



Fall - Winter 2007

Care Cables

Ronald McDonald House of Akron's Newsletter to Friends

Amy & Tim Monteith's Incredible Journey



Joseph, Tim, and Amy Monteith

Tim and I were married the summer of 2002, a month after we graduated from college. Tim started Seminary that fall, as well as a part-time job as a youth pastor. We found out we were expecting in December of that year. The pregnancy started just fine, perfect really. However, at week 21, I went in to see my doctor for what we thought was something “normal,”

only to be rushed by ambulance to Akron General Hospital. I was starting to dilate, and my water broke that night.

Now anybody who knows a little bit about pregnancies knows that babies at 21 weeks don't really survive. As one doctor put it, “they don't even have skin yet.” In writing this and remembering all of this, I don't know how or why we were allowed to choose to try to continue in the pregnancy, except that God's hand was in it all. Babies also need amniotic fluid in order for their lungs to develop and grow and there was hardly any measurable amount after my water broke. Keep this in mind as I continue the story.

I spent the next six weeks confined to a hospital bed that kept me at an angle where my feet were higher than my head. Joseph was born via

emergency c-section at 26 weeks, 5 days. He weighed 2 pounds, 3 ounces, and was 13 inches long.

Joseph was a very sick baby and spent over 3 months of his life in the NICU of Akron Children's Hospital. He was on a ventilator for 70 days, had a PDA Ligation when he was 3 weeks old, had multiple blood transfusions, at least one or two infections, a hernia repair, and a feeding tube.

They finally let us hold Joseph for the first time when he was three weeks old, on the night before his PDA Ligation.



Tim & 3 month old Joseph

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“The Lord has done great things for us and we are filled with joy.” (Psalm 126:3)

Lend Your Support This Holiday Season

Although the actual cost of providing a room for a family is much greater, the Ronald McDonald House of Akron only asks for a modest \$10 per night donation. While many families have difficulty covering this cost as medical and personal bills begin to accumulate, our doors remain open to everyone—regardless of their ability to pay.

To assist families who cannot afford the daily charge, our “Share a Night Fund” was set up to cover these fees.

Every \$10 that you contribute will help underwrite the cost of accommodations and meals for one family for a day—and provide them with peace of mind knowing that their hospitalized child is only moments away.

Please see the Share a Night insert for details on how to donate.



The Steps to Recovery

We each got five minutes of snuggle time, and then he was put back in his islet. Those were the most precious 10 minutes we'd had in the past two months.

There are a lot of hard cold facts that are part of the NICU, and part of having a sick child. And they are just that: hard, cold facts. They come in the form of statistics and probabilities, of not being able to hold your new baby, of having to be away from your child when he or she is sick. They are the consequences of being born too early. There were many, many times when we were told that Joseph "may not make it." And we were told more than we wanted to hear about the likelihood of him having this problem or that problem if he did make it. Our parents were told at different times in our journey that he probably "wouldn't last the weekend." There were many times when we believed it.

About three months into our stay at Children's, the doctors approached us and let us know that Joseph would be coming home in a few short weeks. It was the best day of our lives. All we could do was laugh! Those next two weeks flew by, as we weren't ready at home for him (after all, we didn't know if he'd be coming home at all), and we had to take special classes to learn about how to care for him. Although he had needed the ventilator to survive and grow, it had damaged his lungs leaving him with a condition called Broncho Pulmonary Dysplasia, (BPD). This would require him to come home on oxygen, a heart and apnea monitor, and a feeding tube. There was a lot to learn!

After spending six weeks at Akron General, and three and a half

months in the NICU at Akron Children's, we were finally able to go home as a family. We felt like we had our very own hospital room at home. We had a visiting nurse that came a few times a week, lots of doctor visits, and we had to take him back to the hospital for a week after we brought him home. We brought him home the fall of 2003, and we weren't allowed to take him out of the house until that following spring, except to take him to the doctor's, and we had to limit visitors to adults who were not sick. We were told not to let him play with other children until he was 2 years old.

Joseph was on oxygen until he was 18 months old. He was on a feeding tube for two and a half years. Joseph has seen a lot of doctors, mainly just to make sure everything is working right. He also had to do physical, speech, and occupational therapy for a long time. He has recently been dismissed from occupational and speech therapies, and those were mainly for his feeding issues, which are now pretty much resolved.

