



Aloha from OUR HOUSE to YOURS

Newsletter of Ronald McDonald House Charities® Hawaii

www.RonaldHouseHawaii.org

Issue 3, Fall 2024

Making Memories

“*Medevac.* As a neighbor island family from the Big Island, that is a word that invokes fear and anxiety, serious medical attention is needed immediately for the patient. As a mom of 3 little ones and 30 weeks pregnant, I was going to be medevaced to Oahu. No time to pack snacks, no time to grab a toothbrush, no time to bathe the littles. Go. Now.

Kayla was delivered safely, and all anxieties transferred to her well being. The hospital got her, but who’s got me? I soon became worried about my husband, my littles, and my own self care. Where were we going to stay and how were we going to manage with Kayla in ICU, and all I had with me was my purse. With no toothbrush in it.

‘The Ronald McDonald House has room for you, your husband and the littles.’ Those words were like a huge soft comforter that just wrapped itself around me, a bear hug of an embrace that calmed and steadied my rattled everything.

Ronald McDonald House Charities (RMHC) was a safe haven for us, nearby our precious Kayla while she grew stronger, in her own time. Self care is often overlooked

when a loved one is in a hospital, and RMHC provided a place to stay, a place to maintain our own health, and a place to unwind after a long day at the hospital. My littles were able to be with us and also visit Kayla while she grew.

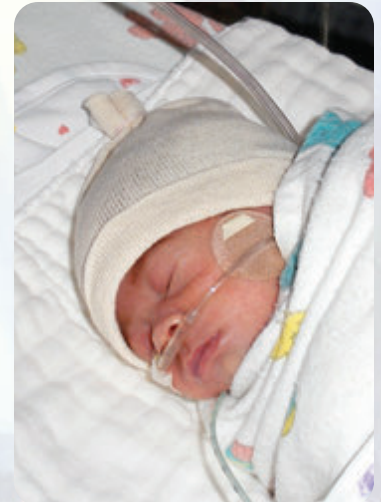
Kayla is now thriving as a Junior in high school. She has managed to achieve a 4.0 GPA, with challenging courses including Honors and AP classes. She is in the Art & Communications Academy, focusing on the Creative Media pathway. She has also been part of the school’s swim team as well as serving as Historian for the Interact Club and Secretary for the Filipino Club.

We will always be grateful and humbled by what RHMC does, providing a place of respite during a high time of need.

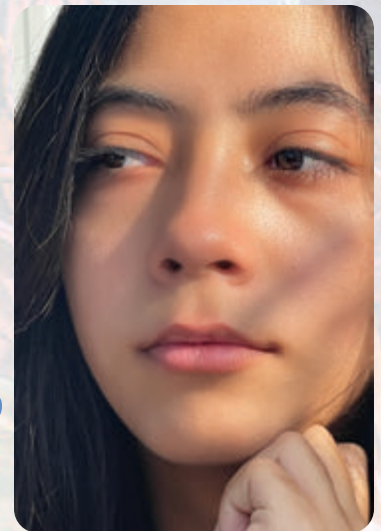
The photo of the littles and Brian with the 3D glasses, really sums up how well RHMC took care of all of us. It brings to mind a quote from Winnie-the-Pooh, “We didn’t realize we were making memories. We just knew we were having fun.”

And they even had a toothbrush for me.”

— As told by mom Ligaya Hill & Ohana



Baby Kayla in the NICU (2008)



Kayla today (2024)



Kayla’s dad, Brian, and her older siblings at Judd Hillside watching a movie.



Kayla (second from left) and her siblings today.

President's Message

Aloha Friends,

As we reflect on the past few months, my heart is full of gratitude for the incredible outpouring of love and support that continues to uplift the families who walk through our doors. Our staff, volunteers, and supporters are truly blessed to have such a compassionate and dedicated community standing with us in this mission of providing a safe and loving home during the most difficult times.

One story that especially touched us recently is that of the Molly and Mack, who came from North Carolina and called our Judd Hillside House home while their child received life-saving care. It's hard to imagine the heartache and fear they experienced, but thanks to your support, we were able to offer them more than just a place to stay—we offered them hope. Seeing families find moments of peace and togetherness during these storms is the essence of what we do, and it's because of you that these moments are possible. For that, I am deeply thankful.

