



AKRON

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Care Cables

Fall 2009

Ronald McDonald House of Akron's Newsletter to Friends

25 Years of Community Support

The Ronald McDonald House of Akron, the "house that love built"

The seeds of the Ronald McDonald House of Akron began with this mission statement: "Children's Family Care, Inc., has been founded by families for the purpose of providing a temporary home for those who have loved ones at Children's Hospital Medical Center. Our home will provide emotional, spiritual and mental support to all who live within these walls." On January 13, 1985, this became a reality with the opening of the House at the corner of State and Locust.

When Bill Considine joined Akron Children's Hospital as CEO in 1979, he began a review aimed at assessing the hospital's strengths and weaknesses. One deficiency identified was the lack of accommodations for patient's family members, especially since the hospital served a 17-county area in Northeastern Ohio. In September of 1982, Mr. Considine brought together the concept of a Ronald McDonald House for the Akron

area through an organizational meeting involving parents/volunteers, hospital staff, and local McDonald's owner/operators. With the vision of Mr. Considine and the leadership and fund-raising effort of Children's Family Care, Inc., the development of a Ronald McDonald House became a top priority.

Jerry O'Neil, Chairman of General Tire and Rubber Company, was selected as the capital campaign chairman, and the project was given a jumpstart by a pledge of \$400,000 by the Children's Hospital Women's Board and a pledge of \$200,000 over four years by 140 local McDonald's restaurants.

On April 1, 1984, a groundbreaking ceremony was held for the 17,000 square foot, 20 bedroom facility.

Children's Family Care, Inc., raised \$1.8 million for the House, so it was built debt-free. While there were many large pledges, the fund drive was "largely a community venture with hundreds of businesses,

organizations and individuals pitching in to make their dream possible."

Since 1985, the Ronald McDonald House of Akron has been the home away from home for thousands of families. Echoing the mission statement from Children's Family Care, it provides not just a bed and a warm meal for its residents, it gives them spiritual and emotional support. But, there have been many changes at Akron Children's Hospital that have impacted the House. In 2001, cardiac surgery began at the hospital. In 2002, the Haslinger Family Palliative Care Center was opened. In 2004, the PICU expanded from an 18-bed unit to a 29-bed unit. Also in 2004, the hospital began performing stem cell transplants with matched siblings; this year it performed its first matched, unrelated stem cell transplant, something which has a direct impact on Ronald McDonald House.

continued inside

On April 1, 1984, a groundbreaking ceremony was held for the 17,000 square foot, 20 bedroom facility.





Cory with his mom, Jennifer and grandmother, Pamela Martin.



Cory and his sister, Alexis Cameron.



Cory at Ronald McDonald House of Akron.

With an autologous transplant (one in which the patient's own stem cells are re-infused), the patient is hospitalized for 21 to 30 days, then discharged. In the case of an allogeneic transplant (one in which the stem cells are from a sibling or an unrelated, matched donor), the patient is hospitalized for about 35 days; upon discharge, they must reside within a thirty minute drive to Children's Hospital until "Day +100" (three months) post transplant. This is the time when the risk of infection and rejection of the graft is most critical.

Also during this time, the patient's immune system is suppressed, so many precautions must be taken.

This esoteric information became a hard reality for one family this past February.

Cory Martin is a normal 16-year-old boy. He likes car racing, building models and riding his bike. But on February 13 of this year, his life and the lives of his family changed forever. He was having symptoms generally associated with the flu: tiredness, upset stomach, lack of appetite. His mother, Jennifer Cameron, decided to take him to the emergency room at Fisher-Titus Hospital in Norwalk, Ohio. Within 45 minutes of their arrival—and

with no preparation emotionally—Jennifer was asked where she would like to have Cory life-flighted: Akron or Toledo. In the confusion of the moment Jennifer remembers the doctor saying the words "leukemia" and "bone marrow cancer". She also remembered that just after Cory was born, he had been treated at Akron Children's Hospital, and Jennifer recalled being impressed, so the decision about where to life-flight him was made.

In fact, Jennifer had stayed at the Ronald McDonald House sixteen years ago when Cory was an infant.