We spent over 100 days at the Ronald McDonald House. We cannot imagine having gone through this experience without it! Our home was in Ashland, Ohio at the time, and although some parents live further away, the thought of being that far away from our sick baby was unbearable. Since it was summer time, Tim was not in school (although he had a lot of catch up work from the previous semester that he had to finish due to me being in the hospital), so we were able to basically live at the RMH for the summer.

Because our home was an hour and a half away from the hospital, RMH provided a home away from home, allowing us to be as close as we could possibly be to our new baby. We were allowed to stay as long as we needed to...so we did! Additionally, RMH took some of the stress off our shoulders in having to deal with day-to-day things like meals and a place to do laundry. It was less expensive for us to "live" there for the summer than it would have been to drive to Akron every day. We would have had to pay for gas, parking, meals out, etc.

The Ronald McDonald House provided a quiet place where we could rest any time we needed, as well as free passes to the YMCA down the street, so we could have a way to release some of the stress. Meals, phone cards and the opportunity to connect with parents whose children were sick were some other benefits.

Because I had been confined to a bed so long that all of my muscles had basically atrophied, I had to use a walker and get physical therapy for a few weeks after I was out of the hospital. RMH gave us a first floor room so I wouldn't have to use the steps. There was also a handicap accessible bathroom on the first floor.

"We spent over 100 days at the Ronald McDonald House. We cannot imagine having gone through this experience without it!"

The staff was incredibly warm and encouraging, always asking how things were going and if we needed anything. They made sure we had a desk in our room, as Tim was still trying to continue in his schooling. Because we were there during a few holidays, staff and volunteers provided special holiday meals.

One of the staff approached me a morning or two after we got there. I was using my walker and slowly making my way to the kitchen for breakfast. I was completely and utterly overwhelmed with everything that was going on. She was so kind and asked how "Joe" was doing that morning. The truth was, he wasn't doing well at all, I was in a lot of pain physically, and it was about all I could do to keep back the tears. I just shook my head "no." I couldn't speak, but I didn't have to. She didn't ask anything else, but put her hand on my shoulder and said something like, "Not such a good day today." That was enough for me to feel comforted that morning. She didn't have to understand or know

everything, and she didn't have to say anything else. It was just enough to know that she sincerely cared and noticed.

Joseph turned 4 years old this past June. Other than being a little short, he is perfectly normal. His lungs and heart are strong and healthy. He is very active. He runs, jumps, hops, rolls, and dances. He is a smart kid. He loves maps, books, and music. He is starting to read, and has a memory like nobody else we know. He loves to play with anything automotive related, and has just taken a liking to pretend play. He'll talk your ear off if you let him, and he has a fire in him that is not easily quenched. He learned how to ride his bike this summer, and by the

time you read this, he will be a big brother. One look at him and you'd probably never know that he had such a rough start. But if you did, if you really knew where we've been, you'd be amazed!! God took an extremely hopeless situation and turned it into nothing short of a miracle. We're so thankful to have had such good medical care and a place like the Ronald McDonald House to call home during such a difficult time.



Joseph's 4th birthday!



Tim, Amy & Joseph just welcomed Jonathan James in September.

A SUCCESSFUL 23RD ANNUAL GOLF CLASSIC

The **Junior Women's Civic Club**, along with **KeyBank**, **Akron Children's Hospital** and **McDonald's of Greater Akron**, hosted the 23rd Annual Charity Golf Classic at the Silver Lake Country Club.

It was a great summer day and golfers turned out to support our Ronald McDonald House. **Golfers raised over \$26,500 for this event.** Many thanks to the golfers and corporations who participated.

Next year's Golf Classic is going to be held at the Portage Country Club on June 23, 2008. Circle that date on your calendar NOW so that you won't miss this wonderful opportunity to have fun AND help raise needed funds for our RMH house!

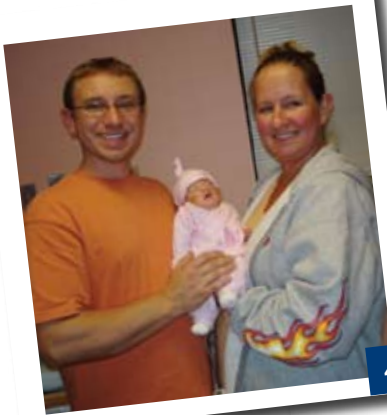


JWCC Members Angie Matesevac and Cindy Farver (left) present a check for \$25,500 to Sara Watkins and Kathy Seward as JWCC President, Beth Leipold (right) looks on.

Next year's event will be held at the Portage Country Club on June 23, 2008.

