



AROUND the HOUSE

The Magazine for Ronald McDonald House of New York, Inc.

TRANSFORMATION PARENTS WHO JOINED THE RMDH TEAM



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* RMDH's
Award winning
volunteer teams



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provides temporary housing "a home away from home" for pediatric cancer patients and their families. The House provides families a supportive and caring environment which encourages and nurtures the development of child-to-child and parent-to-parent support systems. Ronald McDonald House in New York City is the largest facility of its type in the world.



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PRESIDENT'S LETTER



Frank Volino, Chief Financial Officer (left) and Bill Sullivan, President

DEAR FRIENDS,

I think everyone I encounter lately asks: "Where did the summer go?" Can you believe it's November? The Fall is a time of change as leaves turn color and we prepare for the holiday season, closing out yet another year. 2008 will mark our 30th Anniversary as a charity and we will have a year-long celebration of this great accomplishment.

Here at the Ronald McDonald House, many changes are occurring. Our long term Chief Financial Officer, Frank Volino, will retire after 17 years of service and begin enjoying a slower, well deserved pace in retirement. For many years, Frank has been an anchor to our financial stability and stewardship and we will miss our friend, but wish him all the best.

This issue will feature many of our friends who work hard raising funds to help our kids and families. Our friends at Business Traveler magazine, Happy Faces Foundation, Build-a-Bear Workshop Foundation and the Heller Family Foundation will all be featured for their meaningful contributions this past year.

Also, you will meet a wonderful Board Member, Judy Gilbert, whose enthusiasm is contagious to all who work with her. Several of our own Ronald McDonald House employees were once House guests and patients and you'll hear their stories of how the House helped them. Likewise, you'll read about some of our exciting year-end fundraising events and a great story of Alyssa Sylva and her family, who are long-term stays at our facility.

As you celebrate Thanksgiving with your family and friends, as I will with mine, I want you to know that I hold your support and your friendship as a very special blessing. Thank you again for all you have done for Ronald McDonald House and the children and families we serve.

And on behalf of the children, families, volunteers, and staff, I wish you and your family a very Happy Thanksgiving and a joyous Holiday Season!

Sincerely,

William T. Sullivan
President and Chief Executive Officer

WHAT'S NEW AT YOUR HOUSE?

BUILD-A-BEAR WORKSHOP FOUNDATION

STUFFED WITH HUGS



THE BUILD-A-BEAR WORKSHOP FOUNDATION RECENTLY DONATED over

1,000 bears to the Ronald McDonald House of New York. To see the joy of our kids hugging their stuffed bears is to understand how much these

gifts mean. Amazingly, Build-a-Bear brought tennis superstar Serena Williams to hang out with the RMDH kids and families as they built their own bears. It was a very special

event, and one the Ronald McDonald House will continue to receive benefits from for many months to come. In addition, the Workshop Foundation has donated almost \$30,000 over the last two years to support programs for Ronald McDonald House children.

Many thanks go from RMDH to the Build-a-Bear Workshop Foundation and Serena Williams for their tremendous support of our kids.



THE HELLER FOUNDATION

THE GIFT OF ENTERTAINMENT



MANY OF THE RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE CHILDREN – after high-risk surgery or during cycles of chemotherapy – are required by medical conditions to remain in their rooms for long periods, often in isolation. We can all imagine how hard this would be for any of us, but for the active and growing bodies and minds of young people it is a particular challenge.

Enter the **Heller Family Foundation**. After years of ancient TV sets with no plug-ins for DVD and gaming systems, Shelly Talan, a House volunteer, mentioned a request for new TVs to Joyce and Ron Heller, who run their family's foundation. The Hellers didn't hesitate for a second to respond, and even went beyond all expectation by funding a Hi-Definition TV and DVD player for each of the House's 84 family rooms. Now our amazing kids have new options to be entertained, or simply distracted from physical discomfort, on their paths to health and recovery.

Among many other initiatives, the Heller Family Foundation also cosponsors the annual Juvenile Diabetes Foundation Walk-a-Thon in Atlanta, and opened the Heller Diagnostic Center at Lynn University for diagnosing learning disabilities in students. Thank you **Heller Family Foundation!**

BUSINESS TRAVELER MAGAZINE

FLIGHTS OF CHARITY



Business Traveler magazine went the distance this year to raise funds for Ronald McDonald House of New York. In January, *BT* held a dinner and silent auction as part of their annual, heralded Readers' Choice Awards

ceremony, with all proceeds benefiting RMDH. Items up for auction included airline tickets, hotel stays and electronics, all of which received generous bids from attendees.

