



Aloha

From Our House to Yours

www.RonaldHouseHawaii.org

Newsletter of Ronald McDonald House Charities® of Hawaii

February 2013

Apryl's Big Adventure

Last summer, less than one month after moving to Kauai from Colorado, 15-year-old Apryl Erickson and her parents, Evi and Paul, decided that they needed to get to the bottom of why Apryl had been feeling sick for so long. She was still managing to participate in favorite activities like running, dancing, and hiking but something wasn't right and the back

pains she was experiencing were getting worse. They pressed doctors to dig deeper, and upon further testing, Apryl was diagnosed with Hodgkin's Lymphoma, a form of cancer.

"My reaction to being diagnosed was more glad than worried," says Apryl. "I had been feeling sick for over a year. I had been to plenty of doctors who had told me that nothing was wrong and I was tired of it. I was glad to finally know that I had found a treatment and things were going to get better."

Any summer plans Apryl and her family had quickly vanished, and they were suddenly forced to deal with an unexpected detour - Apryl's serious illness. To Oahu they came, seeking medical intervention by specialists at Kapiolani Medical Center. During Apryl's weeks of inpatient



Apryl and mom Evi (right) shared a moment with RMHC-HI's Nikee Wainit before leaving for home.

growing back and she seemed to carry herself with a self-confidence that this cancer thing would not get the best of her. "Treatment was difficult, but with the support of my friends and family I felt as though I could do anything," she says. "I almost felt stronger while I was in treatment at times because of the people reaching out."

Evi, too, acknowledges the positive things that have come out of Apryl's illness. "It was very hard in the beginning when we first found out," she says. "But now looking back at it, so many good things came out of it. I love all the support we got and the many new friends we made. Apryl and I got so close to each other and our bond is very strong; we will always cherish that. As a result of the hardship, we learned to trust and lean on each other."

Mom and daughter were very excited to be able to return home to Kauai following Apryl's treatments. She's attending classes at Kauai High and hoping to get back to her running, where she excels in the middle distances. She thinks she may like to start her own bakery someday, "But my future plans and goals change daily," she adds, which is not unlike most 15-year-olds.

When cancer is involved, perspectives change and there's always the fear that the disease will

Wish List

Gift Cards

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

Household Items

Paper plates & forks
Ziploc bags
Garbage bags
(10 gal., 13 gal., 33 gal.)
Aluminum foil
Plastic food storage containers

Food Items

Flour
Ketchup
Sugar
Cooking oil
Soy sauce
Fresh fruits & vegetables
Frozen meals (microwave)
Individually wrapped snacks

Miscellaneous

Rolls/sheets/books of Forever postage stamps
Xerox paper (8.5 x 11)
Office supplies
Baby Clothes 0-12 mo. (new)



While on Oahu, Apryl met Ruthie Mersburgh, another young lady who has battled cancer while staying at the Ronald McDonald House.

treatments, Evi remained by her side, curling up in Apryl's room to sleep at night and eating whatever was available there.

When Apryl reached the outpatient phase of her treatments, she and mom both moved into the Judd Hillside Ronald McDonald House. As she finished up her chemotherapy, Apryl appeared unfazed by it all. The tall, graceful teen's blond hair began

Message from our President



Jerri Chong

Aloha,
Last month our Family Room, inside Kapiolani Medical Center for Women & Children (KMCWC), marked its 10th anniversary of providing respite and assistance for the families of children being treated there.

The facility is a serene refuge in the middle of the hospital, offering



The commemorative canoe presented to Kapiolani COO Martha Smith. The canoe symbolizes the teamwork that it takes to help the children on their journey to regain their health. Engraved on the paddles are the words, "Family", "Volunteers", "Love", "Family Room", "RMHC", and "KMCWC".

snacks, beverages, computers with internet access, comfortable furniture, a playroom/teen room, and the caring attention of RMHC-HI volunteers who coordinate the facility for families. It became an instant success back in 2003 and today remains a highly utilized resource, welcoming nearly 9,000 visitors each year.