MISSION: Accomplished

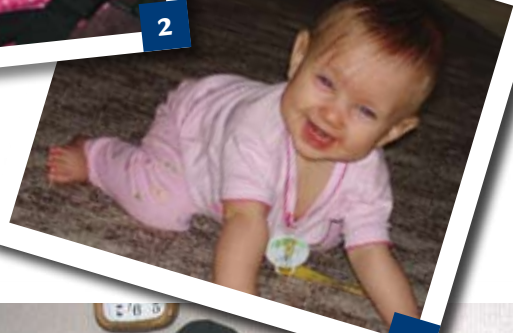
Providing a “home away from home” for the families of children who are being treated at Akron Children’s Hospital is our mission. When we receive words of thanks from grateful families, it helps affirm that we are fulfilling our objective.



Our daughter, Emma Riley, was born on August 18th, 2006, 8 ½ weeks early, weighing 3 pounds 9 ounces and 15 ½ inches long. Emma was in the NICU for a long 24 days, so we had the pleasure of staying at the Ronald McDonald House. We live over an hour away from Akron and RMH gave me comfort in knowing that I could be close to Emma if she needed me. Because of his job during the week, my husband was able to stay with me on the weekends.

The staff and volunteers were friendly, very helpful and always asked how things were going. The other families were great in offering their support; after all, we were all in similar situations. We could relate to one another with the same worries and fears about our babies. The Ronald McDonald House took an overwhelming and stressful experience in our family's life and made it very positive and rewarding. The House is definitely a blessing from God.

Mark and Debi Carroll



To share your personal experiences at our House or the latest picture of your child, please send your letters and photos by email to sara@rmhakron.org or mail them to the House at the address on the back cover.

1. Keith and Recarla Samples take home baby Makaylab, after being with us 100 days.
2. One year old Zaya Slutz Hasham visits our house. Zaya's parents, Ayaz and Bridgett, were here for over 80 days, while Zaya was in the NICU.
3. Joellen Hummel holds baby Maylee on a return visit to Ronald McDonald House.
4. Mark and Debi Carrol with Baby Emma Riley, leaving the NICU.
5. Healthy and happy, Emma Riley at 16 lbs. and 28 inches long.
6. Donnie and Tracee get ready to take 5 month old Destini home after surgery.

2007 Meal Donors

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



Dave Wong from Rizzi's Ristorante & Pizzeria brings in pizza for our families.

- ♥ Altrusa International
- ♥ Amelia Malek
- ♥ Amy Geiser & friends
- ♥ Beta Sigma Phi
- ♥ Bobbi Krannich & friends
- ♥ Buca di Beppo
- ♥ BW-3
- ♥ Capri Pizza & Wings
- ♥ Christ Child
- ♥ Crooked River Grill
- ♥ Crown Plaza, Quaker Square
- ♥ DeVitis Italian Market & Deli
- ♥ Diamond Marcum
- ♥ East Elm Grove Church
- ♥ Elaine Hawthorne
- ♥ Ellet High School - FTA
- ♥ Emma Yoder & friends
- ♥ Giant Eagle
- ♥ Girl Scout Troup #150
- ♥ Greystone Catering
- ♥ House of Hunan
- ♥ Jasper's
- ♥ Jen Hajdu
- ♥ Jesse Neidert & friends
- ♥ Junior Women's Club of Stow, Munroe Falls & Silver Lake
- ♥ Junior Women's Civic Club
- ♥ Kathy Dieckman & friends
- ♥ Kirbie Family Meats & Catering
- ♥ Laurie Esposito, Crites family & friends
- ♥ Maria Plouse
- ♥ Mark & Sharon Kohler
- ♥ Maureen Vastagh
- ♥ Menches Brothers Restaurant
- ♥ Moe's Restaurant
- ♥ Mt. Hope New Order Fellowship
- ♥ Mustard Seed Market & Café
- ♥ Nick Triola Family
- ♥ Pizza Hut
- ♥ Ravenna Church of Christ Youth

- ♥ Rhodes Catering
- ♥ Rizzi's Ristorante & Pizzeria
- ♥ Rocco's Pizza
- ♥ Sally & Jim Casenhiser
- ♥ Shishler's Cheese House
- ♥ Spaghetti Warehouse
- ♥ Stephanie Allen & family
- ♥ Stutzman's Bi-Rite
- ♥ Subway
- ♥ Tangier's Restaurant
- ♥ Todaro's Party Center
- ♥ Vikki & Rodney Shadie & family
- ♥ Vinceen Davis
- ♥ Waterloo Restaurant
- ♥ White House Chicken
- ♥ Windemere Elementary School
- ♥ 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.