Cory was subsequently diagnosed with high-risk, Philadelphia chromosome positive acute lymphoblastic leukemia, and he was in need of a stem cell transplant. A matched, unrelated donor was found and on August 18, he was admitted to Akron Children's Hospital. He received his bone marrow transplant on August 27, and was discharged to Ronald McDonald House on September 30.

Since he and his mom will be staying at the House until December 5, the staff and Board at RMH had to make adjustments in order to be their home away from home.

Through a coordinated effort between the staff and Board at RMH and the stem cell transplant team at Children's, room 108 at the House was transformed into a self-contained living quarter. The room was cleaned extensively, a drop-leaf table was purchased for Cory and Jennifer to eat meals on, an existing daybed was moved into the room to make a sitting area, a sweeper and a microwave were provided for their use only. The hospital provided a small refrigerator, and cable was installed along with a TV and DVD player. Arrangements have been made so that Cory will receive the first helping of the evening meal; due to his fragile immune system, he will not be allowed to have leftover food or anything from the snack table which is not pre-packaged.

The Day Room downstairs was repurposed as well: the hospital has found a tutor for Cory and the former Day Room is now his classroom, complete with computer access for his laptop.

Jennifer says that Cory's disease and treatment have caused him to mature in a relatively short period of months. It has also changed the way he looks at life. Before his diagnosis, he wanted to be an auto mechanic. He now wants to be a nurse. And in a sign of his new maturity, he told his mom, "I don't need any presents for Christmas this year, I just want to be home with my family."

Since 1985, the size and scope of treatments available at Akron Children's Hospital has grown. As the needs of the hospital grow, the mission of Ronald McDonald House of Akron must grow as well to accommodate the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of its patients and their families.

I would like to thank Sue Neitz, BSN, RN, CNP, CPON, Stem Cell Transplant Coordinator, for her help in writing this article.



Phi Mu is an organization of women which, among other things, provides service to others. As a part of their National Philanthropy Day on October 19, they decided to make a donation to Ronald McDonald House of Akron to benefit Cory Martin. They donated a 22" TV with DVD player, an XBOX with controllers and games, and a Guitar Hero game, among other items. Phi Mu members are pictured above with the donations.

A Message From Our President

While the mission of the Ronald McDonald House of Akron will always be to provide a temporary home for those who have loved ones at Akron Children's Hospital, the nature of our service is continually evolving. This year marks the first year that we have housed two Bone Marrow Transplant patients and their families. This has required our House to meet the challenges of patient isolation and accessibility to the hospital, while continually providing the warmth of a home

away from home for an extended period of time. I would like to personally compliment our staff and board for having risen to the occasion to collaboratively provide the best and safest living environment for these young patients and their families.

We are committed to not only meet the needs of today's patients and families but also adapt to what the future may bring us. As we close our 24th successful year of operation and partnership with Akron



Cindy Misheff

Children's Hospital, we are thankful for the constant support of our volunteers, our donors, our Board, and the community. We have been blessed.

Thankfully,
Cindy Misheff

“I don't need any presents for Christmas this year, I just want to be home with my family.”

Cory Martin

A Little Change CAN Make A Big Difference!

Have you ever noticed the donation boxes located on the front counter and in the drive-thru of your local McDonald's® Restaurant? The coins dropped in the donation box are used by Ronald McDonald House Charities® of Northeastern Ohio, Inc. to help fund operating expenses of the Ronald McDonald House® and to award grants to children's programs in Northeastern Ohio. These quarters, dimes, nickels and pennies have added up to more than *Half A Million Dollars* to the Ronald McDonald House of Akron - helping us help families that call our house “a home” while their child receives medical treatment. So spread the word! Tell your friends, your co-workers, and your family members when they drop their change in the donation box at their local McDonald's restaurant they CAN make a big difference - they are helping Ronald McDonald House of Akron!



Pi-A-Palooza

The women of Alpha Delta Pi at the University of Akron hosted a new philanthropy event which raised \$1,048 for the Ronald McDonald House. The event was called Pi-A-Palooza and consisted of a cookout, a pie eating contest, a pie baking contest, a pie relay, and the chance to throw a pie at any Alpha Delta Pi member. The event was open to the entire campus and there was a great turnout. Everyone enjoyed both the food and the games... not to mention the messy whipped cream pies all over the basement! The event was a big success and will definitely be held again in years to come!