The Family Room is an example of how two entities like RMHC-HI and KMCWC, which have the same steadfast desire to help children, can combine their resources to make such a huge difference in so many lives.

Appropriately, an open house event celebrating this anniversary milestone was held at the Family Room on January 11, and we are sharing some of the photos from that day on page 7 of this newsletter.



I would also like to acknowledge a truly wonderful and caring group of people known as "Moms On a Mission." This group, headed by Roxane Kimura and Anne Komatsu, has been incredibly supportive of the work we do for families. In fact, they have done so much for us that there's not enough space here to list it all!

So what are they doing next? Well, get ready for "Rock & Roll Night" on April 6, at the Hale Koa Hotel's Banyan Tree Showroom. It's a fun event for RMHC-HI featuring a buffet dinner, the band "LS 34", music of the 60s and 70s, dancing, prizes and lots more. Space is limited so get your \$60 tickets early by calling Roxane at 256-8788.

Thank you Moms on a Mission, and thank you to everyone who shows their support throughout the year!

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return. "We're waiting to see the doctor in late February, when Apryl will go through all the testing," says Evi. "We pray for good results and that will determine what comes next."

If a positive attitude can make a difference, Apryl has the upper hand. She doesn't act like a victim, instead she just expresses gratitude for the support she has received. "I learned that there are people out in the world who really do care. People I don't even know," she says. "When I was going through my treatments I had more people contacting me and reaching out to me than ever before and it really shows that there are a lot of good people in the world."

"It was a great experience staying at the Ronald McDonald House," Evi says. "Financially, it was a big help not to worry about hotel costs. We made some new friends and did some fun things too with the help of RMHC-HI!"



Apryl was able to attend the annual RMHC-HI Christmas event on Merchant Street. Here she is with event sponsors Marion and Don Murphy.

THANK YOU KAILUA-KONA!

Mahalo to everyone in Kailua-Kona who attended our 25th anniversary event on Saturday, December 12, and those that helped so much in the event's staging! Special mahalos to Nancy Sakamoto and Kona Commons Center for the wonderful hospitality and assistance, and to all the merchants there that donated great prizes to give away. Also, many thanks to Kathy and Robert Leopoldino and McDonald's of Kona Commons, Ho'okena, Brittini Paiva, Nelson Ray Parker, Specialty Balloons, Paul Horner, Bruce Soto, Just Balloons Hawaii, the Mersburgh family and the many, many others who helped!

Making the trip over to Kona for the event from RMHC-HI were Terri Chong, Nikee Wainit, Lisa Levine and Gene Davis.



Above, Hookena; above right, RMHC-HI's Nikee Wainit and Ukulele virtuoso Britni Paiva; below left, Terri Chong with Debbie Wilson and Sandy Lane, former guests at the Ronald McDonald House. Below right, Nelson Ray Parker, who donated the sound system and his services.



“Wicked” showers the families with love (and fun).

Cast members and crew from the hit play “Wicked” visited the Judd Hillside Ronald McDonald House on December 21 to share holiday cheer with the kids and families. These enthusiastic and talented folks conducted craft activities for the keiki, and then performed some songs from the play before leading everyone in a series of Christmas songs. The kids were captivated by the visit and their parents beamed with appreciation.



2012 RMHC-HI Share A Night Gala

Marking 25 years of helping families with seriously ill children.

November 18, 2012

Sheraton Waikiki Hotel

More than 500 supporters gathered for this year's sparkling Gala event to cast the spotlight on the families we have served and those people that worked to make Ronald McDonald House a reality in Hawaii.

There was an emphasis on great entertainment and the atmosphere was electric. The evening seemed to shimmer and people's smiles lit up the ballroom.

The talented Al Waterson emceed the event, and music flowed all evening long from great performers like Jordan Segundo, Angeli Callo, Garry Moore (Little Richard), Johnny Fortuno (Elvis) and Brian Robertshaw's Stardust featuring Rocky Brown.

