



Aloha

# From Our House to Yours

www.RonaldHouseHawaii.org

Newsletter of Ronald McDonald House Charities® Hawaii

Issue 2, June 2022

## As Fate Would Have It...Anuheas Adventure

*“Literally, everything changed overnight.” - Heather Davis*

*An urgent flight to Oahu from Lanai left Heather and Ioane Davis virtually homeless. “When social workers said there was a room for us at the Ronald McDonald House, we just looked at each other and cried out of relief.”*

The couple who lived and worked on Lanai, as teacher and carpenter, were expecting a normal delivery of their first child on May 30, 2022. In anticipation, Heather and Ioane had reserved lodging on Oahu near a hospital with obstetrics and neonatal care facilities and services. They were prepared for an unrushed childbirth, with time for healing, bonding, and celebration after the baby arrived.

But no one was prepared for what happened.

Heather thought her pre-term contractions in Mid-February were a normal part of pregnancy... until her water broke, starting a chain reaction of events. Ioane immediately took her to an urgent care facility, where—because of the COVID-19 pandemic—he had to wait outside to find out the results.

But, before he knew, Heather called from her cell phone saying she was in labor and being rushed in an ambulance to the airport to be medevaced to Oahu. There was no room for him on the medical transport plane.

As fate would have it, there was one seat left on the next commercial Mokulele Airlines 8-seater flight to Honolulu. Ioane booked it and waited to board, planning to meet his wife and baby at Kapiolani Medical Center on Oahu.

Meanwhile, Heather had been put on Hawaii Life Flight (Air Medical Transport). Medics hooked her up to IVs. But just as they were ready for take-off, Heather felt a sharp pain...and the baby at her feet. Anuheas had come into the world early. Very early. Literally caught between Heather’s feet.



*Born 3 months early, Anuheas Davis needed a respirator to breathe.*



*Proud Dad Ioane Davis holds Anuheas.*

The medical team cut the umbilical cord, put the baby on the only respirator on board—not meant for a premature newborn—and told the pilot to cancel the flight. Mom and Baby were taken off the plane and returned to the hospital on Lanai by ambulance. In the meantime, a NICU team from

Kapiolani Medical Center on Oahu had been contacted and was expected to arrive on Lanai that afternoon.

From the hospital on Lanai, Heather got ahold of her husband by cell phone as he was about to board the commercial flight to Oahu. She had exciting news: They had a baby!

Anuheas was only 2lbs, 3 oz. on Feb 20, her birthday. Heather credits the medic on Hawaii Life Flight for keeping Anuheas alive during the twist and turn of events by manually pumping the respirator until the NICU team arrived.

Just five hours later, Heather was discharged from the hospital on Lanai. By then, Anuheas had already been flown with the NICU team back to Oahu, where she was at Kapiolani Medical Center.

The exhausted new parents were distraught about their newborn being over the ocean on Oahu and out of their reach and loving arms. This is not what they had planned. They had to get to Oahu.

*“We still cry every day at the thought; it was so emotional.”*

They booked the next flights available to Oahu and finally arrived—24-hours later. But on Oahu, they had no relatives, no place to stay, no way to get around, nothing, but the desire to see their newborn. At the hospital, a social worker told them about the Ronald McDonald House. Emotionally and physically drained, the couple broke down in tears, knowing they would be given lodging, meals, and support on Oahu. Relief at last.

In the meantime, caring neighbors and friends on Lanai had reached out and offered to watch their dog and garden, and to take care of what

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# Message from our President



Jerri Chong

Aloha,

Summer is here! While some of us associate summer with vacations, beach days, or play time, others will spend it caught up in their

own crisis—a child’s sudden illness or accident requiring urgent or long-term medical care.

Whether bedside at one of Honolulu’s hospitals or at the Ronald McDonald House on Oahu, the healing power of family nearby and a parent’s touch is undeniable. At our two Houses in Manoa—one on Judd Hillside Road and the other on Oahu Avenue—we aim to keep families close and to give

them respite, respect, strength, and courage they need to help an ill child thrive.

Now in our 35th year on Oahu, we have seen repeatedly how necessary our services and programs are. We provide a home-away-from home for parents with seriously ill children getting medical care nearby. Volunteers drive our shuttles to and from hospitals, prepare and deliver meals to our House, and help run fundraising events. The community donates food, gift cards, and money for household supplies and groceries.

Thanks to community support, our cupboards are never bare; our Houses are always clean; and our families can find comfort in talking with our House

Managers or others going through similar experiences. Families can focus on a child’s health instead of basic needs.

We are so grateful for all of RMHC Hawaii’s friends who have rallied behind our families and mission during difficult times for the past 35 years. You give us strength, courage, and hope to help ohana when their lives get turned upside down from sudden illness.

