



Aloha

From Our House to Yours

www.RonaldHouseHawaii.org

Newsletter of Ronald McDonald House Charities® Hawaii

Issue 3, September 2021

A Serendipitous Turn of Events Fosters a Good Outcome and Fuels New Motivation

Serendipity and strangers came to the rescue when Lavinia (Lavi) had the surprise of her life on an airplane—a baby boy.

She and her extended family were en route from Provo, Utah to Honolulu, Hawaii for a vacation when her cramps turned out to be contractions. Her water broke and she felt “unbelievable” pressure, she said.

Three nurses from Utah and a doctor from Honolulu came to her aid. They comforted her and helped her successfully deliver her newborn. Their compassion and caring, along with the love of her family, helped Lavi give birth to a 3 lb., 1 oz. boy.

Passengers on the plane cheered when the newborn cried—indicating healthy lungs—a moment that would go viral on social media, starting on TikTok.

“The love and support from family and fellow passengers was awesome,” Lavi said.

Following the flight, she was transported by ambulance to Kapiolani Medical Center. There, she would learn that her baby needed to stay in NICU (Neonatal Intensive Care Unit) until he reached a normal birth weight (closer to 7 lbs.).

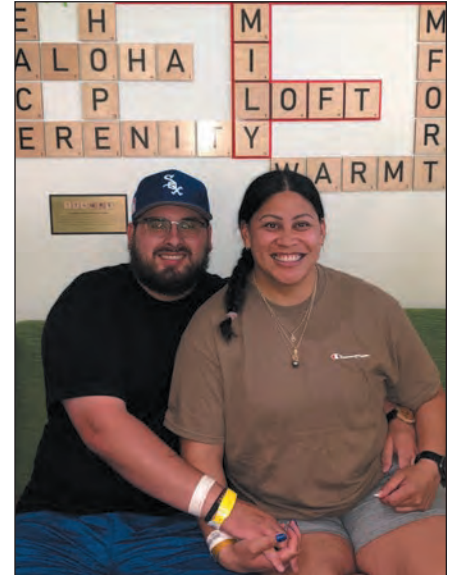
The turn of events prompted Baby’s father, Ethan, to book a flight to Honolulu from Utah, where he had stayed behind to work. He had heard about his child’s birth through social media and a call from Lavi.

At the hospital, a social worker suggested that Lavi and Ethan stay at Ronald McDonald House Hawaii, where they could be together and have transportation to and from the hospital to visit their baby.

“The Ronald McDonald House is amazing, far exceeding our expectations,” Ethan said. His mother, who flew over to Honolulu with him, stayed at the House for a few days so she could see the baby, who they had named Raymond.

“The House is a huge blessing for us and others who don’t live on Oahu,” Lavi said.

Ethan agreed, saying, “It’s comforting getting to know other families at the House and hearing their stories. On the weekends, the staff and house managers are always available to talk story and make sure everything is okay.”



Ethan and Lavi in loft in Judd Hillside Family Recreation Center.

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How You Helped Savannah-Lei Kale’a



“When I said I was planning to keep on working, my bosses told me to go to the hospital immediately.”

Chanel was telling the story about how her daughter, Savannah-Lei Kale’a, was born prematurely. Chanel had cramping and didn’t feel well. Doctors at the OB/GYN office where she was a receptionist tested the heart rate of her unborn baby. Although it was good, doctors advised her to get further tests at the medical center because she was having premature contractions and other symptoms of full-term labor.

The Hilo Medical Center visit revealed that she was already in labor, at just 24 weeks. She had 15 minutes to prepare for a flight to Oahu, where she would be admitted at Kapiolani Medical Center for specialized care.

Mom, Chanel, catches the shuttle each day to visit her daughter at the hospital.

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Message from our President



Jerri Chong

Aloha,

We are happy to announce that we have been back in operation since early this year, following temporary

closures and other COVID related set-backs.

Our two Houses in Manoa—one on Judd Hillside Road and the other on Oahu Avenue—serve as a “home-away-from-home” for families needing long-term or critical care on Oahu for a child.

While we are moving forward with caution and taking the utmost Covid 19-related sanitary measures, our Houses are alive with sounds and smells associated with normal family life. When walking through the front door in the morning, parents’ voices and children’s laughter can be heard. The smell of freshly brewed coffee

and breakfast cooking or being delivered by volunteers waft in the air. And comfort and normalcy settles in as families eat, converse, get ready, and head for a shuttle ride to the hospital.