The Gala grossed more than \$275,000 and, as you can see, everyone had a spirited time!



Left, artist Michael Pearson passed out her commemorative 2013 RMHC-HI calendars. Right, Elvis was in the house!



Left to right, Roland and Kitty Lagareta, Candace Asam-Lopez, Veronica Kaneko and Terri Chong



The music was too good not to get up and dance!



Angeli Callo and Jordan Segundo wowed the audience with their duet of "The Prayer".



Darlene Chung and Linda Rosario



Some of the RMHC-HI families in attendance with Terri Chong following the Gala.



Little Richard (Garry Moore)
and Patrick Lim



Craig and Diane Sumida



June Tong was on hand to
autograph her new cook-
book, "Popo's Kitchen 2" for
folks in attendance.

Mahalo to Our Shining Stars

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Jean, George and Lynn Ariyoshi, Dr. Jay Cambra and
Dr. Lawrence Tseu



Blossom Tyau, Sharon McPhee, Joanna Sullivan, Kitty
Wo and Sandy Albano



Al Waterson

Holidays bright for families at the Ronald McDonald House

This year's Christmas decor and Christmas party for the kids and families of Ronald McDonald House were incredible. What made them really special was all of the effort that members of our community put in to it. Led by a 30-person contingent from HECO, folks also pitched in from American Savings Bank, Chaminade University, U.S. Navy, and Moms on a Mission to create the warm and supportive environment for all to enjoy!



The families staying at Hawaii's Ronald McDonald Houses had a great night out on December 5, thanks to Don & Marion Murphy, owners of Murphy's Bar & Grill. Murphy's annual Christmas event for Ronald McDonald House featured a widescreen movie for the kids, with hot dogs, popcorn, macaroni and cheese and shave ice to go along with it. Then there was the wonderful holiday buffet that filled everybody's stomachs ...and Santa Claus...and trolley rides to see the downtown lights... and a toy drive for the kids. That's why we call the Murphys our "heroes of the heart". Thank you Don and Marion!



KIDS HELPING KIDS

This photo was sent to us from Diane Galow Hertel, Principal at Tullar Elementary School in Neenah, Wisconsin. It shows kids at her school when they had a Hawaiian-themed penny fundraiser for RMHC!

Diane stayed at the Judd Hillside House during her step-daughter Jessica's hospitalization, following a serious car crash on Kauai.

Diane shared in her letter that her family was nearly overwhelmed with the costs associated with flying here and staying at a hotel.

"And then.....we found the Ronald McDonald House," she said. "We commiserated with other families. We were consoled by the staff. We were excited to share our daughter's gains with people that understood. I thank you immensely for the support and structure of the Ronald McDonald House Charities. You truly were a lifesaver for our family, and we will always regard you as such!"

Make Change Count

Your spare change is more important than ever! Did you know that it can really make a big difference for the children and families that we serve?

We think that during 2013 it is possible to raise \$100,000 worth of pennies, nickels, dimes, quarters and dollars - the kinds of change that we get when we purchase something or that we find in our pockets or purses at the end of the day.

Please join our effort. It's perfect for school and business community service projects; corporate and foundation matching grants; or just your family saving up their spare change for the campaign!

Ready to pitch in? You can call Lisa at (808) 973-5683, ext. 243 for tips on how to get started and additional information!

Don't forget, there are easy everyday ways to pitch in too!

- Buy a Happy Meal or Mighty Kids Meal at any Hawaii McDonald's Restaurant and it generates a five-cent donation to RMHC-HI.
- Drop your contributions anytime into the collection canisters near the cash registers at any McDonald's.



RMH Family Room's 10th Anniversary!

The Ronald McDonald House (RMH) Family Room at Kapiolani Medical Center for Women and Children (KMCWC) marked its 10th anniversary on January 11 with an Open House and a short program to acknowledge the enduring partnership between Ronald McDonald House Charities of Hawaii (RMHC-HI) and KMCWC.

