



Aloha From Our House to Yours

www.RonaldHouseHawaii.org

Newsletter of Ronald McDonald House Charities® of Hawaii

February 2015

Elation times two from a dad's perspective...

When Kevin and Karrie Sebastian decided to be a couple, it seemed like a plan just fell into place. "We met in Vancouver and we started dating," Kevin shared. "Karrie told me that her dream was to be a stay-at-home-mom, and I thought that was pretty cool. I told her I dreamed of living in Hawaii, and she thought that was cool too."

They got married about three years ago, moved to Kailua-Kona and started working on making all their dreams come

true. Now, here they were at the Ronald McDonald House in Honolulu anxiously awaiting their new daughter Sydney to gain enough strength to go home. Sydney's identical twin Phoebe had already been released and was cuddling up with mom and dad, and even grandma Sharon (who had flown in from Canada to help out) - at their "home-away-from-home".

Although 39-year-old Kevin could pass for local, he is actually American Indian, a member of the Gitksan tribe, whose homeland straddles the Alaskan and Canadian borders. The oldest of four siblings, he worked on a fishing boat and then decided to better his life by becoming an electrical engineer. It was counter to some traditions. "When I went into engineering, I got criticized by many in my Native American community. There's a tradeoff between knowing the past and preparing for the future. A lot of the people I know are just completely immersed in keeping the language and culture alive. But I had to put 99% of my energy into my studies. It was a decision I made."

After graduating, Kevin started his own small business in Canada and brought it with him when he moved to the Big Island. Now Kevin is juggling more than just running a

successful business, he is getting used to being a dad, something that brings him joy that he couldn't hide - even if he tried.

But it wasn't easy. Karrie had to be medivaced here from Kona Community Hospital on October 10 because she was showing signs of labor at about 33 weeks. Kevin said they stayed at the hospital for four days. "Then they said we could leave the hospital but had to stay on Oahu because she could go back into labor at any time."

It was a good thing they did too because two weeks later Karrie delivered the twins. "They gave me

some scrubs to wear and we went to the delivery room," recalled Kevin. "It was a long, wild night. Phoebe came out first, but Sydney was misaligned in the womb and they needed to perform a C-Section. When they got Sydney out, she was completely blue. She wasn't breathing and they had to resuscitate her twice." Sydney responded and started breathing on her own but she had to stay in the hospital longer, to make sure she would be OK.

Four days after the birth, they discharged Karrie and Phoebe. "Now it was getting desperate because we couldn't go back to Kona and leave Sydney here alone," said Kevin. "That wasn't something that

we could even think of, so we spoke to a social worker at the hospital and told her that this was going to be a

Continued on page 2

Wish List

Gift Cards

Restaurants
Stores/Markets
Gasoline gift cards
Prepaid phone cards
Family activity
Movie tickets

Household Items

Paper towels & napkins
Microwavable paper plates
Plastic forks, knives & spoons
Ziploc bags - gallon
Garbage bags (yard & kitchen)
Cutlery set

Food Items

Fresh fruits & vegetables
Frozen single-serving meals (microwavable)
Individually wrapped mac & cheese (microwavable)
Individually wrapped snacks
Cup O' Noodles

Miscellaneous

Forever postage stamps
Office supplies
Fitted white sheets - full/twin
New Pillows
White photo-copy paper (letter & legal size)



Kevin with Phoebe at the hospital.



Twins Phoebe (left) and Sydney liked being back together after Sydney's release.

Message from our President



Terri Chong

Aloha,

Next month, Hawaii's Ronald McDonald House turns 28 years old. If walls could talk, ours would proudly tell amazing stories of strength, courage and devotion that have taken place here. Each of the thousands of families that have called the House their temporary home over the years have had difficult challenges nearly

every day, but they didn't face them alone because of the support of the House and the compassionate community that makes it all possible to begin with.

