



Aloha

From Our House to Yours

www.RonaldHouseHawaii.org

Newsletter of Ronald McDonald House Charities® of Hawaii

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So much love

Kim and Jim Seah moved to Kauai from the Boston area about three years ago, mainly to back off from their intense work schedules and take the time to bond with their two children. Kim said she felt that “it was the phase of my kids’ lives when we really wanted to take some time off to connect with them; spend time with them; and have them kind of anchored in our values.”

Their children, Paul, now 11, and Grace, now 8, seemed to thrive, and Grace became active in Taekwondo, gymnastics, horseback riding, tennis, and swimming. But she was always having little sports injuries. “We noticed that it took longer than it should have for her to recover from them,” recalled Kim.

They didn’t realize it then, but Grace was coming down with a condition known as “Pain Syndrome”.

Pain Syndrome is a fairly rare condition with fewer than 200,000 cases each year



Kim and Grace. The eight year old’s bright smile belies what she has been through and the pain that regularly wracks her body.

techniques like meditation, breathing, calming and distraction. Mostly distraction. At her age it means keeping her occupied with play, even if she is sitting in a wheel chair. Physical therapy, and behavioral therapy are teaching her how to ignore the pain or at least manage it.

“We were able to stay at the hospital for a week, where she could safely walk with assistance, and we had the crutches and walker,” Kim related. After that, the team at Kapiolani wanted her be here on Oahu on an outpatient basis for an indefinite period of time, until they were sure that it was safe for her to go back to Kauai. “That’s when Ronald McDonald House

came into play. A hotel would have been infinitely harder.”

“Home” soon became the Ronald McDonald House. “It has a great play room for the kids and playing was Grace’s therapy - her distraction,” Kim said.

“One day, we were out giving Grace a chance to interact with the world and walk a little, when she kind of hit the wall and she said she just wanted to go home. By then, ‘home’ meant the Ronald McDonald House. I had to struggle getting her in the car and getting her home, but as soon as she walked in here, she completely relaxed, she ate a little, played a little and, comforted by the home-like environment, she was able to go to her room and watch her iPad before falling asleep. And that was really important.”

in the U.S. Treatment can help, but this condition can't be cured.

It’s not easy to diagnose, and doctors literally had to check things off the list of possible causes, one by one. An incredibly frustrating period ensued during which Grace would be wracked with pain and unable to even walk, yet she had to undergo test after test.

“One way or another when you are going through this type of situation there are tremendous emotional things going on and it is emotionally and physically exhausting,” Kim admitted. “It’s just agonizing to have your child go to bed in horrible pain and wake up in horrible pain.”

Grace may be facing a life-long challenge, but her family’s love and devotion are helping to get her through. Kim said that they now must “get her up and going.” She is learning certain

Wish List

Gift Cards

(especially Uber)

Movie Passes

Household Items

Garbage bags (yard & kitchen)

Ziplock bags

Paper Towels

Food Items

Family-style frozen meals

Frozen pizza

Individually wrapped snacks

Miscellaneous

Forever postage stamps

Office supplies

Cosmetic bags

Message from our President



Jerri Chong

Aloha,
It's summer, and families everywhere are finding ways to spend time together, whether it's a vacation, staycation, an exciting adventure or

summer holiday gatherings. All will be looking forward to family time together, new experiences, and building lasting memories.

But here at the Ronald McDonald House, we will be welcoming about a hundred families whose summer plans have taken a very different turn from what they expected. All will be traveling, but they'll be coming to Oahu many by air ambulance with a seriously ill or injured child needing life-saving medical care an entire ocean away from family, friends, and everything familiar.

Cancer and other serious diseases never take holidays or summers off, so you will always find families staying at our Ronald McDonald House whether it's Easter, Mother's Day, a child's birthday, the fourth of July even Christmas.