A Message From Our Resident Manager

As hard as it is to believe, the holidays are almost upon us. With all the whirl-wind of events this time of year brings, it is a good time to look back on the past year and reflect. I have been with the Ronald McDonald House of Akron for a year now; and what an amazing and extraordinary year it has been.

Of all the things I have experienced this year the one thing that always comes to the forefront is the generosity and giving I have seen come through the doors of this House.

Volunteers give thousands of hours of their time and talents.

Many organizations, groups of friends and relatives, individuals both young and old who make donations, bring in boxes of items from our wish list, contribute to our pop tab collection, bake cookies, prepare meals for our guests and much more. In fact many people give to our House and may not really be aware of it. Every time someone from the Community throws their extra change in the donation box at any McDonald's drive-thru or counter, our House benefits. I am often reminded of a quote by Sir Winston Churchill; "We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give."



Anne Collins

To all of you who make it possible for us to keep the doors of this House open and help us to make life just a bit easier for the parents of ill children, we thank you for your giving and caring that make our jobs here so rewarding. May you and your family and friends have a joyous holiday season and we hope the New Year brings peace and happiness.

Keeping Tabs On Pop

Ronald McDonald House Charities of Central Ohio reported in its 2004 newsletter that in 2003, they raised \$8,100 from pop tab recycling. When Anne Collins saw this simple fact she thought one thing: we can and should be doing this!

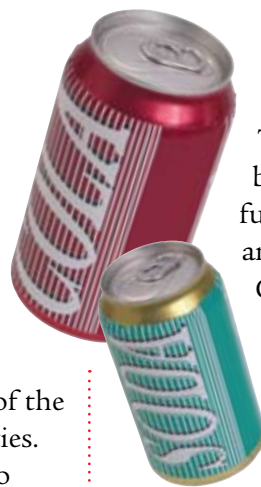
She presented her idea to the RMH Board, contacted NorthGreen Communications for Pop Tab Collection Houses, and a new avenue for revenue was born. To date, Ronald McDonald House of Akron has collected 792 gallons

of pop tabs for recycling. The tabs are collected in-house, but Anne is also encouraging local schools, businesses, organizations and private individuals to get involved.

After collection, the pop tabs are sold to a regional scrap metal dealer for recycling.

As Andy Staebell, President of Great Western Recycling Industries, Inc. says "We feel a great sense of accomplishment in knowing that we are helping in the creation of a community fund-raising program for one of the world's most recognized charities. We encourage other recyclers to get involved...." In fact, the beauty of this program is that anyone can get involved, from school-aged children to senior citizens. It is an added bonus that the program is ecologically friendly as well.

The Ronald McDonald House Charities Pop Tab Collection Program began in 1987, and in the United States it has raised over \$4 million. Anne hopes to use the money raised at the Ronald McDonald House of Akron for a specific in-house project.



To contact Anne to become a part of this fund-raising project and receive a Pop Tab Collection House, call her at RMH of Akron, 330.253.5400.



Kathy Seward helps Melinda Rice of BJ's Wholesale Club with a food and pop tab donation.

2009 Meal Donors

Many thanks to the following dining establishments, organizations and individuals who have provided meals to the Ronald McDonald House of Akron this year:

