



Aloha

From Our House to Yours

www.RonaldHouseHawaii.org

Newsletter of Ronald McDonald House Charities® of Hawaii

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It all worked out

Cherisse and Erik Rita are home on Kauai now, enjoying their new baby and hoping to get back into a comfortable routine, but it hasn't been easy. In fact, from the moment Cherisse began feeling contractions in



On their way home, Cherisse and Erik Rita took some time to talk about their experiences.

July, it's been a series of challenges that has taken the support and compassion of their family, friends, co-workers, and even perfect

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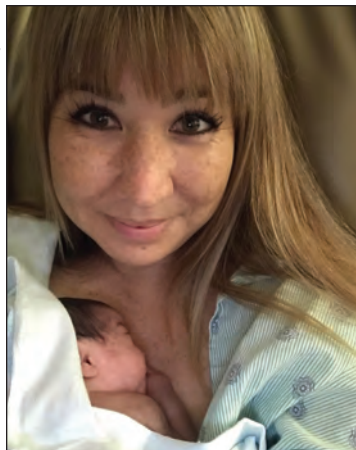
strangers, to face and overcome. Because baby wasn't actually due until October 2, it was a very serious situation and doctors did everything they could to delay the delivery.

"I had pre-term labor at about 26 weeks, and they recommended bed rest, hydration and some medicine they have to help stop the contractions," said Cherisse. "So I tried all of that, and they monitored me for about a week before deciding abruptly to medevac me to Oahu."

Cherisse arrived at Kapiolani Medical Center on Monday, July 10 and had Zyli Azay Rita, a baby girl, on Saturday morning, July 15. "By then I was at 28 weeks," she recalled. Eric had joined her at the hospital for the birth.

The Kalaheo couple has three other school-aged children, Aliyah, Cole and Tenzen, and Eric is working as a plumber and attending classes. Their lives had been busy, but they pretty much had it under control - until everything changed.

"There were a lot of things that got thrown into the mix when this happened," Cherisse explained. "It threw off our expectations. Everything had to change. Thankfully, Erik is an Army Vet and he's got some hard core training on how to be organized in chaos."



Welcome to the world Zyli Azay!

Meanwhile, relatives and friends back on Kauai rallied. Even Zyli Azay's 10-year-old brothers, rose to the occasion. "I ask them to take more responsibility and they did it," Eric said proudly. "We are so grateful to everyone back home for their support and kindness," added Cherisse.

Four days after giving birth, Cherisse was released from the hospital and checked into the nearby Ronald McDonald House, where she could stay while Zyli Azay developed, and grew stronger. "I didn't know much about the Ronald McDonald House, but the nurses said to check into it," she said. "Thank goodness. I can barely even put into words. It's such an unexpected, overwhelming blessing. I felt like there was so much going on that was out of my control. This place gave me the feeling that I had at least some control over my situation."

Meanwhile, Cherisse could be by Zyli Azay's side every day and

able to witness the swift progress her new baby was making. "We've been so fortunate that she hasn't suffered from any major complications. The issues that require major intervention are so common in premies, but we didn't encounter any of them," she

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Message from our President



Jerri Chong

Last month, Kidz For A Cause launched its 2017 campaign to benefit Hawaii's Ronald McDonald House. I am so proud and excited that RMHC-Hawaii is part of this amazing journey. But what

really inspires me is how a little girl's first visit to the "House That Love Built" could have such a profound and lasting effect on her, and ultimately, make a real difference for thousands of people in need.

In 2008, Nicki Lee, a Punahou School 3rd grader who loved to sing, took her love of performing and put on a talent show in her living room, in front of family and friends, to raise money for a school community service project. She selected RMHC-Hawaii as the beneficiary and raised \$1,100 to help the children and families of the Ronald McDonald House! But it was what came after, that changed Nicki and set her on an inspired path.

Her mom, Cathy Lee, says "When Nicki arrived at the Ronald McDonald House to deliver the money she had raised, she was just proud of herself for what

she had done. But when she left, after meeting the children and families, she *understood* the impact of what she had done, and what helping others really meant. It fueled her desire to do more, to give back, to be a Kid For A Cause."

Nicki has worked hard to grow Kidz For A Cause into an amazing peer-to-peer fundraising program that has raised more than \$420,000 over the years for various Hawaii charities. And now, Kidz for A Cause has come full circle, back "home" to the Ronald McDonald House, where it all began 9 years ago.

And what started as an 8-year-old putting on a simple talent show evolved into an incredible movement where children of all ages create FUNraising events and activities that inspire leadership, teamwork, commitment, and most of all, a desire to help others, to do something bigger than themselves.

But the unique premise of Kidz For A Cause remains the same. It's all about kids. Kids helping kids. Kids inspiring kids. It's about the promise and the power of young people to make a difference when given the opportunity. To dream big and

follow their passion. To be the link to making our community better, stronger, and kinder. To be the young heroes and champions of our next generation of leaders.