The incredibly strong support RMHC-HI gets from our corporate community in Hawaii warms our hearts so much. Companies want to give back to the public that they depend on for their livelihood and see our organization as a really good way to make a difference in the lives of seriously ill children and their families.

A great example of this support is Midas Hawaii, led by Dianne and Bob Pereira. This is the third year that they have selected us to receive the revenue from their A.P. III Memorial Golf Tournament, held in January at Mid Pacific Country Club. The event, which honors the late Anthony Pereira, III, raised more than \$30,000 this year.

Bank of Hawaii, is another corporate hero for RMHC-HI. Their recently completed "Live Kōkua" Giving



Luke Yeh and RMHC-HI board member Carrie Jean Oda hold the check and BOH's Peter Ho announces the total amount raised for Hawaii Charities.

Campaign rallied their employees to raise money and then select the charities they wanted it to go to. We were so honored to receive nearly \$35,000 from Bank of Hawaii's kind employees.

During the month of January, we were also very excited to be selected by Kakaako Kitchen as the first recipient of their 12 Months of Giving promotion. Chef Russell Siu created a special menu item for the month and then they donated 20% of that item's revenue to RMHC-HI.

These are just some examples of the strong support we receive from Hawaii's business community. I can't tell you how important this support is and how grateful we are. Looking through the rest of the newsletter you will see other instances where wonderful companies have stepped up to help. Please let them know you appreciate them for caring!

A dad's perspective continued from page 1

tough one financially and stress-wise. She told us about the Ronald McDonald House, before we knew it, we were checking in, and it's been extremely helpful to us. It's hard when you are in this situation and just trying to take care of your most basic needs. Not only did the House help take off a lot of the stress for us, but it also allowed us to take better care of Phoebe while we all waited for Sydney to get out of the hospital. The bottom line is that we've been able to take care of our family much better with the help of the Ronald McDonald House. It has increased the odds for our twins."



Kevin, Sharon and Karrie ready to board their SpeediShuttle and begin their trip home.

Kevin is now allowing himself to think of future possibilities. "I'm really excited for our twins to grow up in Hawaii because there are so much outdoor activities right at our fingertips," he said. Kevin also embraces the Big Island for another reason. He had started studying volcanology back in Canada and has pursued that love by becoming a volunteer at the USGS at the Volcano Observatory.

Life will never be the same for the new parents, and Kevin wouldn't have it any other way!

Your change changes everything!

Don't forget! For every Happy Meal and Mighty Kids Meal sold throughout 2015, our friends at McDonald's of Hawaii are donating **five cents** to RMHC-HI.

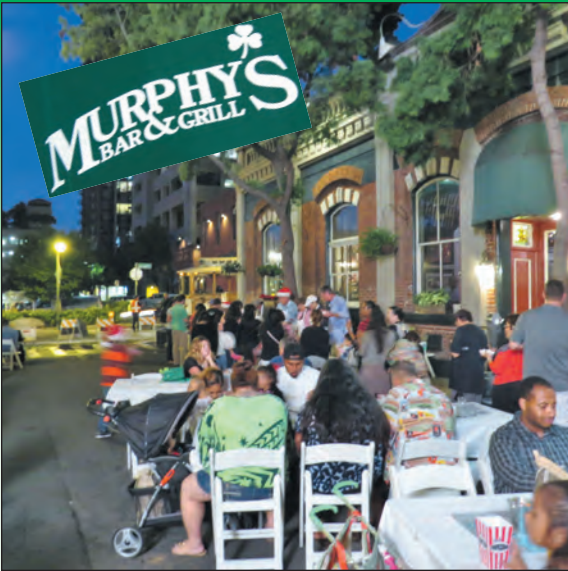


Those nickels will really add up and make a big difference in our ability to serve the children and families.

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.



The warmth of the holidays



For the 27th consecutive year, Don and Marion Murphy opened up their restaurant and their hearts to the families staying at the Ronald McDonald House. Murphy's Bar & Grill's annual "Toyraiser" was held on December 10, and featured food and fun for everyone.