That's why, one of the first things you see when entering our Judd Hillside House, is our perpetual holiday tree standing on the landing and facing the front door, welcoming each family every day when they come "home." This special tree is decorated and celebrated every single day of the year. Because, for our Ronald McDonald House families, every day is a gift, and a reason to celebrate.

This perpetual tree, our "Family Tree", has stood here as long as I can remember, almost two decades. Each month, families and volunteers make sure the tree is beautifully decorated to celebrate the month's holiday or special occasion. Hearts and flowers on Valentine's Day, bunnies and colorful paper eggs at Easter, four leaf clovers and leprechauns on St. Patrick's Day, and an abundance of celebratory streamers, pumpkins, goblins and gobblers, and yuletide decorations for every holiday throughout the year.

Our Family Tree offers every guest a warm welcome each time they walk through the door. But it's what the tree represents not just a seasonal offering, but an endless measure of hope, a compassionate spirit, and loving embrace that makes each person

an extended member of the Ronald McDonald House ohana.

On your next visit to the House That Love Built, be sure to take a minute and write a message of support, offer words of encouragement, or maybe even share a heartfelt holiday wish at our perpetual tree, the RMHC Family Tree.



Our Family Tree, adorned for Mother's Day.

"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

So Much Love continued from page 1

"Ronald McDonald House was a critical step for us," she continued. "We would have been stranded without their help, and I don't know what I would have done."

Grace started feeling better, and it became time for the next part of their challenge. "There is a pain syndrome clinic at Boston Children's that specializes in this," Kim explained. "And they are recommending that we continue in that environment, so we will be going back to Boston soon."

Kim feels that the move is doubly right for them right now. "We realized that we were also fast approaching the time when our parents will need us."

Bathed in her family's love, Grace may just have what she needs to be able to accept her challenges and make the adjustments necessary for her to live a long, fulfilling life.



Heroes Of The Heart

Hula Grill Waikiki, at the Outrigger Waikiki Beach Resort, is an incredible community partner of Hawaii's

Ronald McDonald Houses. For four years and counting, the restaurant has been sponsoring once-a-month dinners for the families. They also have provided dinner on holidays like Christmas Day and New Year's Eve!

Hula Grill Waikiki's generosity even extends to our major fundraising events too, donating to our annual Golf Tournament and Gala for years. Sponsoring more than 200 dinners and continuing to help us in many ways, we are truly grateful for our Heroes of The Heart, Hula Grill Waikiki.



Kidz For A Cause breaks its fundraising record – for us!!

It was a monumental effort by over 200 kidz across Oahu and beyond. **The Kidz For A Cause (KFAC) 2017-2018 campaign.**

Led by KFAC founder and Punahou senior Nicki Lee, the nearly year-long campaign gave student-aged youngsters the opportunity to follow their own passions to create, organize and execute a FUNraiser benefiting Ronald McDonald House Charities of Hawaii (RMHC Hawaii).

On Sunday, April 22, the kidz were celebrated and honored at the Finale Candyland Party at Pomaikai Ballrooms. Through their hard work, dedication and determination, KFAC raised more than \$350,000 for RMHC Hawaii!

It was a fun-filled afternoon and a pleasure to see so many wonderful and bright keiki being recognized for the FUNraisers they produced and community service hours completed. Top performers were awarded for their outstanding achievements.

Outstanding Kid Award – Juliette Cramer, Sacred Hearts Academy, 7th Grade
Given to the individual that exemplified what it means to be a Kid For A Cause.

Hero Award – Risa Hata, Punahou School, Junior; Juliette Cramer, Sacred Hearts Academy, 7th Grade; Nina Gaines, Punahou School, Senior
Given to the top three FUNraisers who raised significant funds for RMHC Hawaii. They raised a staggering \$110,000 through their initiatives!

Leadership Award – Brie Kodama, Punahou School, Sophomore; Grace Kennedy, St. Anthony School, 8th Grade; Alexis and Erika Lavoie, Mid-Pacific Institute, 7th Grade
Given to the top three kids that showed the most leadership qualities throughout the campaign. Their three events collectively attracted 1,500 people!