On top of that, *Business Traveler* devoted four-page spreads, in both the March and April issues of *BT*, to advertising an online auction with all proceeds from the web event going directly


to RMDH. The overall project, including the dinner and online auction, raised an astonishing \$100,000 for our House.

Business Traveler's commitment to our cause of helping kids is truly extraordinary, and we could not be more grateful for all the hard work they've done. Thank you, **Business Traveler!**

FROM BEDDING TO HOUSEHOLD CLEANERS, we need to replenish our cupboards. Through your generosity, we hope to fulfill the below requests. Please send new items to Arlene Mirabel's attention at the House. For an updated wish list and quantities needed, please go to http://www.rmdh.org/involved_5.html.

WISH LIST

405 East 73rd Street
New York, NY 10021
Tel: 212-639-0100
www.rmdh.org

 *New items only please.*

- Scrap booking items
- Craft supplies
- "Green" laundry detergent
- Toiletries
- Clorox or Lysol wipes
- Toilet paper
- Paper towels

- Towels
- Paper goods: cups, plates, napkins
- Dishware
- Glasses (tumblers)
- Assorted tea bags
- Plastic storage containers

- Snack items
- Pens
- Notepads
- Rulers
- Office supplies
- Correction fluid
- Magazine holders

- 3" & 11/2 white binders
- Rubber bands
- Small binder's clips
- First aid Supplies
- 1/3 cut manila file folders





SPOTLIGHT
ON YOUR
BOARD:
JUDY
GILBERT

who owned her own firm for twenty years, and now runs a small, high-level entertainment company for corporate clients. She's been married for sixteen years to Rod Gilbert, New York Rangers Hall of Famer and co-founder of RMDH's annual *Skate with the Greats* fundraising event. Her daughter Brooke is a Thursday night volunteer at the House, making the Gilberts' commitment to Ronald McDonald House a truly family affair.

Gilbert first joined the RMDH Board three years ago, but her involvement with Ronald McDonald House began much earlier. She first came to the House at the invitation of her husband Rod, after the first successful *Skate with the Greats*, to see the newly dedicated "NY Rangers room," which had been furnished from the event's proceeds.

"It was so special," she says of that first visit. "Everything about it. It tugged at your heart, but it was heartwarming to see what the community was doing for the families and children. Before I knew it, I had a passion."

For decades, the Gilberts have helped all sorts of charities, but Judy knows that Ronald McDonald House is closest to her heart. "This

is the one where you can really wrap your arms around it, even hug it," Gilbert says. "This one is a home."

The Gilberts' most high-profile involvement with Ronald McDonald House has been the *Skate with the Greats* fundraiser, which has become a cornerstone of RMDH's annual activities. Last year's event raised an amazing \$1.2 million, and as Gilbert says, "you have to credit Steve Bensinger [Benefit Chair] for the success." Bensinger went out on a limb by setting the event's fundraising goal at \$1 million – much higher than past events – staking \$100,000 of his own money to kick off donations. Of course, he far exceeded his goal.

Gilbert also credits Glen Sather, GM and President of the New York Rangers, and Tom Renny, Rangers Coach, for authorizing the ongoing involvement of Rangers players in *Skate with the Greats*. She would also like to thank – here's more of that list! – Kerryanne Tomlinson, Jeanie Baumgartner, and Anthony Zucconi of the Rangers charitable organization "Garden of Dreams," as well as Brian Leetch, Walter Tomenson and Jerry de St. Paer, all of whom started *Skate* with Rod back in 1994.

Like many outstanding leaders, Gilbert is too busy thanking others to take much of the credit for herself. For that quality of selfless giving and for her passion, Ronald McDonald House of New York is fortunate to have Gilbert hard at work on our behalf.

When Judy Gilbert is asked questions about her accomplishments, she responds by singing the praises of everyone else in her life. Indeed, it was hard for this interviewer to keep her from simply listing individuals whom she'd like to thank in print. That brand of marrow-deep selflessness is rare in this world, and Ronald McDonald House of New York is lucky to have Gilbert serving on its Board.

