



Aloha

# From Our House to Yours

www.RonaldHouseHawaii.org

Newsletter of Ronald McDonald House Charities® of Hawaii

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## A Dream Comes True

Losing a child is one of the most distressing things in the world. For some couples, the shock and pain of the experience leaves scars that make them hesitant to ever try again to grow their family. Vanessa and Tonny Godoy can tell you how difficult it was for them when their baby Thania Vienne died back in 2015 – but clearly, their spirit wasn't broken. They will tell you that it was their strong faith that got them through.

After Thania was born prematurely, and hospitalized in Honolulu, Vanessa



Vanessa and Tonny Godoy with their new daughter Vanna Trish.

and Tonny stayed at the Ronald McDonald House for almost three months. During school vacations, their two sons, Vinzent and Vinze, joined them. Everything seemed under control. Finally, doctors released Thania to go home.

"When they sent us home to Maui, baby seemed to be doing fine, even after all the blood transfusions and surgeries she had," recalls Vanessa. "On the 18th day at home, she woke up crying. It sounded like she was in pain. Since my husband was at work, our landlord rushed us to the hospital."

At around noon, Thania started losing her vital signs and doctors worked on her for an hour to get her stabilized. As they prepared to medi-vac her back to Oahu, they realized her condition was too critical to transport her. "We lost her around 6 p.m.," says Vanessa. "Right at the time we always said our prayers."

Now, we fast forward two years to the very date of Thania's death anniversary. A few nights before, Vanessa had a dream that she pregnant, and now, as she was driving home, the name Vanna just came to her. "I didn't know I was pregnant, but when I got home I looked up the name Vanna, and I

found that it meant 'God's gift,'" she says.

"When Tonny got home, I told him that we needed to go and get a pregnancy kit. 'Just bear with me,' I told him." On the way to the drug store, Tonny revealed that he too had dreamt that Vanessa was expecting another baby. As they had suspected, the test was positive. "And from then she had her name, Vanna."

But Vanna didn't arrive without issues either. "I unexpectedly gave birth early again over on Maui and Vanna had to come over here for treatment at Kapiolani Hospital," says Vanessa. Their new baby weighed 3 lbs. 9 oz. "The problem is we don't have any family over here. It's so good that you have this kind of House here because we can be comfortable. It's a place where we can meet and



Tonny and Vanessa at the Oahu Avenue Ronald McDonald House.

talk to other families. We can sleep well. We can have private time too, when we can reflect on everything that is happening in our lives. We have come to look at this place as our second home."

Vanessa and Tonny are in a special group of parents who have not only stayed twice, but have stayed twice at both the Judd Hillside and Oahu Avenue Ronald Houses.

Continued on page 2

### Wish List

#### Gift Cards

Restaurants  
Stores/Markets  
Gasoline gift cards  
Family activities  
Movie tickets

#### Household Items

Microwavable paper plates  
Garbage bags (yard & kitchen)  
Dishwasher-safe acrylic cups

#### Food Items

Fresh fruits & vegetables  
Frozen single-serving meals  
(microwavable)  
Frozen pizza  
Individually wrapped snacks  
Frozen Hot Pockets

#### Miscellaneous

Forever postage stamps  
Office supplies  
Fitted white sheets – full/twin  
New pillows  
Xbox One and PS4 video  
games (e-rated)  
White shower curtain liners  
White photo-copy paper  
(letter size)

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## Message from our President



Jerri Chong

Aloha,

There have been many studies showing that people in Hawaii are particularly generous when it comes to charitable giving.

I believe it is part of the incredible Spirit of Aloha we embrace across our islands. It's about love and respect for each other, and pitching in to help those less fortunate. It's just part of who we are.

I want to share a story with you that shows how compassion and caring can be contagious, and can gain incredible momentum in a community that has a heart, like ours.

This story starts with Brian Derby, who offers an annual "Offensive Linemen's Camp" for promising high school football players looking to develop their skills and possibly earn college scholarships. It's been very successful. The camp is free to the boys as long as they bring Ronald McDonald House Wish List items on the first day. Why is that? He could charge quite a bit for

this four-and-a-half-month-long training.