In order to avoid duplicates, please call us at 330-253-5400, before making a large donation. We also request that you call to set up a delivery time if you will be dropping off a large donation.

- | | |
|---|---|
| Stouffer's or Lean Cuisine entrees <i>(individual servings)</i> | Parmesan cheese |
| Juices <i>(individual servings)</i> | Canned chicken |
| Cheese <i>(shredded, slices or blocks)</i> | Canned pasta <i>(Spaghetti's, etc.)</i> |
| Fresh fruit | White vinegar |
| Potato chips, pretzels, etc. <i>(individual servings)</i> | Corn muffin mixes |
| Green beans | Boxed cereal |
| Corn | Sugar |
| Salad dressing <i>(Ranch, French, etc.)</i> | Nuts for baking |
| Miracle Whip | Brownie mixes |
| Barbecue sauce | Frosting <i>(canned)</i> |
| Onion soup mix | Popcorn |
| Durkee's French fried onions | Paper Towels |
| Beef broth | Kleenex |
| Canned mushrooms | Laundry detergent |
| Boxed potato mixes <i>(scalloped, au gratin, etc.)</i> | Dryer softener sheets |
| Stuffing mixes | Liquid automatic dishwasher soap |
| Vegetable soup | Phone cards |
| | Grocery store gift certificates |
| | B J's gift certificates |
| | Canned pineapple |
| | Mandarin oranges |

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 pictures represent 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.

- ♥ Aaron & Esther Mast
- ♥ Alpha Delta Pi
- ♥ Apostolic Christian Church
- ♥ Brad & Carrie Barker
- ♥ Bruce J. Wills
- ♥ Cargill Sunny Fresh
- ♥ Center for Individual & Family Services
- ♥ Chapel Hill Tower 2 Residence Club
- ♥ Charlotte Hosey
- ♥ Cheryl & Bill Graham
- ♥ Christ Child Society
- ♥ Christine Hooker
- ♥ Cindy Hendricks
- ♥ Coventry High School National Honor Society
- ♥ Cuyahoga Falls Senior Strollers
- ♥ De & Art Friedman
- ♥ Dean Larsen & Dawn Barrett
- ♥ Debbie Gilmore
- ♥ Diane Dekauy
- ♥ Doylestown United Methodist Church
- ♥ Dunkin' Donuts
- ♥ Elizabeth Wright
- ♥ Evelyn Moran
- ♥ First Congregational Church of Tallmadge
- ♥ Gary & Florence Liedel
- ♥ Great Lakes Baking Co.
- ♥ Helen Peternell
- ♥ Janelle & Scott Maruna

- ♥ Jason & Julie Pugh
- ♥ Joe Hudson
- ♥ John Klein
- ♥ Judith Samuelson
- ♥ Julie & Andrew Jones
- ♥ K.I.S.S. Quilters
- ♥ Karen & Mike Beck
- ♥ Kate Pistone
- ♥ Kathryn Williard
- ♥ Katie Evans & family
- ♥ Krispy Kreme Donuts
- ♥ Levi & Betty Weaver
- ♥ Lincoln Elementary School
- ♥ Living Faith Church
- ♥ Main Street Gourmet
- ♥ Maralyn Yanko
- ♥ Mark & Brenda Thomas
- ♥ Mark & Martina DiStaulo
- ♥ Martha Mary Guild
- ♥ McDonald's of Akron
- ♥ Melanie & John Schaar
- ♥ Michael & Sharon McCoy
- ♥ Michele Sandridge & Dave Russo
- ♥ Mike & Tannis Langsdorf
- ♥ Milark Industries, Inc.
- ♥ Mrs. Sutter's Kindergarten Class
- ♥ NE Ohio Chapter, McDonald's Collectors Club
- ♥ Nicholas Klespies
- ♥ Nicole Taggart
- ♥ Norma Haney
- ♥ Order of Eastern Star - Falls Chapter #245
- ♥ Pat Lallathin
- ♥ Phyllis Vinez
- ♥ Portage Lakes AARP #2213
- ♥ PPG Industries Foundation
- ♥ R. Eileen Daniels
- ♥ Ralph & Elaine Eberly
- ♥ Ramblin' Rods
- ♥ Sam's Club #4750
- ♥ Sandy Delaria
- ♥ Sandy Kuhnhein
- ♥ Shearer Foods, Inc.