Congratulations and a big mahalo to Kidz For A Cause and everyone who supported the many FUNraisers.



DISH FOR A CAUSE



SOCCER CLINIC



PADDLING EVENT



ART EXHIBITION

Mark your calendars, get your team together, and get ready for the 2018 RMHC Hawaii Golf Classic on Wednesday, July 18 at Hawaii Prince Golf Club!



Hurry! Be a part of this year's Golf Classic.

Play • Volunteer • Donate Prizes • Sponsor a Hole

Just call us at 973-5683 x239

Volunteers are our treasure

RMHC Hawaii volunteers contributed more than 11,500 hours to our mission in the past year! That was something to really celebrate at our annual Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon at the Willows Restaurant on May 18.

This annual event allows us to honor our volunteers' hard work with on food and entertainment (this year by the talented Derrick Lee), as well as reflect on their service. Volunteers were all presented with a certificate acknowledging their dedication to our mission.

Our theme revolved around the color green: the color of life, growth and energy. Our volunteers are truly dedicated to the lives of those families who stay with us; they help to grow our mission in supportive, creative ways; and are the energy behind our daily efforts and fundraising events. Each person makes a significant difference with all that they do; we truly

value the time, gifts and talent each volunteer chooses to share with us.

An annual event cannot convey all of the gratitude we have for our volunteers; however, nearly every day a guest staying at the House thanks a volunteer for giving of themselves. That means a lot to everybody. Mahalo to our thriving volunteer ohana for your ongoing support and generosity!

*It's true that
volunteers don't
get paid. But not
because they're
worthless.
It's because
they're priceless.*

Become a Ronald McDonald House volunteer. Just call 973-5683. Check out the volunteering information at ronaldhousehawaii.org.



A trip like no other

Dustin Sproat is a product manager in the software industry and his wife Jessica is a speech pathologist for young children under the age of four. They're adventurous and love to travel, especially to warm destinations during winter when it's 20 to 30 degrees at home in Vancouver, British Columbia.

The couple embarked on a November journey to the Big Island, not knowing that they'd be spending much more time in the islands than they ever imagined.

It was during the couple's vacation that Jessica, just 23 weeks pregnant, began early labor. "I never thought that this would happen," said Jessica.

"We called my obstetrician in Canada and immediately went to Kona Community Hospital."

Doctors there did one test and advised the couple that they'd be medevac'd to Kapiolani Medical Center. "We couldn't put into words what was happening," said Dustin. "Coming from Canada, the idea of taking an air ambulance is a big deal."

On November 28, Jessica was admitted to Kapiolani's antepartum unit. Doctors wanted to delay her baby's arrival for as long as possible to improve the outcome.

"Some days I woke up having contractions, thinking, this is the day," said Jessica. "I knew that any day something could happen and things could change drastically."

They spent many days on the lanai at the hospital talking and playing cards.

Christmas and New Year's passed, and then, after seven weeks in the hospital and about 31 weeks pregnant, Jessica gave birth to baby Kai on January 19.

Doctors detected that Kai had critical respiratory issues, and he was placed in the NICU, intubated, and put on life-support.

Just two days after giving birth, Jessica and Dustin checked into the Ronald McDonald House.

"During the first week, Kai showed rapid improvement, almost borderline miraculous recovery," said Jessica.

"Doctors and nurses were surprised."

However, Kai went through many ups and downs when doctors tried to get him to breathe on his own. His lungs were immature, but over time Kai maintained his own temperature and his condition was upgraded.

"The story for us was scary at the beginning, but each day there was more optimism, and it started to feel like we were headed toward the best case scenario eventually going home with a healthy baby," said Dustin.

"Staying at the House was such a blessing," added Jessica. "It's so serene. We didn't have to worry about 'real life.' The convenience of meals and transportation is

wonderful and it's so close that we could walk to the hospital. Everyone understands each other, and if you need someone to talk to, the other families are a great support system."