First of all, Brian doesn't want to exclude anyone because they don't have the money to pay an entry fee. In addition, he is also really serious about helping his campers grow into well-rounded people. Many of these young men are blessed with physical and intellectual gifts, but Brian wants to awaken their humility, and inspire their empathy for other kids who aren't as lucky.

During Camp orientation, Brian invites our PR Manager Gene Davis to speak to the camp participants, their families, and the volunteer coaches. Gene looks at his role as re-emphasizing exactly how much their donations mean, and to share a little about the kids and families that we serve.

This year, something really special happened. One of the parents at the camp, Joe Kimmey, approached Gene after he spoke and offered to have his company, Foundations Hawaii, donate concrete work - should we ever need it.

It turned out that we needed it right away at our Oahu Avenue House - and

Joe and his crew from Foundations Hawaii did the job quickly and beautifully. To make it happen, Joe convinced his associates at HC&D and the Mason's Union to step up for the children and they all pitched in without hesitation!

Then, noticing that a landscaping upgrade was much needed at the Oahu House, Joe introduced us to a big-hearted landscaper named Steve Dewald, owner of Steve's Gardening Service, who was soon at work beautifying the grounds at the Oahu Avenue House. Steve was able to inspire Koba's Nursery, Beachside Lighting, Pacific Pipe - Oahu, and Sharon's Plants, Ltd. to join him in the project.

When hard working individuals in our community choose to re-prioritize their entire work schedules just to help us, it is more humbling than I can describe. We love our wonderful community! Read more on page three about this incredible synergy that's helping seriously ill children and their families.

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### ***A Dream Comes True*** continued from page 1

On their way home after almost two more months on Oahu this time, and with their new baby Vanna in tow, Tonny wanted to share that the Ronald McDonald House has had a big role in their lives. "When our babies were in the hospital, we were with them, and it was good to know that while we were taking care of our baby, someone was taking care of us."

"When we would come home on the evening shuttle, we would talk to other families who had different situations or stories. You can feel the sympathy of other families, and this way you can gain the strength you need to continue the next day."

"It's not just a home-away-from-home for us it is a family away from our loved ones. Every day you see the kind staff and they make sure we know that we can count on them. They are more than friends now. They are family."

Vanessa agrees. "We feel like we are 'home' once we enter this house. We tell our family back on Maui: 'Don't worry. We are safe here.'"

Heroes Of The Heart



Our treasured friends at Meadow Gold Dairies are always ready to lend a helping hand. In fact, Meadow Gold has been part of the RMHC-HI Ohana from the very beginning.

To help the children, Meadow Gold makes product donations such as milk, juice, ice cream directly to the Ronald McDonald Houses. They also go above and beyond by supporting our Golf Classic, our Gala, and other events and occasions. This year, they also became a charter member of our "30 for 30" corporate support program.

We couldn't ask for more consistent and generous benefactors than the good folks at Meadow Gold Dairies Hawaii - this issue's Heroes of the Heart!

# Sometimes the Magic Happens



**Brian Derby** is well respected in the community. He's a firefighter, a football coach - and a straight shooter; he tells it like it is.

At his annual Offensive Linemen's Camp, he helps young men see what is possible out there, waiting for them, if they work hard enough, practice self-discipline, and understand that with success comes the responsibility to give

back to the communities that nurtured them. Coach Derby doesn't charge for the youngsters to participate in this camp - they need only to bring items from the Ronald McDonald House Wish List on the first Saturday. Coach Derby strives to develop physically skilled, but also well-rounded athletes, and we salute him!



Brian, welcoming his campers and their parents on the first day of camp.



Brian's campers before they loaded up the RMHC-HI van with their donations of Wish List items.

**Joe Kimmey** is a friend and admirer of Brian Derby. His son Joe Jr., a blossoming football star at Kapolei High School, participated in Brian's camp. When Joe heard Brian praise our organization during the camp's orientation day, he wanted to help too. He's a project supervisor for Foundations Hawaii, a large, concrete contracting company. Soon, with the enthusiastic support of the company's president, Kevin Pena, and the in-kind donations of HC&D, the Mason's Union and others, Joe and his craftsmen gave the Oahu Avenue House a huge boost with a project that created a foundation for a new storage unit; connected existing sidewalks; and laid a decorative concrete slab overlooking the water feature. We needed those sidewalks and foundation badly, and it would have cost us thousands!