From one family to many others!



Prior to Christmas, the Luke family of HAWAII NATIONAL BANK dropped off Christmas donations from the Bank's staff and customers for the families and kids staying at Hawaii's Ronald McDonald House.

District 3 Community Policing Team



Members of the HPD District Three Community Policing Team visited the Judd Hillside Ronald McDonald House on December 24, brought gifts, and took a stand with Trucker Dukes of Maui and his parents Shauna and Joshua to "punch out cancer!"



UPCOMING EVENTS

**April 4—Moms On a Mission's
Rock & Roll Night.**

See more information on page 6

July 23—RMHC-HI Golf Classic
We are looking for teams; prizes; sponsors
Contact: cal@rmchawaii.org

2014 RMHC-HI Share-A-Night Gala

November 16, 2014
Sheraton Waikiki Hotel

More than 11,000 families have called Hawaii's Ronald McDonald House their "home-away-from-home," and we honored their strength, courage and devotion at this year's "Share-a-Night" Gala.

Nearly 600 people took part this year and were treated to an outstanding meal and delightful entertainment by Jordan Segundo, Michael & Rene Paulo, Shari Lynn, Rhapsody, Brian Robertshaw, and Al Waterson. The event grossed more than \$260,000!

The event featured live and silent auctions, a drawing for diamond earrings donated by Robert Palma Designs, valued at nearly \$10,000. Everyone enjoyed the fellowship among people who all shared a common love for family and our keiki.



Veronica Kaneko was delighted to win the diamond earrings, and posed with earring donor Robert Palma.



RMHC-HI Board Chair Martin Lau (left) with emcee extraordinaire Al Waterson.



Dr. Jay Cambra did some Christmas shopping at the Gala's Country Store.

*Share a Night
Annual Gala*



The RMHC-HI staff was decked out for the annual Gala, and the ballroom at the Waikiki Sheraton Hotel was filled with enthusiastic supporters.






Ronald McDonald House families attending the Gala included the Fano and Solofa families (left) and the Acobs posing with Jordan Segundo.

Merci to Our Shining Stars

KOA SPONSORSHIP

 McDonald's of Hawaii – Corporate
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First Hawaiian Bank
First Insurance Company of Hawaii, Ltd.
Foodland Super Market, Limited
Golden State Foods - Hawaii
Hawaii Business magazine

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Hawaii Independent Energy, LLC
HMSA
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McDonald's Restaurants of Hawaii
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MW Group, Ltd.
N&K CPAs, Inc.
Outrigger Enterprises Group
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Sheraton Waikiki Resort
The Shidler Group
SpeediShuttle
Sumida & Associates, Inc.

Troy Wada and Dean Park
Karen Wong
Dr. Russell Woo
Bruce Yanagihara

SPECIAL FRIENDS

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Halekulani Corporation
Hawaiian Airlines
Hyatt Regency Vancouver
Kanzen Corporation/Blaine Umeda
KoAloha Ukulele
Duane & Susan Kurisu
Kyo-ya Hotels and Resorts
Martin and MacArthur
Mauna Lani Bay Hotel & Bungalows
La Tour Café
The Queen's Medical Center
Gary Reed
Robert Palma Designs
Royal Hawaiian Movers
Trump International Hotel
Waikiki Beach Walk
Wood, Inc.



Michael Paulo was rockin' out!



Eric Yamamoto and Rafael Renteria bid for silent auction items on their cell phones.



Shari Lynn and Jordan Sugundo bid for silent auction items on their cell phones.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Mahalo!

Hilton Grand Vacations Ducky Dash



Grant Nouchi and Candace Rutkowski from HGV presented RMHC-HI President Jerri Chong (left) with a check for over \$6,000 which are proceeds from their annual "Ducky Dash". The money includes contributions from Hilton Grand Vacations employees.