I'd also like to congratulate our team for the tremendous success of our 33rd Annual Golf Classic. The energy and generosity that day were inspiring. It's more than just a day of golf—it's a day where we unite as one family to raise critical funds for our programs. My sincere thanks to all who participated, sponsored, and supported this meaningful event.



Looking ahead, we are filled with excitement for our upcoming Hope and Heroes Gala, where we will honor the Lee Family. Their kindness and unwavering support have made a profound difference in the lives of many, and this year's Gala will be a heartfelt celebration of compassion and its lasting impact on the families we serve.

Lastly, I encourage you to support our McFun Raiser Booklet program. These booklets offer big benefits—not only to local organizations but also to our programs that bring comfort to families facing unimaginable challenges.

From the bottom of my heart, thank you for being part of our Ronald McDonald House Charities of Hawaii family. Together, we are more than just a charity—we are a lifeline for families in need, and your support makes all the difference.

Best wishes,

Ed Nishioka
President and CEO

“Aloha From Our House to Yours,” the newsletter of Ronald McDonald House Charities Hawaii (RMHC Hawaii), is published three times a year. Printing: Edward’s Enterprises.

Mahalo to our Board of Directors

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Congratulations to Board Members David Lim and Vincent Lim for for being named to PBN's 40 Under 40 list for 2024!

A Home-Away-From-Home

From Vacation to NICU Care

Many families come through our Judd Hillside home with their own experiences. Molly and Mack, a young North Carolina couple traveled to Hawaii this summer for what they anticipated would be a joyful vacation, but took an unexpected turn leading them to the Ronald McDonald House for a remarkable 70 days.

Molly, Mack, and five other family members planned to explore three beautiful islands in Hawaii. But their trip was altered when Molly went into early labor while on the Big Island and their newborn, Owen, required NICU care. With the recommendation of a social worker at Kona Community Hospital, they found themselves at the Ronald McDonald House on O'ahu when Owen was transferred to Kapi'olani Medical Center. Their arrival at the House was initially daunting and overwhelming, but it soon became a place of refuge and one they appreciated deeply.

The Ronald McDonald House provided more than just a roof over their heads; it fostered a strong sense of community. Molly and Mack participated in communal dinners and game nights, which offered a much-needed distraction and camaraderie. A particular memory involved playing Nintendo Switch every night with another family's child, providing a joyful escape for both the child and his parents.

Their experience was enriched by the cultural education they received from the staff and other families. They had an opportunity to visit the Bishop Museum during their stay and learned about the cultural history of Hawai'i, which differed from their existing understanding and the history they learned growing up on the mainland. It provided a renewed sense of respect and love for the islands and one they probably would have not been exposed to on a regular vacation.

Although the couple had rough moments while in Hawaii, one special memory stands out. On July 12th, Molly's birthday, Mack proposed to her, signaling the start



Baby Owen with (L to R) his parents Molly and Mack and Mack's parents, Marty and Michelle

of a brand new life together. The couple drew comparisons from their time in Hawaii with their own experiences back home and expressed gratitude for the family-oriented approach that helped them through their ordeal.

"At the House, it's one group. It's not individuals over there at all, it's all family, one hundred percent," said Mack.

"The staff was just phenomenal too and so giving," said Molly.

As their time at the Ronald McDonald House came to an end, Molly and Mack felt a mix of emotions. "I mean it was leaving a home-away-from-home," said Mack. "The Ronald McDonald House became our home. We lived there. They took us in, and they are family," he added.

They have a heartfelt desire to return to Hawaii when Owen is older, to share the beauty of the islands and the warmth of the community they found during their stay.

The Waters' experience highlights the vital role the Ronald McDonald House plays in providing not just shelter, but a supportive family-like atmosphere during some of life's most challenging moments.

♥ Wish List

The holiday season is just around the corner, and we're looking for Halloween costumes for the kids, trick or treat bags, as well as Christmas presents for newborns, teens and their parents. We also need House essentials, like paper towels and food storage bags. Our hospitality cart is also looking for a restock of snacks, things for new moms (sanitary & breast pads), and adult activity items (see pg. 8).