Gilbert is a retired advertising executive

CHILDREN'S HAPPY FACES FOUNDATION

A NEW CHARITY MAKES AN IMPACT



A BRAND NEW CHARITY HAS JOINED THE CAUSE of helping families and kids fighting illness, and Ronald McDonald House is proud to welcome our new partner. Comprised of leaders from the building management industry, Children's Happy Faces Foundation held its first annual Golf – Tennis – Bowling & Awards Dinner Event on October 2nd at Wykagyl Country Club in New Rochelle. The event's major sponsors included Century Management, an apartment building management company; NCB, National Cooperative Bank; and Mustang Harry's, a popular midtown restaurant. The inaugural event raised an outstanding \$50,000 in net proceeds for Ronald McDonald House of New York.

The new Foundation's mission – "to assist the families of sick children through the difficult and challenging times they are faced with" – is in perfect synergy with the RMDH cause. Many thanks to Children's Happy Faces Foundation for their phenomenal efforts, and we look forward to a long and fruitful partnership to benefit children and families in need.

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PARTNER HOSPITALS

Bellevue Hospital
Beth Israel Hospital
Hospital for Joint Diseases

Hospital for Special Surgery
Manhattan Eye & Ear Hospital

Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center
Montefiore Hospital

Morgan Stanley Children's Hospital
Mount Sinai Medical Center

New York-Presbyterian-Cornell Medical Center

New York University Hospital
Rusk Institute
St. Vincent's Hospital

OPEN HEARTS, OPEN DOORS

Ronald McDonald House Charities International Conference 2007



(Front row) *Fordbam Murdy, Bryan Miller,*
(Back Row) *Rich Block, Wini Cudjoe, Leslie Barrett, Leslie Barrett, Jesse Determann, Jef Champion, Doris Palazzo, Mike Ballew, Whitney Joyce.*



Fordbam Murdy, Joe Guidetti, Fred Hill, Rich Block



(Front Row) *Peter Samaba, Whitney Joyce, Cheryl Frei, Sue Houston, Joanne Shapiro, Shelly Talan, Back row, Bill Sullivan, Bryan Miller, Fordbam Murdy, Jesse Determann, Rick Martin, Patty Berrian, Jef Champion, Rich Block*
(Next row) *Steve Simon, Wini Cudjoe, Ruth Schlossberg, Joe Guitetti, Doris Palazzo, Helen Stafford, Mike Ballew and Ralph Vogel*

Thanks to a generous donation of frequent flier miles from the New York Knicks, RMDH of New York sent a delegation of two-dozen staff and volunteers to the Ronald McDonald House Charities International Conference in Chicago, Illinois. For four days in August, our New York personnel shared stories, learned valuable insights and offered some of their own to more than two thousand conference attendees from all corners of the globe. The Conference theme, “open hearts, open doors,” celebrated the generous hearts in communities around the world, who, through their compassion and hard work, open the door to millions of children and families in need.

Ronald McDonald House Charities is the umbrella organization affiliated with local chapters in thirty countries and regions across five continents, including 271 Ronald McDonald Houses worldwide. Overall, more than 6,000 families stay in Ronald McDonald Houses every night of the year.

RMDH New York’s own Director of House Operations, Wini Cudjoe, taught a seminar to a packed room of colleagues on “Advanced Ronald McDonald House operations.” Our New York facility is the largest Ronald McDonald House in the world, and conference attendees were eager to hear Cudjoe’s wealth of acquired knowledge. New York’s own delegation attended seminars on all manner of topics, from tax issues to branding, strategic partnerships and capital campaigns, among many others.

New York also received a Best Bets Award at the Closing Gala on Friday evening, for our outstanding “Volunteer Program Teams”

[see page 10 for more details]. RMDH New York President, William Sullivan, Board Member Pete Samaha, and Human Resources Director, Ralph Vogel, joined the RMHC Global leadership on stage to accept the Best Bets Award. “It is great to know that our community thinks we have the best ‘volunteer program’ in the world,” Vogel says. “I am proud of the volunteers, the volunteer team leaders, the staff and the board who have supported our volunteer programs.”

The Conference theme, “open hearts, open doors,” celebrated the generous hearts in communities around the world, who, through their compassion and hard work, open the door to millions of children and families in need.

Overall, our New York staff and volunteers left Chicago inspired, with new tools to tackle challenges and initiatives in the coming years. Many thanks to Marty Coyne, President of RMHC Global, and Linda Dunham, Chairman of the Board, for their stellar leadership of this very successful International Conference 2007. ✨

HOISTING ANCHOR

CFO Frank Volino retires after 17 years of service



Frank Volino has seen a lot of changes at Ronald McDonald House over the last two decades.

