



# Aloha From Our House to Yours

[www.RonaldHouseHawaii.org](http://www.RonaldHouseHawaii.org)

Newsletter of Ronald McDonald House Charities® of Hawaii

Vol. XVII, Issue 1, March 2017

## Message from our President



Jerri Chong

Aloha!

2017 marks 30 years of having Ronald McDonald House in Hawaii. So much has happened over the past three decades. We've grown; we've

expanded our reach; we added programs and opened a second house; we've doubled the number of families we're able to serve. Sometime this year, we will surpass 27,000 people served since opening, and reach 125,000 room nights provided for families at the Ronald McDonald House.

When the need grew for a respite center at Kapiolani Medical Center, we partnered with the hospital to create

the RMH-Family Room to assist families spending all of their time at their child's bedside.

This little slice of the Ronald McDonald House receives more than 9,000 visitors each year and has welcomed and provided a place of comfort and support to more than 120,000 people – families of hospitalized children – since opening in 2003.

Each of these families has a unique story and has traveled their own distinctive path. Most will be changed forever because of their experience of having a seriously ill child. We are just glad that in some way, we may have helped make their journey less burdensome and provided emotional and practical support when they needed it most.

Originally, the Ronald McDonald House was for parents only, as children's serious illnesses were all treated in-patient. But as medical techniques and technology changed, and many seriously ill children were being treated on an outpatient basis, we evolved into a home-away-from-home for entire families, including the outpatient children.

Now, as we reach our 30th anniversary, we are reaching out to all the families that have stayed with us over the years. How wonderful it would be to reconnect and hear about how they are doing 5, 10, 20, even 30 years later. With today's social media tools it has never been easier to stay in touch. Share your memories and photos at #RMCHawaiiTurns30. Or reach out to us through our Facebook page or Twitter, or by emailing to [info@rmhchawaii.org](mailto:info@rmhchawaii.org).



The Judd Hillside Ronald McDonald House, circa 1987, preparing for families.



The Judd Hillside House, as it looks today, a home-away-from-home.

Another great chance for you to reconnect with Ronald McDonald House is by joining us at our 30th Anniversary Mahalo events on all the islands. Each event will be extraordinary, with Ronald McDonald performing his show and reaching out to the community, and musical entertainment, prizes, and fun activities for everyone. On Oahu, our first Anniversary event will be at the Kahala Mall Center Stage on March 27 (Kuhio Day) from 11 a.m. – 2 p.m. That is RMHC-Hawaii's actual 30th birthday!

Everyone is invited to join the celebration, since most importantly, we would not have been able to serve families all this time if not for a wonderful and caring community. Nearly every aspect of what we do, and in fact, many of our greatest achievements are related to partnerships with and support from a community that cares. Compassion and support from everyday people on all the islands make this House a home, and on behalf of all the children and families that have been touched by "The House That Love Built," thank you so much!

### 2017 RMHC-HI Board of Directors

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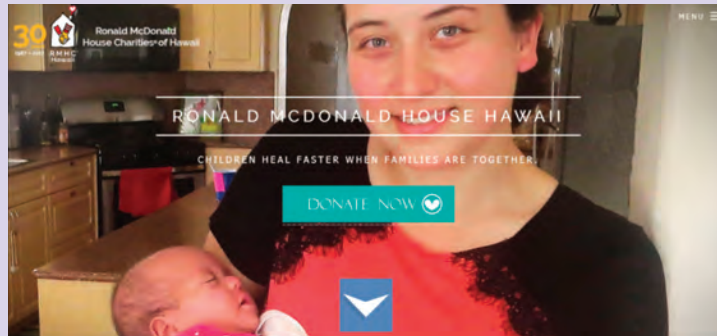
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# www.ronaldhousehawaii.org – it's all new!

Our newly redesigned website is up and running! It's easy to navigate, and it is chock-full of information about the organization, our programs, the families we serve, and the community heroes that make it all possible — our supporters and volunteers.

On our new website, it is easy to access our past newsletters; see photo galleries of our facilities and



events; read stories about some of the heroic children and families that have stayed with us over the years; sign up for our e-mail list; make a donation; contact us; view our current Wish List; check out our calendar of upcoming events; and do many, many other things. Please take a few minutes to look around

our new website. Tell us what you think!