Volunteers Georgeann & Richard Clark bring a donated dinner from Subway of Akron.

- ♥ Sisters Flower Haus
- ♥ Snap-On Business Solutions
- ♥ St. Cyril & Methodius Church, St. Anne's Society
- ♥ St. Jacob's Lutheran Church
- ♥ St. Luke's Lutheran Church Women
- ♥ Stampin' Up
- ♥ Sue Rinkes
- ♥ Susan & Rex Panepucci
- ♥ Susie Biscotti Cookie Company
- ♥ Terah Johnson
- ♥ Tracie Harmon
- ♥ United Methodist Church, Friendship Circle
- ♥ Vaughn Morrison
- ♥ Vickie Lyons
- ♥ WAOSPHCC
- ♥ West High Golden Girls
- ♥ Wooster Motor Ways & Wooster Post Ohio State Highway Patrol



The Neidert family and friends had a cookout for the House.



JWCC member, Melissa Walker arrives with a Thursday meal.



Amelia Malek brings homemade stuffed shells and Italian bread.



Elaine Hawthorne, daughter, Diane and grandson William bring a meatloaf dinner.

A Message From Our President

Well, another summer has come and gone, and hopefully with a beautiful autumn to follow. One thing is certain: beautiful or otherwise, this fall, like everything else, will eventually come to an end, and with it my term as president of the board of trustees of our Akron Ronald McDonald House. It has been a great privilege to be allowed to serve in this position, and I am grateful to the other members of the board for having given me the opportunity to do so.

I must say that being president has been not only a fulfilling experience, but also a very interesting one. The past two years have been busy, eventful, challenging, and sometimes stressful, but always rewarding. And being given the chance to work in this capacity with the board and with our wonderful volunteers has been something I will never forget. As has been pointed out many times, our house runs on volunteers, and we are truly gifted to have so many wonderful and highly committed people who continually give of their time and effort to make our house a place of peace and comfort. We are also extremely fortunate to have an active, involved and dedicated board of trustees; it is a hands-on, working type of board, and although we may not always agree, we can honestly say that at the end of the day everything we do is done with the best interests of the house in mind.

However, I would like to give special thanks and recognition to our incredible staff. While the board and the volunteers may be the head and the hands of the house, our staff provides the heartbeat that keeps this place running. This little group of amazingly dedicated people work small (and sometimes large) wonders of an endless variety, and on a daily basis, in ways that most of us never get to see and appreciate. In the face of all the kinds of challenges a facility like ours can produce they still manage to keep things running along smoothly day after day. Because they work with families, many of them very young, who are dealing with fear and trauma, they have been faced with every conceivable situation, things with which most of us will never be confronted. And they have consistently responded with love (although sometimes it has to be tough love), and always handled things with grace and dignity. I cannot count the times I have heard residents comment on how well our staff has treated them, and how much the concern and compassion that they have been shown have meant to them. Over these past two years I have come to the realization that our staff does not work here simply for the money, because the value of what they do far exceeds our ability to pay.

Rather, most of their efforts come from the heart; this place has simply gotten into their blood, and they serve it with a dedication and commitment that can only be explained by love. These are remarkable people, and it has truly been an honor to work with them.

And now my term, like the season itself, is soon coming to an end. There were challenges to be sure, but together we met and overcame them, and I think today our house is stronger and more relevant than ever before. As we look to the future, we can be confident that the Ronald McDonald House of Akron will remain a vital service to the community, and will continue to nurture and support our resident families, both physically and emotionally, in a place that is truly a home away from home, the House that Love Built.

And so in the spirit of that love, let me once again extend my best wishes to everyone; may you have that beautiful autumn, and follow it with a blessed, joyous and safe holiday season.



Volunteers Elaine Forsch (center) Carol Vargo (right) accept wish list items from Mitzvah Day Volunteer, Alauna Redfern (left).



Gina from Rocco's of Cuyahoga Falls brings an evening meal.



Board Member Cindy Misheff receives a check from Doc Ramage of Wooster Motor Ways (left) and Lt. Chad Enderby, Wooster Post of Ohio State Police (right).



Don McCardle and Cindy Misheff hold a tray from Giant Eagle.



Ronald McDonald House® of Akron, Inc.
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Ronald McDonald House of Akron

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Who to Call

For **volunteer opportunities** – either on a regular basis or for special needs – call Sara Watkins or Kathy Seward 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 Sara Watkins at 330.253.5400.

Mission

The Ronald McDonald House of Akron was founded by families for the purpose of providing 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.