Mahalo for your generosity and unwavering support!

Appreciatively,

Jerri Chong, RMHC Hawaii

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## As Fate Would Have It continued from page 1

they’d left behind. Their workplaces were understanding and supported their urgent need to go to Oahu.

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Ioane and Heather Davis

Thirty six days later, Heather said, “We crash out, eat, and shower at the House, then spend 12-hour shifts at the

hospital each day, planning our time around visiting our daughter there. “Now we can read to her every day. She grabs our fingers in the incubator and smiles.”

At the Oahu Ronald House, where most adults stay while a child is getting in-patient medical care, the parents gather in the dining room to eat and share stories when they

return from long days at the hospital. Parents staying there greet each other on a first name basis, providing each other with support and comfort, knowing they are all going through similar experiences.

“Others in the House have told us what to expect during certain



procedures, since they’ve been through it too,”

At the time of this writing, Ioane and Heather looked forward to holding Anuheia. Their dream came true.



Anuheia and her parents at the hospital.

Heather said. “It’s always really great, but sad, to see housemates leave.”

Anuheia will need to stay in NICU until her premature system matures and she can breathe and eat on her own.

## Ronald McDonald House Charities Hawaii

### Board of Directors

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# Looking Back in Celebration of Being Here for Families for 35 Years

*"I love it when events come full circle."*

*-Nalinee Morris*

One of the first families to stay at our House soon after it opened 35 years ago was the Pickop family from Kauai.

Nalinee Pickop (now Morris) was diagnosed with infantile botulism at just a few months old. Her parents flew with her to Kapiolani Medical Center for urgent medical treatment, not knowing where they would stay or how they would afford the specialized medical care. But, at the time, all they could think about was the health of their baby.

Her father, who worked for the State Department of Agriculture on Kauai, was able to transfer his job to Oahu in order to stay at the Judd Hillside House, which had just opened in 1987 in Manoa. He could stay with Nalinee in the House and easily get to and from the hospital.

Nalinee's mother kept her job coding at Kauai Medical Clinic (now Wilcox Hospital), but flew to Oahu each weekend to be near her daughter and husband.

Nalinee knows her parents appreciated being able to live at the Ronald McDonald House. "It helped the situation to have a home-away-from-home and to not

have to be as concerned with expenses and basic needs so they could focus on my health."

With the specialized care at the Oahu hospital and the loving touch of her parents, Nalinee recovered. Since then, she's married and had two healthy children. She's lived in several places and made a few career changes.

After working in the hospitality industry in Arizona, she switched to phlebotomy, then returned to Kauai and got her nursing degree and practiced on Oahu. She recently moved to Washington to start a nursing position specializing in gastroenterology.

While getting her nursing degree, Nalinee ended up doing a nursing rotation at Kapiolani Medical Center for Women and Children and working on the Wilcox wing near Ronald McDonald House.

Nalinee has a special place in her heart for the Ronald McDonald House and has been back to visit several times. She knows her parents struggled and found the support they needed at the House during an extremely difficult time.

Almost 35 years since she and her parents stayed there, she is giving back to people in need in her own special way—with care, compassion, and a huge dose of empathy.



*Nalinee and her mother, Nitaya, when staying at the House in 1988.*



*Nalinee's father, Ed, and Nalinee visiting the Judd Hillside House for its 20th anniversary celebration.*



*Nalinee and her children in 2021.*

# Virtual Red Shoe 5K



Our 2nd Virtual Red Shoe 5K was held March 4th – 27th and raised over \$27,000! Mahalo to the 238 registrants who got active, rocked their socks, and “FUN”raised for RMHC Hawaii. They all showed their stripes while walking, running, hiking, exercising, swimming, playing tennis, skiing, biking, vacuuming, golfing, walking their precious critters (and dressing them up too), and even sleeping in. We can’t thank you and your donors enough for stepping up and having some fun—all in support of our families.

Next year we are hoping for an in-person Red Shoe 5K Fun Run/Walk, along with a virtual component for those who prefer getting active their way. Hope to see you there.