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| ♥ 356th Fighter Group | ♥ Elaine Hawthorne | ♥ Nick Triola Family |
| ♥ Agape Christian Fellowship | ♥ Emma Yoder | ♥ Pizza Hut |
| ♥ Akron Children's Hospital
Resident Doctors | ♥ Giant Eagle, Fairlawn | ♥ Rhodes Catering |
| ♥ Alpha Delta Pi | ♥ H & R Block | ♥ Rizzi's Ristorante & Pizzeria |
| ♥ Alpha Phi Omega | ♥ Happy Cookers
(Martha Mary Guild) | ♥ Rocco's Pizza |
| ♥ Altrusa International | ♥ Islamic Medical Assoc.-
NEOUCOM | ♥ Sadie Byler |
| ♥ Amy Geiser & friends | ♥ Jennifer Kupiec & friends | ♥ Sandy Adkins |
| ♥ Berlin NE Church | ♥ Jenny Jurkovic & friends | ♥ Scorchers |
| ♥ Beta Sigma Phi | ♥ Jesse Neidert & friends | ♥ Sharon & Mark Kohler |
| ♥ BJ's Wholesale Club | ♥ Jr. Mom's Club, Stow,
Munroe Falls, Silver Lake | ♥ Shisler's Cheese House |
| ♥ BW-3 | ♥ Julie LeFever | ♥ St. Anne's Circle,
St. Mary's Parish |
| ♥ Catering by Culinary Duet | ♥ JWCC | ♥ St. Hilary Brownie Troop
583, Maureen Vastagh |
| ♥ Charlotte Hosey & Koinonia
Sunday School gals | ♥ Katie Krystowski | ♥ Stephanie Allen & Family |
| ♥ Christ Child | ♥ Kirbie Family Meats &
Catering | ♥ Stutzman's Bi-Rite |
| ♥ Christie Long | ♥ Lisa Tweed | ♥ Subway |
| ♥ Color Our Rainbow | ♥ Little Caesars Pizza | ♥ Tangier's Restaurant |
| ♥ Cynthia's Edibles | ♥ Marilyn Yoder | ♥ The Spaghetti Warehouse |
| ♥ Debbie Smith | ♥ Michelle Boldt | ♥ Vikki & Rodney Shadie |
| ♥ DeVitis Italian
Market & Deli | ♥ Moe's Restaurant | ♥ Vinceen Davis & Jen Hajdu |
| ♥ Diamond Marcum & Family | ♥ Mustard Seed | ♥ Waterloo Restaurant |
| ♥ Dine In Diva | ♥ Nancy Walker Gerbetz, Luisa
Iturriaga, et al. | ♥ White House Chicken |
| ♥ E. Berlin Church | | ♥ Windemere School |
| ♥ Edna Miller | | ♥ Yocono's Restaurant |



Our Wish List

Please check this list of items and foods that we so often need at our House. We're thankful for all the businesses, groups and individuals who refill our pantry and storerooms.

Before making a large donation, we ask that you call 330-253-5400 to set up a delivery time.

- | | |
|--|---|
| Stouffer's or
Lean Cuisine
entrees
(individual servings) | White vinegar |
| Potato chips,
pretzels, etc.
(individual servings) | Boxed cereal |
| Sweet potatoes/
yams | Canned fruit
(15 oz - 29 oz cans
are best) |
| Canned
mushrooms | Canned
cranberries |
| Mixed
vegetables | Fruit Juices |
| Salad dressing
(Ranch, French, etc.) | Cheese
(shredded,
slices or blocks) |
| Miracle Whip | Fresh fruit |
| Beef broth | Vanilla pudding
(boxed) |
| Noodles | Sugar |
| Boxed potato
mixes (scalloped,
au gratin, etc.) | Brown sugar |
| Cream of
chicken soup | Chocolate chips |
| Cream of
celery soup | Nuts for baking |
| Durkee's French
fried onions | Paper towels |
| | Laundry
detergent |
| | Grocery Store
gift certificates |
| | B J's gift
certificates |

Volunteers— Heart of the House

Where would we be without our volunteers at the Ronald McDonald House? They are the first voice you hear on our phones and the first smile that greets our families and visitors, making them comfortable and welcome.

The goal of our volunteers is to make each family's stay as easy and uncomplicated as possible. Our volunteers are the heart and soul of our success over the years. The part they play in our daily operations and family services is essential, and they are vital to our special events.

As we begin our 25th year of service at the Ronald McDonald

House of Akron, the "house that love built" continues to provide a unique "home away from home" for families of ill children undergoing treatment at Akron Children's Hospital.

Since 1985, our house has provided the comforts of home for more than 26,000 families in Ohio, 40 additional states and four foreign countries. This could not have been done without the help of these wonderful and dedicated volunteers.

They are the people responsible for the "house that love built," the Ronald McDonald House of Akron, Ohio, and we salute them.

If you would like more information about the Ronald McDonald House or are interested in becoming part of our volunteer family, please contact Peg Deemer, Volunteer Coordinator or Resident House Manager Anne Collins at 330.253.5400, or email jpdeem@hotmail.com.

