



Aloha

From Our House to Yours

www.RonaldHouseHawaii.org

Newsletter of Ronald McDonald House Charities® Hawaii

Issue 3, September 2020

A Home Away from Home and “Grandma” Helped the James Family Stay Close

Life on the Big Island was good for Saya and Jeremy James. Their daughter, Hisako, was 13-months-old and Saya was expecting their second child.

Hisako had been born at home, and Saya remembered the warmth and love that followed when she held her baby, with her husband nearby. She imagined holding her second newborn in her arms in just a few months and being enveloped in the same post-partum glow.

But, tragically, her path took a different course. Hope and elation turned to worry and fear when—at just 28 weeks pregnant—her water broke, jeopardizing the life of her unborn child. She immediately went to the hospital in Hilo and, within hours, was medevaced to Oahu, and rushed by ambulance to Kapiolani Medical Center for Women and Children.

Saya realized the birth of her second child would be nowhere near what she had experienced with her first. She was hospitalized on another island while Jeremy was in Hilo, working and trying to take care of Hisako.

Saya and Jeremy didn’t know what to do. How could they care for Hisako? How could they explain to their baby girl what was happening to her mother, why she had gone away?

They called Saya’s mother, “Grandma Misa,” in Japan. Grandma Misa travelled all the way from Kamakura to help her son-in-law take care of her

granddaughter while he continued his job as a diesel mechanic.

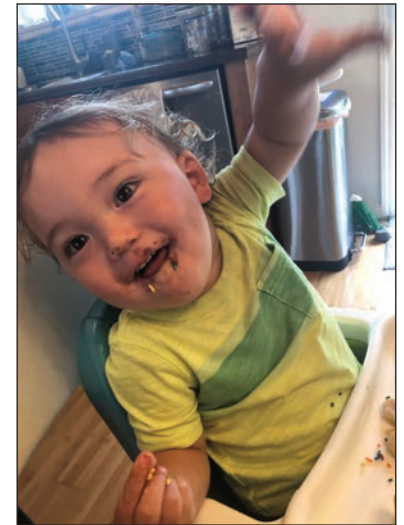
But Saya couldn’t leave the hospital and she was all alone, frightened and frantic. Jeremy, Grandma Misa, and Hisako flew to Oahu to be by Saya. Grandma Misa and Hisako checked into a nearby hotel on Oahu, while Jeremy stayed by his wife’s side at the hospital. He arrived just in time for the birth of their son—who weighed only 4 pounds and 2 ounces at the time of his delivery. Together they cradled their newborn before he was taken to the

Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), where he needed to stay for at least a month.

After Jeremy left, Saya knew this birth was 180 degrees different from



Saya James holds Malu



Malu enjoying his food

the birth of her daughter at home. In a hospital, on a neighbor island, with no baby in her arms and no husband at her side, she fell into a deep depression—exhausted physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

Then, a social worker recommended the Ronald McDonald House. Saya had heard good things about the House from a friend who had stayed there 10 years earlier. Saya and her mother and daughter could stay there while her newborn, Malu, was in NICU. She could visit him daily and bond with her son. Her husband could also visit and the family could stay together at the House on weekends.

Saya was so relieved and, when she held tiny Malu in her arms, she knew her baby was going to make it! She knew her whole family would be alright.

While Saya stayed in the hospital to recuperate, Grandma Misa and Hisako moved into the Ronald McDonald House, just a shuttle ride away from the



Sister Hisako with Malu near the beach

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Message from our President



Jerri Chong

Aloha,

Since our House opening 33 years ago, Ronald McDonald House Charities Hawaii (RMHC) has provided comfort, care, and support to children and families throughout the Pacific Region.

Our commitment is to provide a home-away-from-home for families of seriously ill keiki needing medical care on Oahu.

Our hope is to help children and their families heal by enabling them to stay together and share hope, courage, and joy.

Thanks to our community and supporters like you...we are still here. As with most businesses and organizations, we've had to adjust and reprioritize to try to fill funding gaps

due to the far-reaching economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. RMHC Hawaii's first priority is the health and safety of our families, volunteers, and staff, so we cancelled fundraisers and temporarily suspended volunteer programs. What we have NOT suspended are our services to families with seriously ill children. Your gifts help us provide them with a place to stay, transportation to and from hospitals for medical treatment, food, and other goods so crucial to their survival and healing.