What an awesome group of caring folks who came out on December 8 to spend their time on a Family Service Project at the Ronald McDonald House! They pitched in to cook, clean and do crafting with the kids.

Hawaii Employers Council



On December 5, RMHC-HI board member Clayton Kamida (3rd from left) and his HAWAII EMPLOYERS COUNCIL

staff made lunch for everyone at Ronald McDonald House and delivered a huge donation of Wish List items!

A BENEFIT FOR RMHC-HI

Moms On A Mission Hawaii Presents

ROCK N' ROLL NIGHT
WITH A TOUCH OF GOLD

APRIL 4, 2015

5:30PM - 11:00PM

POMAIIKA'I BALLROOMS AT DOLE CANNERY

\$85 EARLY BIRD

\$100 AFTER MARCH 15

DINNER BUFFET | CANDY BAR | DOOR PRIZES | SILENT AUCTION
CELEBRITY HOST | SPECIAL PERFORMANCE BY TOUCH OF GOLD



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The wonderful ladies of Waipahu HS and The Tanioka Foundation joined forces to spend a day helping out at the Oahu Avenue Ronald McDonald House on December 2.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Mahalo!

IOLANI SCHOOL



The IOLANI SCHOOL Economics and Entrepreneurship classes have been volunteering at the Ronald McDonald House since the spring of 2009. Their visit on November 5 was their 11th. That's over 300 students that have mopped the floors, washed the windows, dusted the furniture, wiped down toys and furniture, did yard work, helped with big mailers, made luggage tags for the children and their families, and baked cookies. With each visit, they also sponsored a simple lunch for the staff members and the families staying at the House.

CARDEN ACADEMY OF MAUI



Maui's Carden Academy conducted a school-wide "Make Change Count" coin collection campaign to benefit the families at Hawaii's Ronald McDonald Houses. The 150 student academy, with grades K-8, raised a total of \$2,234.98, and on December 12th, RMHC-HI board member Diane Sumida (far left) accepted the donation on behalf of the charity.

Honolulu Alumni Chapter, Kappa Alpha Psi



This service fraternity brought pizza and sandwiches for lunch to both Ronald McDonald Houses on January 17. They also took the time to visit with and get to know some of the families, including Trinity (on playground equipment), her mom and grandma, who are here from Lanai.

Moscow International Circus



The Moscow International Circus stepped up for RMHC-HI by donating more than \$6,000 from the proceeds of their performances. They also treated RMHC-HI families to a day at the circus!

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Volunteer Spotlight Wendell Chong



Let's shine the Volunteer Spotlight on a gentleman who brings with him a wealth of experience and a seemingly endless supply of energy. His name is Wendell Chong and you will find him working to help the families both at the Ronald McDonald House and the RMH Family Room.

The 68-year-old Aiea resident recently retired after a long career in retail with companies like Walmart and Woolworth's, and is now spending some of his new-found time to give back to his community. "I always wanted to help people," Wendell says. "If you help one person improve their life, then your life is a success." But he shares that he was also inspired by his late son Bruce who was deaf from birth and passed away about four years ago at age 43.

"Bruce went through all the programs here and he was working as a trainer at Lanakila," Wendell recalls. "So I've gone through a lot raising a "special needs" person. I know how people can use help.

He's actually been helping the families staying at the Ronald McDonald House in many different ways since he started volunteering. "I enjoy doing different things. I'm a Jack of all trades and a master of none," he jokes.

Among the many assignments Wendell has accepted have been to work on the RMHC-HI Golf Classic and the annual Share-a-Night Gala. He is also about to begin shifts at the RMH Family Room at Kapiolani Hospital.

"I just enjoy working with the people here at RMHC-HI. They are very easy to talk to. They're just like a family and to top it off, we are helping those that really need it."

Mahalo Wendell!



Wendell Chong and wife Aileen attended the House Christmas party.