Right, here are just some of the craftsmen that lent their skills to enhance our Oahu Avenue Ronald House. That's Joe Kimmey shaking hands with RMHC-HI's Gene Davis (left).



**Steve Dewald** doesn't know Brian Derby, but he is one Joe Kimmey's longest friends. When Joe called, Steve quickly offered his landscaping services to put the crowning touch on the new Oahu Avenue improvements. The project included new shrubs, plants and trees; and upgrades to the water feature, irrigation and lighting systems. Steve's Gardening Service contributed \$8,300 in labor and got donations from his vendors, Koba's Nursery, Beachside Lighting, Pacific Pipe - Oahu, and Sharon's Plants, Ltd. - bringing the total landscaping project value to \$12,000!

Below left, Steve and his crew receive appreciation from RMHC-HI's Gene Davis and Kanoe Paaahu for his company's donation. Below Right, some of the new greenery.



# The 26th Annual RMHC-HI Golf Classic

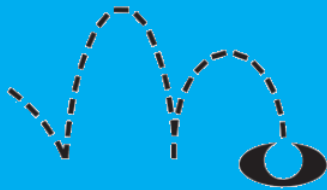
**WE WANT YOU!** to be a part of this year's Golf Classic!!

Enter a Team!

Volunteer!

Sponsor a Hole!

Donate Prizes!



Ronald McDonald House  
Charities of Hawaii  
Golf Classic

**2017 RMHC-Hawaii Golf Classic**  
**Thursday, July 20, 2017**  
**Hawaii Prince Golf Club**

Information and fillable forms are available at  
[www.RonaldHouseHawaii.org](http://www.RonaldHouseHawaii.org)  
or call Candace at 973-5683 x 239.

## *Patience Pays Off*

After nearly four months at the Ronald McDonald House, the Chow-Kalipis were able to take little Kylo home to Molokai in late June!!

Born with a heart defect, Kylo (below, right) will need heart surgery in the future, but he stabilized, gained strength, and grew from 4 lbs. 12 oz. to 11 lbs. 3 oz., and he can now wait at home for that date with the mainland surgeon. We are so happy for them, but we miss the sound of little feet running by the office and the house full of giggling youngsters! Kylo's sisters Kylee, Karlee, Kinzee and Kacy, and brother Kody, ranging in ages from one to eight years-old, were so excited to bring their new brother home! Mom Marissa and dad Zed previously stayed at the Ronald House for about four months in 2010, when Kody had his own birth-related issue.



# Ways The Community Supports Us Mahalo!



It's really personal for Rona Takata. Her family experienced the Ronald McDonald House in Seattle and she became passionate about her support for the organization. Rona spearheaded a drive among her friends and associates to raise money to purchase Cuddle Bears and the Cuddle Bear children's books to go into the welcome bags that families get when checking into the Ronald McDonald House.

Left, House Operations Manager Kanoe Paauhau holds up a sample welcome bag with one of Rona's Cuddle Bears peaking over the edge. Rona is holding her son, Eli.

Thank you Hilo! It was a great 30th anniversary event on Saturday, May 27 at **Prince Kuhio Plaza**! We got to see so many wonderful people! Here's our RMHC-Hawaii road team that next will be traveling to Kauai for another free, fun, family event at Kukui Grove Center on Saturday, August 26. Join us Kauai! 11 a.m. – 2 p.m. Left to right, Lindsey, Gene, Kanoe and Michael. Of course, Ronald McDonald is a part of our traveling team, too. He does a great show that encourages the keiki to "Go Active".

Additional "mall-halo" events take place on Sept. 16 at Windward Mall and Sept. 23 at Pearlridge Center. Come, have fun everyone!!



**Rad Rteimeh** and his friends were at the Judd Hillside House recently to cook dinner for our families. They also brought toys for the kids. Rad, a professional chef, is making dinner every third Saturday of the month thru 2017!



Thank you **Moms On A Mission** for the wonderful benefit event for us on April 29! "It's Only Rock & Roll" drew a great crowd. The event included dinner, dancing, and the special "Candy Bar", presented by the Komatsu family! Above, MOM members delivered the \$8,000 proceeds to RMHC-HI's Kanoe Paauhau and Candace Asam-Lopez.