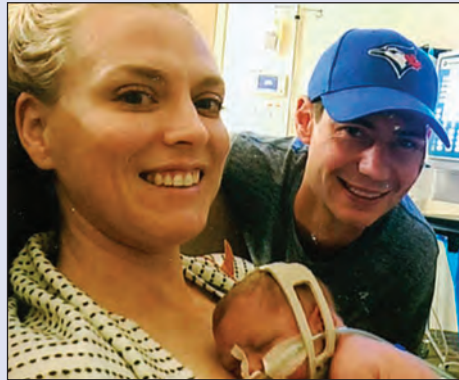
Dustin noted that they missed out on child classes and bonding with other parents back home, but here "we've made many friends that will be our ohana for years to come."

Dustin and Jessica were familiar with the Ronald McDonald House from prior experiences. Dustin, through his charity, Hockey Players for Kids, and Jessica, from working at children's hospitals.

Jessica noted that accessing services instead of being the one providing services gave her a whole new perspective.

"While we couldn't bring our baby home from the hospital at night, that feeling of staying at the House is better than any hotel," said Jessica. "We appreciate and thank the donors, volunteers and staff. It's been a difficult time and the House has really been there for us."

Note: About a month after being interviewed for this story, and nearly five months after arriving on their vacation, Dustin and Jessica departed for home with Kai, and are now beginning a new, joyous chapter in their lives.



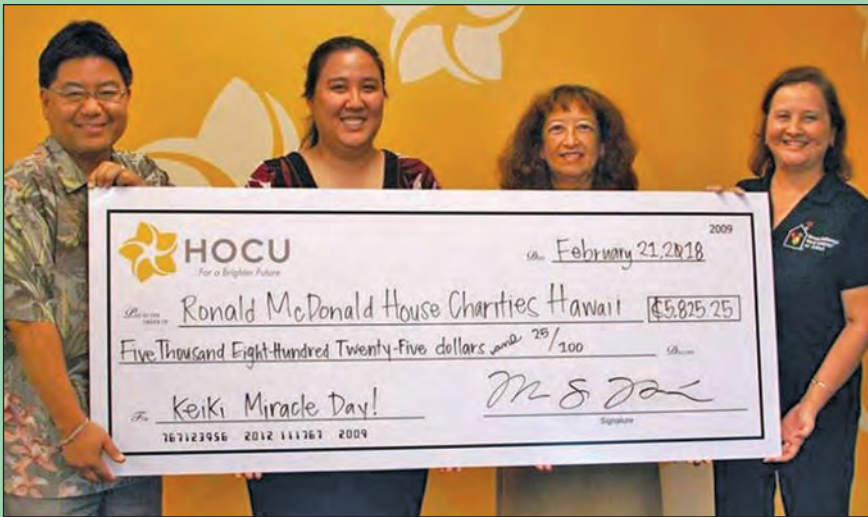
The Sproats – Jessica, Dustin and Kai



Kai early, but raring to go!



Ways The Community Supports Us Mahalo!



As part of its on-going commitment to support charitable organizations that serve Keiki in the community, **HOCU** (Honolulu Federal Credit Union) representatives Ross Inouye, Kai Rees, and Cathy Todd presented RMHC-Hawaii's Candace Asam-Lopez with a check for \$5,825.25 raised from its 2nd Annual Keiki Miracle Day (KMD) and Christmas Bazaar. "Ronald McDonald House Charities of Hawaii has provided an invaluable service to families of children with serious illnesses for more than 30 years," said Mark Munemitsu, HOCU president and CEO. "HOCU is proud to support the efforts of RMHC as they seek to deliver comfort at the most stressful times for these parents."



Sarah Kirimitsu (left) and Madison Abe of **Hawaii Baptist Academy** provided lunch for the families and staff. They were accompanied by their parents and the meal featured teriyaki beef strips for sandwiches or with rice, along with potato chips and macaroni salad.