To set up a donation drop off, call us at (808) 973-5683 or email info@rmhchawaii.org.



For more ideas, visit our Wish Lists online at: <https://linktr.ee/RonaldHouseHIDonate>.



Our 33rd Annual Golf Classic was held on July 18th, 2024 under sunny and breezy skies at the Hawaii Prince Golf Club. The sold-out tournament had 63 teams and 189 individuals, all playing to support RMHC.

The day teed off with a McDonald's-sponsored lunch to fuel everyone up for the fun day ahead. Shotgun was at 11:45 a.m. and the golfers were off ready to swing into action. Throughout the course, they enjoyed a variety

of treats and activities including Smoked Hamachi Tostadas prepared by Kuoha Culinary, Rainbow Drive-In chili, games hosted by several platinum sponsors, refreshing ice-pops to keep cool, and so much more. Over 100 volunteers lent a hand with set-up/breakdown, greeting and engaging with golfers ensuring they had wonderful experience.

After a great day of play, golfers gathered at the clubhouse for a deluxe bento and a program filled with exciting prizes. Our 33rd Grand Prize Team Winner was 'Alohilani Resort. See full results and more photos on our website.

Mahalo to our golfers, team/hole/prize sponsors, golf committee, and volunteers who made our Golf Classic a success!

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Saturday, November 23, 2024 · 5:30PM

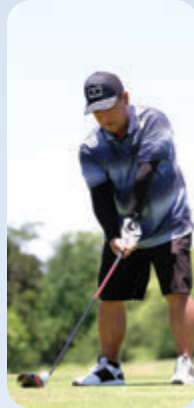
‘Alohilani Resort Waikiki Beach

An Evening of Hope and Heroes honors a special family, Dr. Darrell, Cathy and Nicki Lee. They have over a decade-long history with RMHC Hawaii that began when 8-year-old Nicki raised more than \$1,000 through a school community service project for us. Ten years later, her fundraising efforts through the nonprofit she founded, Kidz For A Cause, raised more than \$360,000. This acted as the catalyst to renovate our playroom at Judd Hillside.

Cathy, a prominent interior designer, then took the lead donating her time and expertise to spearhead the complex Family Recreation Center project, creating a two-story area thoughtfully designed to spark hope and healing. Throughout, Darrell steadfastly supported his family on every level. Families struggling with pain, sickness, and stress now enjoy a safe, magical space to gather and play, thanks to the dedication and generosity of the Lee family.



Cathy, Dr. Darrell, and Nicki Lee



Family Recreation Center at the Judd Hillside House

You can be a Hero too! Become a table sponsor or purchase seats for our families to attend the Gala. We are also in need of items to offer at our new Galleria shopping experience. Help us create unique packages with gift certificates from dining, retail and service venues, travel and lodging, technology, etc. along with items valued at \$100+. Reach us at: gala@rmhchawaii.org.

Workplace Giving Changes Lives

Workplace giving programs are vital in supporting our communities, offering an easy and convenient way for donors to make their annual tax-deductible donations and contribute to causes they care about.

If you are a federal government employee (civilian or military), please consider allocating a portion of your **Combined Federal Campaign** gift to Hawaii's Ronald McDonald House.

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

Many companies support employee giving programs, such as **matching gifts, annual giving campaigns, holiday drives, and volunteerism**. You can become a House Partner by choosing an activity, whether individual or company-wide, to provide hope and hospitality for families in need.



Aloha United Way

#70680

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McFun-Raiser Booklets For 2025 Are Here!



Our newest edition of McFun-Raiser Booklets is now available for schools and organizations to purchase for their fundraisers. There are awesome deals from McDonald's Hawaii as well as local businesses; Honolulu Theatre for Youth, Sea Life Park, Kids City, and Wai Kai. Each book has a retail value of \$114+ and an expiration date of December 31, 2025. Minimum purchase of 50 booklets at \$6 each. You sell for \$10, making \$4 for your group. Booklets make great stocking stuffers at Christmas!