With your support, we've also been able to continue some of our most important projects to further our mission. One of those is building our new Family Recreation Center, which provides gathering places to fulfill our commitment and to share hope. With the community's help and donor support, it will include a gaming area,

computer spaces, tree house, and library so each family member can thrive while being near loved ones.

In our effort to raise funds crucial to family services and to maintain and update our Houses, we've re-imagined our popular Annual Golf Classic by holding two virtual golf tournaments, one on the driving range using new technology and the other in-person, on the course. Read about them in this latest newsletter.

RMHC Hawaii relies on over 100 volunteers and thousands of donors, just like you, to help deliver our mission each year. But this year, we are relying even more on your support. Our families need you more than ever.

Sincerely,

Jerri Chong, RMHC Hawaii President

"Aloha From Our House to Yours," the newsletter of Ronald McDonald House Charities Hawaii (RMHC-Hawaii), is published three times a year.

James Family *continued from page 1*

hospital, in Manoa. Hisako immediately found joy and distractions with all the toys in the children's playroom.

"The house was beautiful," Saya recalls, remembering when she first walked into the Ronald McDonald House. "Homey" is how she describes the ambience.

"Having a kitchen and an abundance of food—often cooked by volunteers—was so wonderful. And there were many others there going through similar situations, which was very comforting because they understood how we felt every day without saying

words. Everyone was very kind to each other. I can't imagine how it would have been to have spent those four weeks on Oahu without the Ronald McDonald House."



Turning two-years-old in September, Malu was recently nicknamed "HD" (High Density Boy) after a "healthy" check-up. He loves eating, playing in the water, and feeding the chickens, his mother says.

Canned Goods
Frozen Dinners
Clear Shower Curtain Liners
Paper Towels

Your Gifts Helped Turn a Shaky Start into a First Birthday



Axyl during “Kangaroo Care”

There was so much to be grateful for on Thanksgiving Day for Dawn and Michael Sidman. They were expecting their first child, and their family was coming to their home for dinner that night.

Dawn was in the kitchen preparing the Thanksgiving meal, counting her blessings and looking forward to the family gathering, when she had a funny feeling. In moments, everything changed.

Just six months pregnant, and with no warning, her water broke—12 weeks early. She called the hospital, then her husband, who worked as an operator at a biodiesel fuel plant. It took Michael 25 minutes to rush home so they could be medevaced to Oahu just one hour later.

Strapped onto the gurney with her husband by her side during air transport, Dawn recalls worrying about Thanksgiving dinner and being disappointed that they wouldn’t be celebrating with the family at home. Then, the shattering realization and worry about their unborn baby hit her. Would he be okay? Would he have all of his limbs? Would he be able to play like other children?

Dawn gave birth a week later, at Kapiolani Medical Center for Women and Children. Axyl was a micro preemie, just 2 pounds and 9 ounces.

His respiratory system was underdeveloped and he had a PDA

(hole in the heart), Pulmonary Hypertension, and low blood sugar levels. He needed respiratory assistance.

For Dawn, it seemed like weeks until she could hold her baby. The first time she saw him she was overwhelmed. It took five nurses to bring him to her from the incubator because of all the tubes keeping him alive and helping him breathe. Finally, she could hold him for “Kangaroo Care.” She would be able to hold him next to her heart.

Axyl would need to stay in the NICU for three months. With no place to stay on Oahu, Dawn was referred to Hawaii’s Ronald McDonald House. She visited Axyl at the hospital every



Dawn, Axyl, and Michael Sidman

day, from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Michael joined her on weekends, staying at the House and visiting Axyl in the hospital.

“We are so grateful and blessed to have stayed at the Ronald McDonald House...and for them giving us a place to rest our heads, providing us with meals and daily rides to the hospital, and to and from the airport when needed. We could not have gotten through the three months without their assistance.”

By the time the family returned to the Big Island, the hole in Axyl’s heart



Axyl Helping Dad

had healed as had his other conditions. He was sent home with an oxygen tank and a breathing tube. Dawn said they expected to have more respiratory issues, but she’s happy they were wrong.

Axyl turns two-years-old this November. At 18-months-old, he reached the 60th percentile for height, weight, and head circumference in comparison to full-term babies. He has not had any respiratory issues since being home.

“He is a healthy, ‘rascal kid’ who loves the ocean and water and being outdoors,” Dawn says.