Nicki Lee and Jerri Chong, 2008



Nicki and Jerri, 2017

"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

It all worked out *continued from page 1*

shared. "We are profoundly grateful." "Zyli Azay has overcome a lot, but we haven't had to deal with half of the things that some of the other parents I met, and now call friends, are going through. I'm empathetic because we have similar but different stories and the differences are glaring to me. We have become close during this shared process, and I feel for them," said Cherisse.

Most preemie babies are not released from the hospital until at least their original due dates, but here they were, on their way home weeks sooner. "It all worked out." said Cherisse. "I have no idea what we would have done without Ronald McDonald House. It's not just a bed to sleep in. It's truly a home-away-from-home."

Bank of Hawaii's support for Ronald McDonald House Hawaii has been steadfast from the very beginning. Over the years, BOH has included RMHC-HI in large-scale fundraising activities within the company; provided members for the RMHC-HI Board of Directors; and supplied volunteers at our Houses and special events. Even the Bankohana, employees from every Bank of Hawaii branch across the state, have helped hundreds of Ronald McDonald House families through Live Kokua, the bank's employee giving program.



"Our relationship with the bank has always been one that extends throughout the company, to their very caring employees," said Jerri Chong, RMHC-Hawaii President. "We are so grateful for their confidence and support."

We fondly consider Bank of Hawaii, and its many team members, special "HEROES OF THE HEART".

Kidz For A Cause 2017 - benefitting RMHC Hawaii



Nicki Lee, founder of Kidz For A Cause addressed the crowd (right) at the Hawaii launch event on Sunday, August 27 at Sacred Hearts Academy. Hundreds of enthusiastic students and parents attended and left with the energy and tools to make this year's campaign the biggest and best to date!

Join Now!!

KFAC FUNraisers inspire Kidz to use their creativity and passion to help kids in need. FUNraisers created by Kidz have included sports clinics, bake sales, dances, a carnival, talent shows and more! And, earn school community service credits just by doing what you love!

To become a Kid For A Cause, register today at KidzForACause.org — elementary, middle and high school students welcome! Campaign lasts through February, 2018.

Register online at KidzForACause.org

Nicki feels strongly that Kidz For A Cause is just as enriching for the kids participating as it is for the charity that benefits from the campaign.

"Kidz For A Cause has become so much more than just a way to raise money, she explained. "We are also able to mentor kids and to really teach them leadership skills and communication skills along with philanthropy and values."

"It works so well because of that peer-to-peer motivation and peer-to-peer learning aspect. It's kids helping kids in need."

"What's so empowering is that all of these kids that want to make a difference are coming together and using what they love to do - but all for the same common goal. Being able to collaborate and inspire each other is so powerful."

The focus is on kids, but Nicki is also quick to acknowledge the important role that parents and other adults play in the success of Kidz For A Cause.

"Kidz For A Cause isn't due to one person. It's everybody coming together for incredible causes. That's one of the things that I love about it."



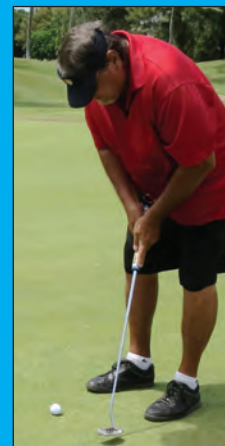
Meeting the James Family on her first visit to the Ronald McDonald House was a big reason Nicki Lee became so passionate about philanthropy.



Left photo, the day in 2008 when Nicki visited the Ronald McDonald House and met Jerri Chong and the James family. Middle photo, Dennis, Kierah, Kaylee and Angie James during a stay at the House in 2009. Right photo, recreating the pose from nine years ago at a reunion on the mainland this summer. The James family now lives in Lompoc, California.

The 26th Annual RMHC-HI Golf Classic

July 20, 2017 at Hawaii Prince Golf Club



It was another beautiful day for our Golf Classic, and there was fun for golfers and volunteers alike! Best of all, we raised more than \$100,000 to help families with seriously ill or injured children.

Mahalo to everyone who made it possible!

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Tony Group Autoplex
Turtle Bay
Waikiki Beach Walk
Waikiki Parc Hotel
Wailea Beach Resort Marriott, Maui
Mr. Bruce Yanagihara

Join us at the 2017 Ronald McDonald House Charities of Hawaii Annual Gala Dinner on Saturday, November 18, 2017, at the Sheraton Waikiki Hotel!



Share a Night Annual Gala

Help us celebrate 30 years of providing a “home-away-from-home” for families with seriously ill children at our biggest event of the year. Get ready for the Incredible entertainment! Delicious Dinner! Warm Fellowship! Silent and Live Auctions! The Country Store!

Being a Table Sponsor is a great way to participate:

- Koa Sponsorship - \$15,000
- Maile Sponsorship - \$10,000
- Ilima Sponsorship - \$5,000
- Pikake Sponsorship - \$3,000
- Individual seats - \$250

Can't make it on November 18, but still want to help? Sponsor a table for families currently staying the Ronald McDonald House, or donate auction items!



There is something for everyone at the Gala's Silent Auction!

