned goods," says Brian. "But many of them went way beyond that."

What the boys and their families donated this year amounted to more than 2,000 pounds of rice and a large quantity of canned goods. This year, 130 young aspiring football players took part in the camp, which took place at Kaimuki High School on February 12.

"It's awesome that the parents gave so unselfishly. It was a great day and a great expression of caring by everyone," Brian adds. "We don't only teach football. We teach about being a good person too."



Pro Bowl donates to RMHC-HI



RMHC-HI's Michelle Takahashi and Gene Davis posed with the Cleveland Browns mascot during the Pro Bowl's Ohana Day. NFL Charities contributed \$4,000 to RMHC-HI, and made 50 tickets to the game available for families staying at the Ronald McDonald House.



Volunteer Spotlight

by Michael Ahakuelo, Volunteer Services Manager



Best Buy Honolulu



Let's shine the volunteer spotlight on some special people at Best Buy Honolulu.

The supportive

Best Buy team provides "movie night" every first Friday for the families staying at our Ronald McDonald Houses. Best Buy Digital Life Supervisor Edward Martinez and his staff have graciously taken on the role of introducing families to the latest movie releases.

The friendly Best Buy volunteers bring with them a projector, a blow-up TV screen, and surround sound equipment. Along with their visits, they provide the Ronald McDonald House families a variety of snacks and treats so everyone can sit as a

big 'ohana, and enjoy the whole experience. It's a great opportunity for families that are dealing with a child's serious illness to get their minds off their issues for an evening of entertainment and friendship.

Best Buy has also donated a brand new computer for the families at the Ronald McDonald House on Oahu Avenue, and their Geek Squad is donating their services to help provide any computer maintenance and virus protection.



Getting ready for the families' movie night! Here are (left to right) Best Buy's Candice Phelps, Nygel Martin, Edward Martinez, and Marrison Porfirio.

Ronald McDonald House Charities of Hawaii sincerely thanks Best Buy and their caring staff for their continued support, which greatly adds to the home-away-from-home environment for our families. We'll see you on the next first Friday, Best Buy!

Volunteering is the gift of you!

Find out all about the different volunteer opportunities available at RMHC-HI by calling 973-5683 ext. 241 or visiting www.RonaldHouseHawaii.org



March 27, 2011 marks the 24th anniversary of the first Ronald McDonald House in Hawaii. Mahalo for your support! www.RonaldHouseHawaii.org

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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