The House itself has moved locations from East 86th street down to East 73rd; the old facility had only twenty-four rooms, and the current building has eighty-four; RMDH had around twelve employees when Volino first started and now there are close to fifty. He's seen changes in leadership, staff and families arrive and depart, but one thing that hasn't changed at the House through all those years has been, well, Frank Volino.

After seventeen years of dedicated service to Ronald McDonald House, Volino is retiring from his role as Chief Financial Officer. President Bill Sullivan says, "Frank has been an anchor to our financial stability" over the past two decades, and though he will be sorely missed, he leaves Ronald McDonald House with the hearty congratulations of all staff, families, volunteers, and friends.

Volino came to RMDH in the winter of 1990 as Controller under then-CEO Vivian Harris. He only planned on staying for two years – through construction of the current facility – but his experiences at the House changed those plans.

"In those early years," Volino says, "we got to know all the families and their children. There were only twenty-four rooms – we got to know their difficulties. I got hooked immediately."

So, after twenty years working financials for Merrill Lynch, Volino made the decision to stay at Ronald McDonald House. "I had a sense, for the first time in my life, of being able to help people a lot less fortunate than myself," he says. His strong connection to the House's mission made it a "bittersweet" choice to retire, but part of his decision-making had to do with the emergence of a worthy successor in protégé Joseph Guidetti.

"I didn't plan to [retire]," Volino says, "but Joe fit in so comfortably. It smoothed the decision because I knew the House would be in good hands." Guidetti, whom Sullivan has announced as RMDH's next CFO, looks up to Volino as his mentor and friend. "His wisdom and knowledge have been invaluable to me in taking on the financial responsibilities of the House," Guidetti says. "Frank built a strong financial foundation for the House during his tenure and he has shared his experiences over the past 17 years."

Volino's tenure as CFO at Ronald McDonald House included a vast range of responsibilities. In the old days he personally managed all finances for the operation, from payroll to bookkeeping, financial statements and 990 tax returns. As the House grew, Volino developed new financial strategies to segregate his prior duties into separate areas. He also oversaw the transition from a manual – hand-written – accounting system to a computer-based one, and implemented procedures to assure the organization met all the Better Business Bureau standards for charity accountability. Through it all, it was the House's children and families that kept him passionate for his work.

"It made it more than a job for me," he says. "Seeing the difficulties that they're dealing with, I don't dread going to work on Monday. The days don't seem long enough to accomplish everything I want to accomplish. I never lost that feeling. I still have it today."

Volino looks forward to enjoying his retirement years with his wife, Kathy, and their two children and six grandchildren. The couple hopes to travel to Alaska and southern Italy in the near future, but his immediate plans involve a certain fishing vessel he's been eyeing for months. "I have a particular boat in mind," Volino says, smiling with a far-away look in his eye. One can imagine Volino at its helm, trolling the waters of Long Island Sound for a relaxing – and very much deserved – quiet day of fishing. 🌸

IN LOVING HANDS

Six RMDH staffers were once parents with sick children living in the House

Fourteen years ago, Latifa Kahric arrived in New York City from Bosnia, without a friend or relative in the United States, without knowing a word of English, and with a very sick twenty-two month old daughter in her arms.

She and her husband were political refugees displaced from their home in Jajce, Bosnia, living in relocation housing when their young child took ill. An American doctor working in Bosnia connected the family with Mt. Sinai hospital in New York, but immigration laws prevented Kahric's husband from joining his wife and daughter on the journey.

Kahric arrived at Mt. Sinai frightened, alone, and desperately worried about the life of her daughter. After two weeks, a hospital social worker recommended her to the Ronald McDonald House. "I needed help," Kahric said recently, her voice cracking with emotion. "And the people here gave me everything."

It's clear when speaking to Kahric that Ronald McDonald House of New York means more to her than words can say. At the crisis point in her life, she found friends here. RMDH staff and other families helped her and her daughter find their way in a new country, a new language, and through her child's battle with life-threatening disease. "They made us feel like we were home," she says. Indeed, Ronald McDonald House was the first home Kahric's daughter Merima had ever known.

Today, Merima is healthy and strong, disease-free, and Kahric herself has found a calling as a Guest Relations expert at Ronald McDonald House. "Now I have the chance to do that for someone else," she says. "I know what they've been through. I have the same shoes."