RMHC-HI President Jerri Chong praised the association between the two organizations. "While we are marking the first ten years of our cooperative effort here at the Family Room," she said, "the partnership



Jerri Chong addressed those gathered for the event.

between Kapiolani Medical Center for Women and Children and Hawaii's Ronald McDonald House goes back all the way to the House's very beginning. It has been a fruitful association and it has been extremely beneficial for thousands of kids and families."

Chong also singled out the many volunteers who have become vital components in the Family Room program. One of the regular Family Room volunteers, who was in attendance at the anniversary, knows well what the facility means to patients and their families because he spent several months as a patient there and saw how much the respite and support center helped his family.

Since recovering from his major medical issues, which left him in a wheelchair, Jarek Barnett has turned his life changing experiences into positive action. "I treat the patients and families as friends," says Jarek.



A Hawaiian blessing was performed by Chaplain Rev. Joshua Almanza.



Jerri Chong and RMHC-HI Board Chair Wade Nakashima made a presentation to Kapiolani's COO, Martha Smith.

"Sometimes I share the story of my challenges if they ask. When I'm here volunteering, I'm giving out assistance and moral support but I'm also getting a lot of those things back."

KMCWC COO Martha Smith also attended and applauded the partnership and the difference the Family Room has made. "We're looking forward to the next ten years working together with RMHC-HI and many more after that," she said.

There was food and refreshments and an anniversary cake. RMHC-HI also presented a gift to Smith and the hospital. It was a small Koa canoe with paddles signifying the journey that families of sick kids are on, and how with the help of everyone on board, they make it to their destination.



Left to right, RMHC-HI Board Members John Cheung and Martin Lau, and Family Room volunteer Jarek Barnett.



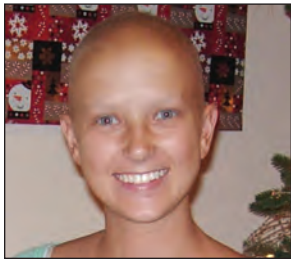
Wade Nakashima and RMHC-HI Board Members Carrie Jeanne Oda and Bruce Yanagihara.

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Volunteer Spotlight The Senior Seven



by Michael Ahakuelo, Volunteer Services Manager

We shine the volunteer spotlight on seven outstanding individuals. They are our extraordinary "Senior Seven," volunteers who are always there for RMHC-HI in a time of need. No matter how small or big the task, these seven caring people are always ready to lend a helping hand. Together, they have a combined total of 64 years of volunteer service at RMHC-HI, and they are gems who we truly value and hold close to our hearts.

These volunteers are no strangers to hard work at the House and at our special events. "You name it, they have done it all," says Michelle Takahashi, RMHC-HI Community Relations and Development Specialist. "They've done so many projects for us including stuffing tens of thousands of envelopes for our direct mailer/bulk mail and quarterly newsletters, assembling

team sponsor gifts & taking inventory for our annual golf classic, and painting hundreds of stars for table favors along with packaging & wrapping gift baskets to sell at the Country Store for our annual RMHC-HI 'Share a Night' gala."

When the Senior Seven are not volunteering, they all enjoy an array of different extracurricular activities which keeps them going strong while being young at heart. These active folks like traveling; teaching and taking ballroom dancing; doggie training; painting; designing and creating jewelry; teaching yarn and ribbon lei making; golfing; and of course, spending time with children, grandchildren, and favorite pets.

One of the gentlemen in the group, Ed Robello, shared what motivates him. "I volunteer at the Ronald



Ronald McDonald loves our Senior Seven too! Front row, left to right Nobu Oshiro, Donna Asam, and Nancy Akamichi. Back row, James Asam, Sharon Kim, Ed Robello and Richard Akamichi.

McDonald House because it is such a worthy organization and they really need volunteer help. I like the home-like family atmosphere and the people there. I enjoy working with the staff and providing support in any way I possibly can. And I have made such wonderful friends while volunteering here."

We are so lucky to have them. They truly are heroes of the heart! Mahalo to our Senior Seven for all the hard work they do for the Ronald McDonald House.