This is part of “a day in the life” of a family staying at the Ronald McDonald House. Our families get to know one another. Keiki become friends, playing on the jungle gym or chasing each other in the front yard. They pick tangerines and flowers from the garden, hang out in the family recreation center at the gaming wall, indoor treehouse, or kids’ picnic area. Parents talk, sharing stories and words of encouragement and support. And families watch television, relax or read in our loft together. Life goes on....and the intangibles—the camaraderie, the sharing and caring, and the presence of a support system that is motivating and healing—becomes part of the

everyday experience that families can count on.

And despite going through the most challenging and difficult circumstances, families feel less isolated, more comfortable, and find moments of peace in the midst of crisis. When they walk through our doors, they know they have come to a safe and healing place.

Home is so much more than just bricks and mortar. It’s a feeling. Of being safe, and happy, and hopeful. It’s where love resides and where life happens. At the Ronald McDonald House, we welcome our families home every day.

Most 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.

Raymond continued from page 1

The couple agreed that being relieved of having to find food, lodging, and transportation gave them more time to spend with Raymond.

Raymond was discharged from the hospital two months later at a healthy baby weight of 8lbs., 6.2 oz.

After having such a positive experience at Ronald McDonald House in Hawaii, Lavi and Ethan said they are inspired to learn more about the Charity. They have both worked at treatment centers for adolescents and say they are eager to put their skills to work as volunteers at a Ronald McDonald House in Utah when they return.



Raymond at time of birth.



Raymond @8lbs, 6.2 oz., just before leaving the hospital.

Savannah-Lei continued from page 1

Despite being given shots to stop the contractions before being medevaced to Oahu, Chanel's pregnancy had progressed by the time she arrived on Oahu.

Luckily, the contractions stopped. But only for three days. Chanel had an infection, which spread to her unborn baby—whose heartbeat became irregular.

Doctors had to induce labor. Within twenty minutes, Savannah-Lei was born, weighing only 1 lb, 8 oz. She would require intensive care at the hospital for months, while her lungs developed and she gained weight.



Savannah-Lei in NICU.



Savannah-Lei going home.

"The whole experience went so fast," Chanel said. "It was unbelievable and scary."

Chanel said she was so relieved to hear there was a room for her at Ronald McDonald House on Oahu Avenue. "I went from being scared to feeling comforted," she added. "I am so lucky to be here."

Her mother visited from Hilo and stayed with her every other weekend while Savannah-Lei grew stronger. Doctors said the baby's progress was faster than normal, which gave Chanel hope.

Daily, Chanel took the morning shuttle provided by RMHC Hawaii to the hospital, where she stayed with her daughter all day before returning to the House on the evening shuttle.

"It's so nice to come home at the end of each day to wonderful meals, companionship and support from families and staff at the Oahu House."

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Wish List

- Disinfectant sprays/wipes
- All-purpose cleaning spray
- Antibacterial hand soap
- Paper towels
- Individually wrapped snacks
- Xerox/copy paper

Join Us for Our *Share a Night Benefit*

Heroes of the Heart Auction

November 21, 2021

We're looking for silent auction items, including:

Collector Items • Lifestyle, Health & Beauty Products • Wine/Liquor • Gift Cards • Sports Packages & Gear
Designer Clothing and Accessories (local & international brands) • Jewelry • Art (paintings, ceramic, glass)

Support your favorite restaurant or retailer. They will appreciate it and so will we.

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 Lisa Levine at 808-892-1902 or Lisa@rmhchawaii.org.

Meals Program

Our meals donation program helps keep our families fed so they can focus on helping their keiki get better! Currently, in lieu of volunteering at our House, meal donations can be arranged by contacting



Kiree@rmhchawaii.org.



Kanani Dias and Ohana provided dinner of Huli Huli chicken plates.



Ark Christian Center prepared a lunch of bbq ribs, potato salad, cole slaw, rice and dessert.



Families loved the rice, noodles, chicken and teri beef meal Patti Kahoekapu and Ohana provided.



West Honolulu Rotary Club brought our families a dinner of rice, fish, garlic shrimp, corn, salad, hamburger steak with gravy.

Other Ways the Community Supports Us

INTERNSHIP



Tabitha Tomori joined us remotely from her hometown, Hilo, Hawaii, as our Digital Media Intern this summer. She is now a sophomore at University of California, Santa Clara. A graduate of Kamehameha Schools, she was part of the Kapili Oihana Summer Intern Program.