And now “drumroll” please...congratulations to the winners of the Lucky Draw photo and fundraising contests:

## BEST INDIVIDUAL

Nora Miwa – Pacific Jobbers Warehouse

## BEST TEAM

Andrea & Lilly Deutsch

## CUTEST CRITTER

Reiko Lin - McPug Fun

## GRAND FINALE

Team K.E-N

## TOP INDIVIDUAL FUNDRAISERS

### TIERS

Tier 1: \$1,000+

Tier 2: \$501 - \$999

Tier 3: \$270-\$500

### WINNERS

Troy Wada - Individual INPAC & Hawaii Real Producers

Eric Yamamoto - Team Ballard

Roger Dequina - True Health Ohana

## TOP TEAM FUNDRAISERS

### TIERS

Tier 1: \$3,501+

Tier 2: \$1,501 - \$3,500

Tier 3: \$1,000 - \$1,500

### WINNERS

Jerri’s Team Keiki Kokua - Captain Jerri Chong

True Health Ohana - Captain Sheryl Legaspi

Pacific Jobbers Warehouse - Captain Katherine Miwa



# Volunteers are the Heartbeat of RMHC Hawaii

While our volunteer programs have been temporarily suspended due to COVID-19, volunteers are still dropping off non-contact donations and helping remotely or at the House, adhering to safety measures and precautions.

Volunteer contributions—whether donations, helping hands, or in-kind services—have helped keep families close by providing a home-away-from-home for 35 years now.

If you talk with staff or families who have stayed at our Houses, they will most likely mention “volunteers.” A stand out moment for a previous guest was of a volunteer tutoring her child who was doing school work at the Judd Hillside House. Volunteers help with everything, from cooking and driving shuttles to organizing the kitchen and working behind the scenes. They create memorable and loving experiences for families in crisis.

Not only do our guests appreciate our volunteers’ kind-hearted and loyal support, but our Staff at RMHC Hawaii relies heavily on their helping hands for many of the tasks that go into successfully fundraising and running a “home-away-from-home.”

“They are instrumental in implementing our fundraisers,” said Candace Asam-Lopez, Director of Development. “From organizing our auction items to filing and more, they enable us to run our events—whether online or in-person—helping support our Houses and providing essential services for families with critically ill children in need. We have an in-person golf tournament coming up and will be reaching out for volunteer assistance with that.”

For now, staff relies on essential volunteers at the House and groups gathering offsite at a social distance. The volunteer program is reaching out for non-contact delivery of donated items, meals, and e-cards so we can shop for groceries and household supplies. (See our Wish List in this newsletter and on our Instagram and Facebook newsfeeds every Wednesday.)

We are gearing up to opening our volunteer program again and look forward to seeing all those smiling faces and helping hands.



*Chef Ed Kuoha of Kuoha Culinary donates his gourmet meals and time to our families and fundraisers.*



*Lester Shoda is one of our volunteer shuttle drivers who takes RMH ohana to and from nearby hospitals.*



*Jeanne Hemen keeps our kitchen organized and helps out where needed.*



*Lori Lee helps our fundraising department.*

## *Other Ways the Community Supports Us*

There are so many ways to get involved.

Go to our website

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

for more information.

## **Wish List**

- Paper Towels
- White Towels (Bath Towels, Wash Cloths & Hand Towels)
- Fresh Fruits and Vegetables
- Xerox/Copy Paper
- Disposable Masks
- Disinfectant Sprays/Wipes
- Antibacterial Hand Soap
- Toilet Paper
- Batteries (AA, AAA, D, 9-Volt)

# Oahu House Lets the Light Shine

Hawaii's second Ronald McDonald House opened on Oahu Avenue in 2006 to serve adult family members of children receiving in-patient care and neighbor island women experiencing "high-risk" pregnancies. Many describe the Oahu House as "calming."

Guests typically take our shuttle service to a hospital nearby to visit their baby or bedridden patient/relative during the high-risk pregnancy. After a long day at the hospital, they can return to the comforts of home and a meal.



Kahu Kordell Kekoa blessed the Oahu House with RMHC Hawaii's Jerri Chong, Rebecca Jones, and Kanoe Paauhau, after recent renovation and upgrades.



Kanoe Paauhau oversees family services, facilities, programs, and volunteer assistance for both Houses.

Kanoe Paauhau, Director of House Operations, makes sure that families staying at Oahu House get the same nurturing and supportive lodging and essential services that are provided at the Judd Hillside House. She oversees the maintenance of the seven-bedroom home, its library, exercise room, and community areas. For more than fifteen years, she has been ensuring that families have a healing and supportive environment to call home during their time of need.

"Throughout the pandemic, we've made safety and security a priority at both our Judd Hillside and Oahu Houses. 'Slow and steady' has been our approach to closing and re-opening amid fluctuating rules and guidelines about social distancing, quarantining, wearing masks, and taking temperatures."

The slow and steady approach was used when Oahu House was closed temporarily in October 2021 and re-opened on March 1, 2022. Kanoe took this time to upgrade the House and to enhance the comfortable environment for families who stay there. She also had the House blessed prior to its re-opening and hired the House's new Evening/Resident Manager, Rebecca Jones.