*“Aloha From Our House to Yours”, the newsletter of Ronald McDonald House Charities of Hawaii (RMHC-HI), is published three times a year. RMHC-HI, 1970 Judd Hillside Road, Honolulu, HI 96822*

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Just contact us at our toll-free number:  
**(855) 227-7435** or go to  
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## Wish List

### Household Items

Garbage bags (yard & kitchen)  
Paper Towels

### Food Items

Fresh fruit and vegetables  
Frozen meats and chicken  
Frozen pizza  
Individually wrapped snacks

### Miscellaneous

Forever postage stamps  
Xerox paper

Heroes Of The Heart



Don and Marion Murphy and Murphy's Bar & Grill have been supporters of Hawaii's Ronald McDonald House for nearly as long as the House has been in existence.



Marion and Don posed with Kauai's Apryl Erickson at their annual RMHC-HI event.

Each December, Don and Marion open their hearts and their Restaurant to families staying at the Ronald McDonald House, creating a huge "toy-raiser" event known as the "Miracle On Merchant Street".

The Murphys are able to close off a whole block of the street fronting their downtown restaurant to provide a Christmas event complete with a delicious buffet dinner and other food stations along the street. They even put up a huge screen for kids to watch animated features. Those attending need only to bring a new toy or game for the kids staying at Ronald McDonald House.

# Around the House

## Better Together

Who would have known? A story that started out about two outstanding RMHC-HI volunteers and long-time supporters that turned into a love story and even a recipe for a happy life!

We sat down with Al Waterson and Nancy Bernal right around Valentine's Day. What a perfect time to get to know this devoted couple better and learn their story. They are not only life partners but also happen to be business partners. That arrangement may not be right for every marriage, but for Al and Nancy, it works. A true recipe for success, with a pinch of sass, double measures of humor, and overflowing with caring.

This is a couple with hearts of gold. For many years, Al and Nancy have contributed an incredible amount of time, energy, and professional services to benefit the kids and families we serve. They pull together the lineup of entertainment for our annual Gala and other fundraising special events; bring music and family cheer to the Ronald McDonald House every Christmas holiday season; reach out to the community to help raise funds to support our programs; and embrace our families with open arms and hearts at every opportunity. And they aren't shy or hesitant to invite many others from their wide circle of friends and colleagues to join them in helping our Ronald McDonald House families.

"We're here to help in any way we can because we absolutely believe in the Ronald McDonald House," said Al. "It's all about the kids, and it's very personal for Nancy and me. We can't even begin to imagine how helpless and frightened parents must be to have a child who is so seriously ill. We're blessed to just be able to help or provide support in some small way."

Al and Nancy met nearly 40 years ago at a club named Opus One in the former Ilikai Hotel, where Al was the featured performer. "I knew right away, at first sight," Nancy admitted. "Something just drew me to him. So I came back the next night, and the next night....and, well, we've been together ever since."

Nowhere is it more evident that "It Takes Two" to create the sparkle that Nancy and Al, together, bring to the stage at our Ronald McDonald House events, or to every project they work on together. "We just complement each other so well," said Nancy. "Al is a professional emcee, singer, actor and entertainer, and I'm the entertainment manager, working behind the

scenes, crossing the t's and dotting the i's, handling all the business aspects of making a show run smoothly."

But Nancy does so much more than just manage a cadre of talented performers. She mentors and nurtures young and upcoming talent, guiding them protectively through the tough facets of the entertainment industry, such as Jordan Segundo, Forte, and Bruno Mars at the start of his career. She is committed to supporting and developing her "family" of actors, singers, and models, always making sure that their passion and integrity for performing is at the gold standard. Her biggest fan, and vice versa, is husband Al. "She's the real talent," says Al. "I just listen to her and do what she tells me!"



Nancy Bernal and Al Waterson

While Nancy manages the entertainment needs of RMHC-HI's special events, Al often acts as

the emcee, and his decades of show business experience really shines. He has done movies with people like Donny and Marie Osmond; acted and appeared with Frank Sinatra (and performs ole Blue Eyes' signature songs), appeared in a number of original Hawaii Five-O episodes with Jack Lord, and much more.

What fuels their passion for life and each other?