Students from HBA have been a regular feature of the volunteer calendar for a very long time.



Students and faculty advisors from **Kanto Gakuin University** in Yokohama, Japan visited the Judd Hillside House twice while they were in Hawaii. The enthusiastic group prepared a delicious chicken curry lunch for the families - then gave the House a deep cleaning!



Karl Fujii, representing the **Kaizen Baseball Tournament**, presented Jerri with a check for \$1,500. The proceeds came from 7 and 8 year olds learning about teamwork, competition, sportsmanship, and philanthropy.

Ways The Community Supports Us Mahalo!

Become a Legacy Donor

With just a little planning and a big heart, you can give comfort and hope to sick children and their families for many years to come.

Join our Caring Hearts Legacy Society by including RMHC-HI in your will or estate plans. Your gift can offer benefits for you and support future generations of Ronald McDonald House Families.

Ways to Give

- Charitable bequests via your will or living trust
- Beneficiary designations through your retirement plan or life insurance
- Memorial or tribute gifts in honor of a loved one
- Appreciated stocks and securities

ATTENTION: If you are at least 70 1/2 years old and want to save on your taxes, the I.R.S. allows you to make a tax-free gift of up to \$100,000 directly from your I.R.A. to a non-profit or non-profits of your choice. For more information on how to take advantage of this tax regulation, call Lisa at (808) 973-5683 ext. 243. A charitable distribution from your IRA can be used to satisfy your minimum distribution requirement.

Your change changes everything!

McDonald's 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 each year.



McFun-Raiser Coupon Books



Every day, more and more schools, teams and clubs are discovering the fundraising power of the RMHC-HI McFun-Raiser Coupon Book Program.



It's really simple and it really works! McDonald Restaurants of Hawaii donates menu items, which is really the key to this program. RMHC-HI packages these menu items in a handy coupon book, which it sells to organizations like those described above for \$3 each. The group then sells them for \$5, making a \$2 profit on each coupon book sold. Since the coupons in the book are valued at approximately \$25, everybody is a winner!

Each McFun-Raiser booklet contains coupons for:

McDonald's Food Items

- 1 FREE HAMBURGER
- 1 FREE small order of FRENCH FRIES
- 1 FREE ICE-CREAM CONE
- 1 FREE HASH BROWN
- 1 Buy any LARGE SANDWICH, & get 1 FREE
- 1 Buy any BREAKFAST SANDWICH, & get 1 FREE

Honolulu Theatre for Youth - One free \$10 children's admission with purchase of an adult ticket.

Some restrictions apply on coupons.

Check out more information about McFun-Raiser on the RMHC-HI website at www.ronaldhousehawaii.org, or call RMHC-HI at 973-5683 ext. 244.

Mighty, Happy to help the kids

Don't forget! For every Happy Meal and Mighty Kids Meal sold throughout 2018, our friends at McDonald's 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 by participating in special promotions like this one and by dropping your change into the handy collection boxes near cash registers!



Ronald McDonald House Charities® of Hawaii

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Give Hope All Year Long!

Join a valued group of supporters who have generously decided on easy and convenient *monthly* gifts to RMHC-HI.

Convenience Donations are automatically made monthly, saving you time, money and postage.

Peace of Mind You'll never have to look back to see when you last gave. You'll be sent a receipt of donation at the end of the year by mail or e-mail.

Flexibility You can increase, decrease or cancel your contributions at any time simply by calling (808) 973-5683, ext. 244.

Satisfaction Enjoy knowing that your support is helping to reduce administrative costs and that your gift is a full investment in bringing comfort, care and hope to families with seriously ill children.

Simplify your life by signing up today. Just click the "Donate Now" button on our website's home page (www.RonaldHouseHawaii.org) or call (808) 892-1902.



Hope is often the best medicine of all.