Get ready to click, bid and win! You can even participate in our silent auction from home!

Browse auction items and register to bid at rmhchawaii.cbo.io from November 15 - November 18, 2017

30th anniversary “MALL-HALO” events all across the islands!

Thank you for joining us at Kahala Mall, Kona Commons, Kapolei Commons, Prince Kuhio Mall, Queen Kaahumanu Center, Kukui Grove Center, Windward Mall, and Pearlridge Center during 2017!



Ways The Community Supports Us Mahalo!



Honolulu Federal Credit Union's (HOCU) Keiki Miracle Day was a smashing success on August 26. The benefit for RMHC- Hawaii, which took place at HOCU's Moiliili branch, included a "Trash and Treasures" market;

baked goods; craft fair; retail pop ups; food; keiki I.D.s; games and more!



Sam Choy's In Our Kitchen!

An awesome episode of Sam Choy's popular TV show was taped at our Judd Hillside House on July 28 and aired August 27 on KHON2 - hope you had a chance to watch it!

If not, be sure to mark your calendar for October 22 at 6:30 p.m., when it will be rebroadcast.

In this segment, Chef Sam Choy enlists the help of RMHC-Hawaii's President Jerri Chong and current guest at the House, Duke Au Hoon, from Maui. They use food from the community refrigerator and pantry to create a meal for all the families.



Chef Choy has been a long-time supporter of Ronald McDonald House, hosting fundraisers at his restaurants for us, playing in our golf classics, visiting the House and interacting with the kids - even shooting a previous TV show in our kitchen almost ten years ago!

Ways The Community Supports Us Mahalo!

Workplace Giving Changes Lives

Workplace giving programs provide essential support for RMHC-HI families, and many donors find it to be an easy and convenient way to make their annual tax-deductible donations.

If you are a federal government employee (civilian or military), please consider designating a portion of your Combined Federal Campaign gift to Hawaii's Ronald House by selecting #89629 on your pledge form.

If Aloha United Way is your option for workplace giving, you can choose to direct your gift of \$48 or more per year, by going to "Invest My Gift – Agency Support" on your pledge form and filling in code #70680.

Mahalo for your support and we salute you for changing lives!



#70680



#89629



Thanks to friend of RMHC-Hawaii **Chrissy Schechter**, who is the Publisher and editor-in-chief of *Kauai Family Magazine*, the Henrys, a family staying at the Judd Hillside House from Kailua-Kona, got to enjoy the excitement of Sesame Street Live!



Your wheels can help too!

When you donate a vehicle to RMHC-HI, you are helping to keep families together and close to their child in difficult times.

1. Contact us at (855) 227-7435 or go to onecarhelpsrhmc.com
2. At no cost to you, your vehicle is towed by our vendor (I.A.A.) to the nearest auction location
3. I.A.A. sends you a receipt. Your donation may qualify for a tax deduction
4. The proceeds from your donation make a huge impact on a family in need



Your trucks, motorcycles, boats and RVs can also make a difference for so many families!



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When you shop at smile.amazon.com, you'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of your eligible purchases to RMHC-HI.

Log in to your Amazon account at smile.amazon.com. At the top left corner, search for and select "Ronald McDonald House Charities of Hawaii" and start shopping!



Ronald McDonald House Charities® of Hawaii

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Our House is more than a cozy place to sleep – It’s a Home Away From Home

Sign Up to Be a Family Support Services Program Volunteer!



Volunteer Spotlight



We are recruiting volunteers for our Family Support Services Program! Come be the first friendly face to welcome and assist those visiting or staying at Hawaii’s Ronald McDonald Houses. Our volunteers will serve as House ambassadors, and help provide a supportive environment for families who call the Ronald House “home”. Because the caring touch is most often the healing touch.

COMMITMENT

- ♥ Daily Shifts available: 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- ♥ Minimum two shifts per month
- ♥ Minimum six month commitment

RESPONSIBILITIES

- ♥ Staff reception and welcome desks
- ♥ Provide House tours to families and visitors
- ♥ Like to cook or bake? Be a Snack Attack Program volunteer, and you can help make lunch items, snacks and sweet treats for our families to enjoy.
- ♥ “Recipes from the Heart”- Help us collect family recipes and stories for the upcoming RMHC Hawaii cookbook!

- ♥ Home For the Holidays - Plan an Easter egg hunt, prepare Mother’s Day bouquets, fill Halloween buckets, decorate Christmas trees - help make holidays special for families.
- ♥ Have a special skill or talent? Whether you’re crafty, artsy, or have another unique skill, we can plan activities and arrange it to take place during your shift.
- ♥ Help us gather information and resources for the families.

SKILLS

- ♥ Friendly, positive attitude
 - ♥ Compassionate
 - ♥ Reliable and consistent
 - ♥ Responsible
 - ♥ Understand the need for confidentiality
- We’re excited to meet you and work with you! Email Volunteer Services Manager Lindsey Tolentino at lindsey@rmhchawaii.org or call 973-5683 ext. 241 to learn more!