"With each new year, it's new adventures for us" shared Nancy. "We look at everything with gratitude and with a very open mind. We appreciate all of life's gifts."

Laughter and humor is also an important part of their recipe for a happy life together. "He's got all the talent and all the funniness, and I get to keep him in line," laughs Nancy.

"We are just better together, two halves of a whole," said Al. "Life couldn't be better, and we are very blessed."

- Gene Davis



Al, doing what he likes best - working with a live audience.

# 2016 RMHC-HI Share-A-Night Gala

November 20 at the Sheraton Waikiki Resort

## Share a Night Annual Gala

This year's RMHC-HI Share-A-Night Gala was a stunning success, attracting nearly 600 attendees and raising more than \$325,000 to help the children and families!

Honorees this year were Bob and Dianne Pereira, owners of Midas Hawaii, who have been unwavering in their support of our mission.

Guests were treated to outstanding entertainment by A Touch of Gold, Jordan Segundo, Augie T, Casey Fortuno, and Al Waterson. Everyone enjoyed the delicious dinner; participated in the silent and live auctions; browsed our country store; sampled great wines; and enjoyed the warm fellowship.

Mahalo to all of our attendees and many sponsors!



Gala Honorees Dianne and Bob Pereira



Left to right, RMHC-HI Board member Clayton Kamida, Betty Kamida, Board Chair Carrie Jeanne Oda, and Wesley Oda.



Families that formerly stayed at the House returned for the Gala! Left to right, Charlene, Dan and Ruthie Mersburgh; Naz Beck, Kamalana Beck, and Iris Koomoa.



Casey Fortuno and Jordan Segundo performed together (above, left). Touch of Gold had everyone swaying and Augie T had everyone roaring with laughter. Entertainer Al Waterson emceed.

# Mahalo To Our Shining Stars

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## AP III Tournament

January 30, 2017  
Mid Pacific Country Club

Presented by Midas Hawaii

Benefitting RMHC-HI

We are so fortunate to have the strong support of Bob and Dianne Pereira of Midas Hawaii! Last year's Gala Honorees conducted their yearly AP III Memorial Golf Tournament on January 30 at Mid-Pacific Country Club with the proceeds coming straight to RMHC-HI. The event raised nearly \$48,000!



Above, RMHC-HI's Jerri Chong with Dianne and Bob Pereira. Below, the players, ready to head out onto the course. Bottom, RMHC-HI's Lisa Levine and Lucy Ahn helping out on one of the holes.



# Ways The Community Supports Us Mahalo!

# IT'S ONLY ROCK'N ROLL

**BUT I LIKE IT!**

APRIL 29, 2017 5:30pm  
Pomaika'i Ballrooms @ Dole Cannery  
Tickets \$85

**Dinner & Dancing all night with  
LS34 & Emcee Lina Girl**

And Enjoy The Signature Candy Bar

**Benefitting Ronald McDonald House Families  
MOMS ON A MISSION HAWAII**

A Local 501 (c) 3 Organization

**TICKETS: [momsonamissionhawaii.org](http://momsonamissionhawaii.org)**

Contact: Roxane 256-8788 for any questions

## Calendar of Events

- March 27 RMHC-HI 30th Anniversary Celebration *Kahala Mall Center Stage 11am-2pm*
- April 29 It's Only Rock 'N Roll –But I like It! A fundraiser for RMHC-HI by Moms On A Mission *Pomaika'i Ballroom, Dole Cannery*
- May 6 Molokai and Lanai Visitor Industry Charity Walks
- May 13 Hawaii Island, Kauai, Maui Visitor Industry Charity Walks
- May 20 Oahu Visitor Industry Charity Walk
- May 27 Hawaii Island 30th Anniversary Celebration *Prince Kuhio Plaza*
- June 24 Maui 30th Anniversary Celebrations *Queen Kaahumanu Center*
- July 20 26th RMHC-HI Golf Classic *Hawaii Prince Golf Club*
- Aug. 26 Kauai 30th Anniversary Celebration *Kukui Grove Center*
- Sept. 16 30th Anniversary Celebration *Windward Mall*
- Sept. 23 30th Anniversary Celebration *Pearl Ridge Center*
- Nov. 18 RMHC-HI Gala *Sheraton Waikiki Hotel*

## PLEASE JOIN THE RMHC-HI CHARITY WALK TEAMS

RMHC-HI helps kids and families from all islands, so we're inviting our supporters to walk for us in all six of this year's Visitor Industry Charity Walks in Hawaii!