The Spirit of Community

The Ronald McDonald House of Akron has been truly blessed by the generosity of many individuals, organizations and businesses from Akron and the surrounding communities who have given donations of food and materials, as well as their time. These are pictures of just a few of the generous people who donate to our House.

Below is a list of just some of the groups and individuals who have supported our House in the past few months. To them, and the countless others who have also lent a helping hand to our House, we offer our heartfelt thanks.

- ♥ AAA - Akron Auto Club
- ♥ Akron Beacon Journal
- ♥ Akron Children's Hospital
- ♥ Akron Zoological Park
- ♥ Alpha Delta Pi
- ♥ American Legion #244 Auxiliary
- ♥ Amy Reilly
- ♥ Angelina Cardina
- ♥ Anita Fott
- ♥ Applebee's - Dine to Donate
- ♥ Bath Grange #1331
- ♥ Bernard Ruhaak
- ♥ Bissell, Inc. - Homecare Div.
- ♥ Brand Source
- ♥ Canal Fulton Christian Fellowship
- ♥ Carl Peppard
- ♥ Cascade Locks Park Association
- ♥ Center for Individual & Family Services
- ♥ Chuck Myers
- ♥ Cintas
- ♥ City of Akron, Traffic Engineering
- ♥ Coca Cola Bottling Co. of Akron
- ♥ Community of Christ Church
- ♥ ConKerr Cancer
- ♥ Cuyahoga Falls Senior Strollers
- ♥ Danette Cozart
- ♥ Daniel Winkler
- ♥ Debbie Baughman
- ♥ Delta Theta Tau Sorority
- ♥ Dillard's, Summit Mall
- ♥ Dunkin' Donuts
- ♥ Eberhardt Landscaping & Lawn Service
- ♥ Ecolab
- ♥ Edith Weisend
- ♥ Embroider Your Own
- ♥ Ernst & Young, Jr. Beam Team
- ♥ First United Methodist Church, Women's Group
- ♥ George Galehouse, DDS
- ♥ Georgia Pacific
- ♥ Giant Eagle #4096
- ♥ Graf Growers
- ♥ Green School District
- ♥ Home Depot #3841
- ♥ InSinkErator
- ♥ James Reinhardt
- ♥ Jane Collins
- ♥ Janice Smith
- ♥ JoAnn Fabrics
- ♥ John & Shirley Kay
- ♥ John Swisher
- ♥ Junior Women's League, Canfield
- ♥ JWCC
- ♥ K.I.S.S. Quilters
- ♥ Kassie Petrick
- ♥ Kate Pistone
- ♥ Katee Hogue
- ♥ Katie Evans
- ♥ Ken Westfield
- ♥ Kenneth Cutrer
- ♥ Krispy Kreme Donuts
- ♥ Land O'Lakes
- ♥ Larry Kerr
- ♥ Lincoln Elementary School
- ♥ Louis Greco
- ♥ Luann White
- ♥ Mark Hines
- ♥ Martha Mary Guild
- ♥ Mickey Whitehurst
- ♥ Milliron Iron & Metal
- ♥ Mitchell Barcus
- ♥ Monica Peritt
- ♥ Mt. Pleasant United Methodist Church
- ♥ Mt. Zion Lutheran Church
- ♥ New London Elementary School
- ♥ North Akron Kiwanis
- ♥ North Ridgeville High School
- ♥ PPG Industries Foundation
- ♥ Reiter Dairy
- ♥ Robert Schneider
- ♥ Robert Selby
- ♥ Roger Waring Family
- ♥ Romaine Coniglio
- ♥ Ronald McDonald House Charities of Northeastern Ohio
- ♥ Rubber City McDonald's
- ♥ Sam's Club #4750
- ♥ Shearer Foods Inc.
- ♥ Shirley Zimmerman
- ♥ Sisters Flower Hous Three
- ♥ Springfield High School
- ♥ St. Joseph Catholic Grade School
- ♥ St. Luke's Senior Day Center
- ♥ Stephen Lattocha
- ♥ Stow Hampton Inn
- ♥ Susan Crawford
- ♥ Tanya Williams
- ♥ Target
- ♥ Temperature Control
- ♥ Terry McFeeders
- ♥ TNT Exterminators
- ♥ United Appliances Inc.
- ♥ University of Akron, Circle K
- ♥ Vina Smith
- ♥ William DeCesare
- ♥ Xi Lambda Lambda Sorority
- ♥ Zeta Tau Alpha Alumnae



A group of University of Akron nursing students toured the House.