“Being a Digital Media Intern for Ronald McDonald House Charities Hawaii has truly been such an amazing experience. A few years ago, my cousin was born with fluid in his lungs and had to be flown to Oahu. With the help of RMHC Hawaii, my aunty and uncle had a place to stay while my cousin was being cared for in the hospital. I am so thankful for this opportunity to give back and show my appreciation for everything that the House has done for my family. Being able to use social media to bring light to the RMHC’s mission while also developing my marketing and communication skills has been such a rewarding experience. I am forever grateful for RMHC Hawaii and everything they continue to do to help families in their times of need.”

We #appreciate the talent and time Tabitha shared during her internship this summer.



WEB DEVELOPMENT

Michael Nolasco has been an integral part of our volunteer work force for more than a decade.

“I love working for Ronald McDonald House Charities Hawaii as it provides a wonderful service and resource for families who are under extremely difficult circumstances. This is just a small way that I can contribute to this great cause.”

Michael initially offered RMHC Hawaii tech help as a way to support the Charity and its mission. Soon, he was building our website. Now, he works closely with our staff, using his talents and knowledge to further develop, update, and maintain our website. He used his deep understanding of RMHC Hawaii and years of experience to help create an increasingly dynamic website, reflecting a pivot to more interactive platforms for fundraising and events. We are grateful for his services, patience, and time he has so graciously donated to our House over the years.



Behind the Scenes

FRIENDS

The best things about the Ronald McDonald House are the intangibles. The nurturing and caring environment created by RMHC Hawaii staff and other families helps with stress relief and healing. Talking story with others in similar situations helps children and their families feel less isolated, not different. Most of all, staying at the Ronald McDonald House helps provide families with hope and courage.

Sadie (top) from the Big Island, and April, from American Samoa, became friends while staying at the Judd Hillside Ronald McDonald House this summer. Sadie stayed with us while her sister, born prematurely, was in NICU, and April returned to the House for a check up after being treated for Leukemia the year prior.



INSPIRE YOU & ME TV

President of RMHC Hawaii Jerri Chong was on the set for an interview with Jessica Lani Rich, TV Producer and Host of "Inspire You and Me." The inspiring show about people who make a difference in the community and world airs on Sunday nights at 8 p.m. on KWHE TV-14 (Channel 11 on Spectrum and Channel 14 on Hawaiian Tel). The interview can be viewed on YouTube.



KEEPING FAMILIES CLOSE

Decklan helps Dad on the computer in the Judd Hillside House family recreation center, while Mom visits baby sister who is in NICU at Kapiolani Medical Center. From the Big Island, they are making the Ronald McDonald House a home-away-from-home while baby sister, who is 3-months-old, gets treated for a heart condition.

Thank You Supporters



To our partners at **Southwest Airlines**, Happy 50th Anniversary! Thank you for helping support our House! You have made a difference and have allowed us to continue to provide a home-away-from-home for families with children getting medical care on Oahu.



Big Mahalo to House supporters **Norman and Sharon Wong** who visited us with friends from California. They toured our new family recreation center that was finished and opened earlier this year thanks to their help. We enjoyed their visit and are so grateful for support from donors like them!



What a fun-filled day for all. Golfers enjoyed food and camaraderie at the Hawaii Prince Golf Course, while raising more than \$100,000. Proceeds go to RMHC Hawaii to help provide a home-away-from-home and essential services for families with children in need of medical treatment on Oahu.

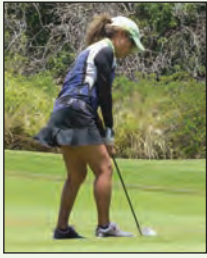
To comply with COVID-19 safety measures, the tournament was limited to 162 golfers this year, for a total of 54 teams. The tournament kicked off with a “shotgun start” at 11:45 a.m., after golfers had checked-in and picked up their gift bags and lunches. Food and snacks were available throughout the day at different holes. Superb Sushi, Kuoha Culinary, Lance Aldan, and Paradise Beverages were just a few of the culinary vendors with booths on the course.

Golfers also participated in games and contests along the course (especially at Par 3 holes). Prizes included R/T airline tickets, resort stays around Hawaii, and restaurant gift cards. Keurig Dr Pepper sponsored Hole-in-Wons at each Par 3, including a \$10,000 prize.

This year, in lieu of the traditional banquet and awards ceremony following the tournament, golfers got a specially prepared luau meal and gifts-to-go as a thank you for spending the day on the course in support of the House That Love Built.

Thank you to all of the businesses, organizations, volunteers and individuals that made this event a success.





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2 Platinum Sponsors



2 Platinum Sponsors



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



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 **Optional 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, 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.



#70680



#89629



Mahalo Melissa Yara and the employees at Old Navy and Gap! Doubling the impact through your company's Gift Match Program will ensure families can stay together when they need each other most.