This year's Charity Walks kick off on Lanai and Molokai on May 6. Then Maui, Kauai and Hawaii Island Walks take place on May 13, followed by Oahu's Charity Walk on May 20.

Official RMHC-HI walkers on all islands receive a special t-shirt commemorating their participation!

If you are not able to be a walker on the team, you can still "walk-in-spirit" by making a direct donation to the RMHC-HI Walk team on your island or through someone who is walking.



How do you join or support the RMHC-HI team on your island? Easy.

**Using a mobile device**, just text the appropriate island code to 71777.

CODES: OahuCW;  
MauiCW;  
KauaiCW;  
BigIslandCW;  
LanaiCW; and  
MolokaiCW.

**Using a**

**computer**, Visit [www.charitywalkhawaii.org](http://www.charitywalkhawaii.org) and click on your island at the top of the page. Then click "Participate in Charity Walk" link.

For more information, call Lucy at 973-5683 x 240.



# Our Ohana Is Forever

## #RMHCHawaiiTurns30

Help us reconnect with our forever 'Ohana by posting your favorite RMHC-Hawaii memory with the hashtag: #RMHCHawaiiTurns30. Mahalo for all of your support and love! We look forward to seeing your posts!



*Celebrating 30 years!*

"It was the most memorable experience, during one of the most difficult times in my life. The staff and volunteers are awesome. It made our experience waiting for our twins to grow and get stronger at the NICU bearable. I was able to maintain balance and strength. We were blessed to have been able to be on the same island with our babies. They were just a drive away, and I could see them whenever I chose to. Ronald McDonald House was our temporary home, and we are forever grateful for them."

-Celeste Alconcel Mollena

### How are you doing?

It means so much to us when we hear from families we have shared the Ronald McDonald House with over the past three decades.

Now that so many of us are on social media, it's easier than ever to stay connected to your RMHC-HI Ohana.

Tell us how your family is doing or share a photo! #RMHCHawaiiTurns30.

"Words cannot describe how difficult it is to have a child born sick, but to have you share your home, your hearts, and your friendship, shed a bright light on some of our darkest days. For that, you will always hold a special place in our hearts. Please know that your impact on so many, is so profound."

-Ransen and Christina Camara

"I was a patient at Shriners Hospital in 2008 & I come all the way from Fiji. Being away from home was a very tough situation to face but RMHC provided me with a home-away-from-home and everything was just perfect. The staff, environment and other families living in that house are just a blessing. Words cannot express how thankful I am & I hope one day soon I'll be able to visit Hawaii again. BLESS YOU ALL.

- Vinaka Vakalevu

"This is our Ohana, our friends. We love the families we have met. It's a place of healing, reflecting, connecting and being loved!! LOVE is truly the key to healing on all levels and this is a place of love. Thank you so very very much!! We will return to island next month and we will come home to say Hi to all our families and friends here. Until we meet again .. In the spirit Of Aloha .. Malamapono"

-Liliu and Kealii Ross

**"More than a home-away-from-home, the Ronald McDonald House is a family-away-from-family."**

**-Tonny Godoy, Maui**



"We are so grateful for what the Ronald McDonald House has provided for us. Our 6-year-old daughter Mila often said how she never wanted to leave, and I know it was because the staff and volunteers always made us feel comfortable and loved. To all the families, we are sending lots of love and pray that you will be home soon with all your loved ones."

-Anette Feldman

**Ronald McDonald House Charities® of Hawaii**

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## Ways The Community Supports Us Mahalo!



**Above, left** - the lively crew from the DISNEY STORE, Ala Moana Center put together a delicious Taco Bar for Ronald McDonald House families on February 12.

**Left** - some of our dear friends from Bank of Hawaii and Hawaiian Airlines teamed up to cook dinner for the families staying at Ronald McDonald House on January 13.

**Above** - on February 6, Mary and Bill Kendall dropped off blankets that Mary crocheted. Over the years, Mary has hand-made, with love, almost 700 blankets for the RMH kids and families.