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The House That Love Built Has a New Addition

We are so happy for your support of our House and mission to care for seriously ill children and their families. Our Family Recreation Center is getting closer to completion and to being a multi-purpose gathering space for families in need of respite. A place where families can share hope and compassion, and be there for each other so they can heal and move forward.

Scientific studies have shown that people heal faster and better when they feel loved and supported by family members and friends or others with whom they can relate. The new Center will enable us to better provide a home-away-from-home for every member of the family—whether a teenager doing distance learning on a computer or a mom relaxing with her child in the reading loft. This furthers our goal of keeping families together during some of the most critical times in their lives.

A “Tree of Hope” in the middle of the room will be a symbol of caring and love representing community and corporate donors who have adopted this project. Their names will be engraved on perpetual plaques and added to the tree trunk. With your help, we can complete the interior design of this room, bringing to fruition a multi-purpose, family gathering place in the House that Love Built. For more information on the “Tree of Hope” or to inquire about being a donor, please email info@rmhchawaii.org.



Virtual Giving Opportunities

For more info and ways to help, go to our website www.RonaldHouseHawaii.org

Every day, families face the emotional and economic toll of having a child in the hospital. Since 1987, with your support, we've been providing families with a place to stay and services to keep them close to each other during these critical times. Whether a family needs a bed tonight, tomorrow, or until their child heals, we plan to be there to offer compassion and the services they need so they can focus on just one thing: the health of their child.

The health and safety of all is crucial during these times of social distancing and adjusting to necessary protocols to combat COVID-19. These non-contact virtual ways of providing support will help our families tremendously.

FOODLAND GIVE ALOHA PROGRAM

From September 1-30, donations to RMHC Hawaii, which is participating in the Give Aloha program, will be accepted at all Foodland, Sack N Save, and Foodland Farms stores statewide.

Here's how: To donate, next time you shop at any of the Foodland stores listed above, use your Maika'i Card when you check out and give the cashier our number **77306**. You can also make a donation when you place an online grocery order for curbside pickup or delivery at <https://shop.foodland.com/>. Foodland and the Western Union Foundation will match each donation up to a total of at least \$300,000 for all participating organizations combined.



MAKE A DIRECT CASH DONATION

Here's how: Make a direct cash donation using the enclosed envelope to RMHC Hawaii or use the donate button on our website www.RonaldHouseHawaii.org.



GIFT CARDS OR E-GIFT CARDS

Purchase gift cards from any retailer or grocer such as: Costco, Sam's Club, WalMart, Target, Longs, Walgreens.

Here's how: Purchase them through the store's website and email to info@rmhchawaii.org. If donating gift cards (not e-gift cards), mail to P.O. Box 61777, Honolulu, HI 96839-1777.

AMAZON SMILE

Sign up with Amazon Smile.

Here's how: Designate Ronald McDonald House Charities Hawaii as your charity of choice. We will receive a portion from every qualifying item purchased.



FOOD AND MEAL DONATIONS

Provide a pre-made, frozen, or donated meal or fresh produce box.

Here's how: Contact Kiree Higa at Kiree@rmhchawaii.org to schedule a "no-contact" meal drop off: catered, frozen, pre-made, or restaurant sponsored meal. Restaurant gift card/e-cards, Instacart delivery, Safeway grocery delivery, and meal delivery gift card/e-cards (Uber Eats, Grub Hub, Door Dash, Bite Squad) also help us feed our families.



McFun-RAISER PROGRAM

A fun and easy way to raise money for your organization and also for Ronald McDonald House Charities Hawaii

Raise money for your school or organization by purchasing McFun-Raiser coupon booklets from Ronald McDonald House Charities Hawaii (RMHC Hawaii) for just \$3.00 each. They retail to the community for \$5.00 each, earning your organization \$2.00 for each booklet sold. McDonald's coupons are redeemable at all participating McDonald's Restaurants in Hawaii.

Here's how: To view coupons and to order, visit www.ronaldhousehawaii.org/fundraising.php and complete the McFun-Raising Purchase Agreement or contact Leah Funtanilla at 808-892-1907, or email leah@rmhchawaii.org. The required minimum for initial orders is 50 booklets; valid through December 31, 2021.



Golf Tournament - TOPTRACER at Bayview

We held our first-ever VIRTUAL Golf Tournament July 1 through July 31—surpassing our goal of \$10,000. Participants played at Bayview Golf Course driving range using their new TOPTRACER technology to track participants' swings and game progress.