The kitchen of the home, originally built in 1998, has new countertops, flooring, and cupboards, along with a bay window that enlarges the space and lets in more light. New windows throughout the House provide better ventilation, security, and lighting, while minimizing noise and heat.

We are thankful for the support of community and businesses who helped with the renovations, including McInerney Foundation, which helped fund the new windows, and Brian Yee of Kopke Enterprises.

Kanoe said, "Brian was instrumental in our kitchen remodel from the start—coordinating with and hiring electricians, plumbers, and other subcontractors as well as donating his time and talents—all in support of our families and cause."



To enhance the comfortable environment for families during their stay at the Oahu Avenue Ronald McDonald House, the kitchen was remodeled and new windows were installed throughout the home that was originally built in 1998.



Rebecca Jones

Rebecca, Evening/House Manager, provides assistance and emotional support for guest ohana staying at the House. Rebecca, who has the calm, caring demeanor needed for families staying there, said she loves providing them with a warm and comfortable home base.

"I enjoy hearing about the progress of their kids and being here to witness the emotional ups and downs of their journey. Some of my favorite moments have been quite ordinary - hearing the families chat and laugh together and seeing how they can support each other because they are all experiencing similar challenges. Knowing that they can have small moments of relative 'normalcy' during such a trying time, and in the absence of their usual social support systems, is heartwarming to me. The other day, two of the families were laughing about how, in casual conversation, they referred to the house here as 'home.' That made me feel really good about what we provide."

# Behind the Scenes

## Spotlight on Board Members

*Our Board of Directors is integral to the operations and management of RMHC Hawaii. As business leaders and key influencers in our community, they ensure that our nonprofit runs efficiently and continues to meet our mission. They serve on our Board in many capacities, including on our Guest Services, Facilities, Finance, and Fundraising committees.*

*Dr. Lois Chiu and Dr. Barry Mizuo bring their specialized talents, care, and compassion to our Guest Services Committee. In this article, they share unique perspectives, knowing first-hand about a family's needs and the dire situations that sudden illness—especially a child's—can cause. A referral to the Ronald McDonald House is often one of the best remedies.*



### **Dr. Lois Chiu**

*Chief of Neonatology at Kaiser Permanente, and RMHC Hawaii Guest Services Committee Chair*

“Serving on the Board for Ronald McDonald House is the least I can do for the organization that has helped my families at Kaiser Permanente.”

About half of her patients—premature and ill infants—come from Neighbor Islands, especially Maui and the Big Island. One of the first questions she asks her patients is, “Do you have a place to stay or any relatives or friends on Oahu?” The answer is usually, “no,” so they have to fend for themselves. “They are basically ‘homeless’ when they arrive on Oahu.”

She refers new parents to the Houses several times a week. RMHC Hawaii is the only place with a home-like environment where they can do their own cooking and laundry. Parents and/or families staying at the Ronald McDonald House also can find comfort in the camaraderie they develop with other families going through the same or similar experience.

“Little things like that matter.”

Patients referred to Ronald McDonald House often are surprised about how nice the House is. “It’s a real home, in a nice neighborhood,” she said. “Everyone is always so grateful to be referred there.”

Dr. Chiu believes in RMHC’s mission of keeping families close. She said pediatric patients definitely do better knowing family is nearby. “Babies know too. By three to four months, babies are happier when parents are there visiting with them, holding them, and singing or reading to them.”



### **Dr. Barry Mizuo**

*Pediatric Hospitalist at Kapiolani Medical Center for Women and Children*

Dr. Mizuo enjoys patient care and has always been committed to giving back to the community. “When an opportunity arose for me to serve on the Board of Ronald McDonald House

Charities Hawaii, I knew it would be a good fit.”

A Pediatric Hospitalist at Kapiolani Medical Center, Dr. Mizuo encounters many families in need of a place to stay while their children get specialized care. The children he treats range from newborns to teenagers, with different conditions, including cancer. Many of his patients and their families are referred to Ronald McDonald Houses.

Social workers at Kapiolani Medical Center work closely with RMHC Hawaii staff to make sure patients and their families have lodging, food, and transportation so they can focus on being together and healing. He said there is no doubt that RMHC Hawaii fulfills a need for families arriving on Oahu with no place to stay and no relatives on Island.

Dr. Mizuo stressed the importance of children having loved ones nearby during their medical journey. “Being in a foreign place with strangers around can be intimidating,” he said. “Having some family nearby and visiting the hospital is important to the healing process.”

“Patients and their families are grateful for a home-away-from-home that’s close and convenient to the hospital where they are getting medical care.”

He added, “Being on the RMHC Hawaii Board has given me further insight into all that RMHC Hawaii does to support its mission.”

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