# Ways The Community Supports Us Mahalo!



On May 10, the Honolulu City Council presented RMHC-HI with a certificate to acknowledge 30 years of assisting Hawaii's families with seriously ill or injured children. Mahalo Councilwoman Ann Kobayashi and fellow council members! At the ceremony representing RMHC-HI were Kanoe Paauhau, Jerri Chong, Gene Davis and Brian Takeda.

We are so humbled and thankful for **T&T Tinting Specialists, Inc.**'s incredible donation to the Oahu Avenue Ronald McDonald House! The decorative glass graphics are so beautiful - and sure to help ease our families' daily stress!



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



Life goes on for the keiki staying at the Ronald McDonald House.

Despite serious health concerns, kids just want to be kids!



We got a big boost on May 19 from the local **Sherwin-Williams** team! The folks from this quality paint store donated the paint, and they personally re-painted the green railing that runs all around the Judd Hillside House. They rolled up their sleeves and tackled this big project with much aloha. MAHALO Sherwin-Williams!!

The day before Mother's Day, May 13, was Ronald McDonald House Day at **Watanabe Floral**, and a portion of the day's proceeds came to RMHC-HI! In addition, all during the month, customers had the opportunity to lend a hand to help us help the families. It also gave shoppers a chance to meet Ronald McDonald and to learn all about us.

That special day and month at Watanabe Floral raised more than \$4,000 to help with our mission.



# How You Can Help

## Attention Business Owners and Corporate Executives!!

**This is a chance to demonstrate your love for the communities you serve!**

We've always known we can't make medicine taste better nor can we take the sting out of treatments. But for 30 years, Hawaii's Ronald McDonald House has managed to reduce stress for families in Hawaii and the Pacific who are dealing with a major shift in their world.



Achieving a milestone in 2017 of 30 years of service, the year also marks a juncture to RMHC-HI's next 30 years. Integral to our journey forward, the establishment of a Corporate Club will serve as a foundation for increasing our reach in the community.

We invite you to celebrate our 30th Anniversary with us by becoming one of 30 RMHC-HI founding Corporate Club members. With a \$5,000 donation, you will be partnering as an official corporate sponsor of our 30th Anniversary Celebration Year, and will become a contributor to a much greater effort and goal for this milestone for our charity.

**Our Corporate Club founders will also provide enough financial assistance to help us support a secondary goal - to give 30 more families 30 nights in Hawaii's Judd Hillside and Oahu Avenue Ronald McDonald Houses. Won't you join us?**

For more information, contact Lucy Ahn at (808) 892-1903 or [lucy@rmhchawaii.org](mailto:lucy@rmhchawaii.org).

## Your change changes everything!

McDonald's Restaurants makes it possible - and very simple - for you to join them in lending a helping hand to our families each and every day.



RMHC collection canisters at the in-store counter and drive through window are available for you to help "change" a life by depositing coins or bills.

It may seem like your change won't help much, but with each coin you deposit at each of your visits, in combination with others, it makes for a "super-sized" contribution to Hawaii's Ronald McDonald House each year.



## DOUBLE YOUR GOOD

Thousands of community-minded companies offer matching gift programs that can double or even triple the power of their employees' donations.

Ask your corporate Human Resources Department to see if your employer matches contributions of cash or volunteer hours for employees, retirees and/or spouses. If your company does have a Matching Gift Program, please check the guidelines, and how to get your donation matched.

Thank you for taking advantage of your company's generosity to further benefit Hawaii's families. It's an easy way to maximize your gift and make a big impact!

**Ronald McDonald House Charities® of Hawaii**

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



A group of our long-time volunteers came together for this year's Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon at The Willows Restaurant on May 12. They were treated to lunch, great entertainment by Imua Garza and Jordan Segundo, unlimited access to "The Candy Bar," and certificates acknowledging their dedication to our mission.

It was a warm gathering of remarkable people. Giving and caring, our volunteer corps is the backbone of RMHC-HI.

Right, Mamie Murray received her award and gift basket from RMHC-HI President Jerri Chong. Mamie is our longest active volunteer - nearly the entire thirty years Hawaii's Ronald McDonald House has been in operation.

So many ways to volunteer! Call Lindsey at (808) 973-5683 x241.