Beth Leipold presents a check for the JWCC golf outing to Cindy Misbeff.



Cindy Misbeff and Ann Newman of RMH Charities of Northeast Ohio.



Copley-Fairlawn Brownie Troop 430 toured RMH in April.

25 Years of...

Five thousand hours. That equates to 208 full days. Or 625 eight-hour work days. Over nearly twenty-five years, that is how many hours Joan Robinson has volunteered at Ronald McDonald House. In 1955, she retired from her secretarial position at Goodyear to raise her children; then in 1985, Joan saw an advertisement for volunteers at the new Ronald McDonald House of Akron. She and her mother decided to check it out. They were among the first group to volunteer, starting on the Tuesday morning shift. At that time, Blanche Davy was the resident manager and the sole employee, with many of the tasks that are now done by RMH staff being done by volunteers. This is one of the many changes Joan has seen. During her orientation in 1985, the volunteers were taken to a room in Akron Children's Hospital and coached about how to interact with guests at the house. They were advised to be helpful and to listen to families, but not to ask questions.

Joan has worked with three resident managers: Blanche Davy, Sara Watkins and Anne Collins; she has worked with a variety of volunteers, and she has worked with... a penguin! About 13 or 14 years ago, on a snowy winter day, some employees of Sea World in Aurora brought two penguins, Penney and Pete, to the House. Penney was a bit cranky that day and stayed in the van, but Pete came into the House to a few surprised children, as well as Blanche, Joan, and the other volunteers. Pete apparently enjoyed himself and felt quite at home until they decided to take him outside to the courtyard to let him go down the slide. It became clear that Pete



Joan Robinson, RMH Volunteer for nearly 25 years.

Sea World penguin "Pete" surprised children, as well as Blanche, Joan, and the other volunteers.



was an "indoor" penguin and did not like the cold!

Blanche Davy clearly had an inside "line" with Sea World. Joan told me that at one point a fish in the tank at the House became so large (almost the size of the tank!) that it was taken to Sea World. One wonders if this is where the current sign warning about feeding the fish originated.

Joan also remembers fondly the parties at the House over the years: a going-away party in Blanche's apartment, various birthday parties in the House. But the biggest party Joan is involved with is part of one of her other volunteer projects—the Oktoberfest in Cuyahoga Falls. Twenty-eight years ago, at the urging of her neighbor, Emil Czetli, Joan became involved as the secretary for the event, a position she still holds today. The Oktoberfest is a three-day event on the mall in Cuyahoga Falls, and hosts 50,000 to 60,000 people.

As a nonprofit, the money raised goes toward pontoon boats for the river, scholarships, the Falls Cancer Club, the YMCA and Muscular Dystrophy research, to name a few. As well as her secretarial duties, Joan also hosts an annual banquet for the Oktoberfest workers at the Quirk Cultural Center. With the size of the event, the planning committee meets year round.

In the nearly twenty-five years Joan has volunteered at RMH, she has seen many changes. Her children are grown; she now has five grandchildren. She now completes three volunteer shifts every two weeks, adding up to an astounding 400-500 volunteer hours each year at the House. Over this time, staff has changed, volunteers have changed, the wallpaper and furniture has changed. What is Joan's best memory of her time at RMH?

"Just being here. I enjoy being here."



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The Ronald McDonald House of Akron does not share your personal information (i.e., name, address).

Who to Call

For **volunteer opportunities**, either on a regular basis or for special needs, call Peg Deemer at 330.253.5400.

For information on organizing a **fundraising event**, call Sheldon Barlette at 330.253.5400.

If your group or organization needs a **speaker** to discuss our mission, call Anne Collins at 330.253.5400.

Mission

The Ronald McDonald House of Akron was founded by families for the purpose of providing a temporary house for those who have loved ones at Akron Children's Hospital. Our home provides emotional, spiritual and mental support to all who live within these walls.