Congratulations to our winners: **Rylen Yamamoto** (Grand Prize Winner), **Malia Gibson, Dale Miyashiro**, and our Lucky Drawing Winner for "Rocking their red for Ronald"—**Taylor Sugimoto**. Mahalo to everyone who came out to take a swing FORE our keiki during the month of July!



RMHC Hawaii Virtual Golf provides a chance to play with a purpose while having fun and social distancing.

Virtual Golf - In Person...On the Course

You still have time to play! We've extended our popular "Virtual" In-Person...On the Course Golf Classic until October 30 in response to golf course closures due to COVID-19.

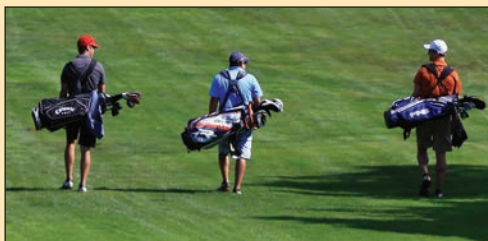
Each year, our Annual Golf Classic, in which nearly 200 golfers participate, is one of our biggest fundraisers! This re-imagined virtual tournament is a great way for golfers to have fun, social distance, and help raise funds crucial to our House and mission of providing a home-away-from-home for seriously ill children and their families.

The virtual tournament gives participants a chance to golf with a purpose while competing for prizes and best scores with others who support our House. Individual

players can choose the course, day, and tee times anywhere in Hawaii—even on the Neighbor Islands; sponsored players can swing FORE our families at the Hawaii Prince Golf Course. Virtual means, after you register, you simply take photos of the 18-hole fantasy scratch card and course score card and send them to us. We'll do the rest "virtually."

Join RMHC Hawaii's RMHC2020 Golf Facebook Group to watch tournament progress and post photos.

**To register, go to our website
www.RonaldHouseHawaii.org**



#Mahalo Supporters & Business Partners

We want to thank all of you who are donating services and goods as our House re-opens to new families following the temporary suspension of programs & events due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.



Much needed Tupperware was donated by the Fuchigami ohana and Diane Okubo.



Hawaiian Made Eggs (Ka Lei Island Fresh Eggs) delivers dozens of eggs to our House each week.



Honpa Hongwanji Girl Scout Junior Troop made us positivity boxes and face masks.



Volunteer Tom Moody donated Sunday dinner for our families. Tom helps to keep our shuttle running, driving families to local hospitals.



Island Slipper Factory donated masks for keiki staying at our House.



Mary delivers hand-made quilts throughout the year, which we include in welcome bags for every family that stays with us.

Check out our Facebook photo album at www.facebook.com/RonaldHouseHawaii



Round-Up for RMHC® to benefit Hawaii families

Next time you visit a McDonald's restaurant, please consider giving a small donation right when you order by rounding up your total to the nearest dollar.

Here's how you can donate:

At Counter and Drive Thru: Let a Crew Member know you would like to "Round-Up" when you place your order. Cash donations are also accepted in the RMHC Donation Boxes.

Workplace Giving Changes Lives

Workplace giving programs provide essential support for RMHC Hawaii families, and many donors find it an easy and convenient way to make their annual tax-deductible donations and give to the causes they truly care about.

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 McDonald House.

If **Aloha United Way** is your option for workplace giving, choose **My Community Investment** and direct your gift of \$48 or more per year to help keep families together during a medical crisis.

Many companies encourage employee giving programs such as **matching gifts, payroll deductions, annual giving campaigns, holiday drives and volunteerism**. Become a House Partner by selecting an activity, whether individual or company-wide, to provide hope and hospitality for families in need.



Aloha United Way

#70680



#89629



ONLINE GALA WISH LIST

Watch for more about our RE-IMAGINED GALA...going *VIRTUAL* this fall

We're looking for new or unused items, including:

- Designer clothing and accessories (local & international brands)
- Jewelry
- Art (paintings, ceramics, glass)
- Collector Items
- Lifestyle, Health & Beauty Products
- Wine/Liquor
- Gift cards

Auction items are not limited to this list and are needed by **November 5**. For more information/questions or to schedule a non-contact delivery or pick-up, please contact Tina Scotty at 808-892-1906 or gala@rmhc-hawaii.org.

Support your favorite restaurant or retailer.