For more information, please visit our website

RonaldHouseHawaii.org

Email: mcfun@rmhchawaii.org

Phone: (808) 892-1907

"Round Up" For RMHC Hawaii

Help support our families and programs when you Round-Up for RMHC Hawaii at participating McDonald's restaurants.



It's easy! Whether you order at the front counter, drive-thru, or kiosk, you can ask to Round-Up for RMHC and your purchase (including tax) will round up to the nearest dollar. You can also drop your loose change in a RMHC Donation Box available at the front counters and drive-thru windows. A little bit adds up and will go a long way to keep families close.

VOTE for RMHC Hawaii

We have been chosen to participate in a special charitable giving campaign sponsored by Target.

Now through December 31st, vote for us through the Target Circle program. To enroll, sign up at: www.target.com/circle, download the Target app or provide phone number at checkout. Every vote counts to help us receive a portion of the available Target funds.

HERE'S HOW TO VOTE:

1. Choose 'My Target' in the Target app or 'Account' on Target.com
2. Tap 'Cast votes'
3. Find us & vote (minimum one vote or as many as you choose)

As you earn more votes with each eligible purchase in-store or online, you can keep voting multiple times during the campaign! Hit the bullseye for our families with your vote today.



Around the House



Guest Services Coordinator, Karl Cubangbang & Ed Nishioka participated in the H4H Hoopathon.



Hoops 4 Hawaii's (H4H) second annual 24-hour Hoopathon took place on Father's Day weekend, raising \$18,784 each for both RMHC and Palama Settlement. A slam dunk for our families. L to R: Candace Asam-Lopez and Ed Nishioka of RMHC gratefully accept a check from H4H coordinators Jay Grasso, Jordan Kauwe, and Roger Dequina.



The Politski family of Kauai ready to enjoy donated Big Island Candies (BIC) Crunch Bars. RMHC Hawaii received a portion of the proceeds from sales of the popular bar in August, totaling \$2,500. Definitely a sweet treat and surprise!



Southwest Airlines employees from the Big Island, Maui and Oahu prepared meals for our families on three different occasions during the month of June. Their volunteer hours also add up to generate "Tickets for Time" flight awards for RMHC.



Students from Punahou School held a "pot painting" crafting activity with our families.



Dinner for the families prepared by the folks at Our Lady of Good Counsel School.



Mahalo to the Junior League of Honolulu for their generous donation from their Community Assistance Fund.

Ronald McDonald House Charities® Hawaii
1970 Judd Hillside Road
P.O. Box 61777
Honolulu, Hawaii 96839-1777
Phone: (808) 973-5683
info@rmhchawaii.org
www.RonaldHouseHawaii.org

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Hospitality Cart Launches at Kapiolani Medical Center

RMHC Hawaii unveiled their Hospitality Cart at Kapiolani Medical Center for Women & Children, aimed at providing comfort and support to families with babies in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU).

The Hospitality Cart brings a little slice of the Ronald House to the hospital offering families a variety of activities and refreshments to help pass the time and bring a sense of normalcy during their stay at the NICU. The cart has items for adults such as cards, adult coloring books, crossword and word search puzzles, mini-crafts, books and journals. For children, there are age-appropriate activities to keep them entertained, engaged, and smiling. In addition to activities the cart also offers a selection of beverages including coffee, tea, hot cocoa, bottled water, and assorted snacks – all free of charge for the families to enjoy.



You can play a role in bringing comfort to families by becoming a volunteer representative for our Hospitality Cart program. Greet, prepare, serve refreshments, replenish items, and help patients and their families pick out an activity from the cart. Most important skill is a welcoming hand and a caring heart.

To learn more about this and other volunteer opportunities contact: volunteering@rmhchawaii.org.



L to R: Dr. Barry Mizuo (Pediatrician at Kapiolani and 1st Vice Chair of the RMHC-HI Board of Directors), Gidget Ruscetta (Kapiolani COO), Ed Nishioka (President & CEO of RMHC-HI), and Mike Foutch (Vice President of Hospital Operations at Kapiolani) reveal our newest Hospitality Cart at a blessing on June 13th.