Vincent and Jan Manlapaz



Eldin and Latifa Kabric



Vincent and Jan Manlapaz



Merima, Latifa, Halil and Eldin Kabric

It's hard to imagine a person better suited to working with RMDH families than Kahric, whose kindness, grounding, and utter dedication to serving the families and children shines through on first meeting. But the story she tells is one of many in the Ronald McDonald House, where five other staff members were once parents with sick children living in the House: Gustavo Patritti, Migdalia Vasquez, Felix Colon, Roberto Santiago, and Jan Manlapaz.

"Families feel understood here," Manlapaz says. "We know what they've been going through, the worries, the agony, the anxiety about what will happen in the future."

Manlapaz came to Ronald McDonald House from the Philippines eight years ago when his son Jan Vincent was diagnosed with leukemia. At the Santa Thomas University Hospital in Manila in 1999, Jan Vincent was given a prognosis of only seven months to live. Determined, Manlapaz took his son to Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York for a second opinion. Dr. Peter Stein, who Manlapaz credits with saving his son's life, gave them astonishing news: Jan Vincent had been misdiagnosed. He still had leukemia, but a more treatable type.

"Everything, absolutely everything changed as a result of that moment," he says. Manlapaz and his son took residence in Ronald McDonald House while Jan Vincent received life-saving treatments at MSKCC. Through the help of an angelic benefactor, Mrs. Fiona Druckenmiller, Jan Vincent

endured two bone marrow transplants, three relapses, countless cycles of chemotherapy, and has now been healthy and cancer-free for four years.

"This is a legacy," Manlapaz says of his work at Ronald McDonald House. "I want to thank the House, to pay them back for what they have given me. It's the commitment in your heart, when you're doing something

with regret but with a sense of peace. "What I'm doing now is for humanity. I ask myself: What will be your legacy? I want to give back."

Gustavo Patritti agrees with the comments of his fellow staff. "After spending long hours in the hospital we came back to this warm House where we always found friendly hands that supported us in all possible ways,"

"I've given up my ambitions," he says, not with regret but with a sense of peace. "What I'm doing now is for humanity. I ask myself: What will be your legacy? I want to give back."

you love." At RMDH, Manlapaz's official title is in Guest Relations, but he's also the handyman for the House, fixing everything from electronics to doorframes, as well as serving as Fire Safety Director. An engineer by education, Manlapaz owned his own construction management company in the Philippines, which he was forced to sell when Jan Vincent took ill.

"I've given up my ambitions," he says, not

Patritti says. "Now I am working here not only to make a living but to help people who are experiencing the same situation."

Ronald McDonald House is fortunate to have these individuals supporting the House's families and children today. With people like this on staff, RMDH guests can rest assured the responsibility for their care is in loving hands. ✨

SIMPLY

THE BEST

RMDH of New York's Award-Winning Volunteer Program Teams



Madeline Rose, Rita Kronovet and Joan O'Maggio



Mark Morrison, John Pyrch and Devin Darcangelo



Teresa Matrullo and Bruce Greenspan; Althea Alvarez (right)



This August at the Ronald McDonald House Charities International Conference,

our New York House won a Best Bets Award for the most outstanding Volunteer Program Team in the entire global organization. The Award was chosen by our colleagues in the RMHC Global Advisory Council and includes a grant of US\$5,000. According to Ralph Vogel, Director of Human Resources, the average volunteer has been with RMDH of New York for over five years – an astonishing figure among non-profits. About fifteen volunteers are assigned to each of the seven nights of the week. As Vogel says, volunteers allow kids and families “the opportunity to ‘escape’ for a few hours from all the pressing issues related to living with cancer.”

Around the House chatted with four Volunteer Team Leaders – each in charge of one weeknight’s volunteer group – about their experiences at Ronald McDonald House.

AROUND THE HOUSE: *How did you first become involved at RMDH?*

Jef Campion, 6 years, Thursday Team Leader: I was introduced to this most wonderful charity through the Yonkers Fire Department fifteen years ago.

Leslie Barrett, 5 years, Events Team Leader: I first learned about the House when I attended the NY Rangers Skate with the Greats event with my family.

Lynda LaMont-Garmong, 13 years, Sunday Team Leader: My sorority alumnae group had a party for the RMDH kids, which I attended.

Anne Lekow, 6 years, Wednesday co-leader: I live in the neighborhood and heard about the House from one of my neighbors.

ATH: *Was there an early experience at RMDH that really cemented your decision to stay involved here?*

Lekow: For me, it was seeing it in action. There could potentially be five children playing together and all speaking different languages but having a great time. I love how well the parents interact as well. It is really important that they can support each other and speak the medical “language” that only they understand so well.

Barrett: My first day at the house, I met Mark Morrison [Tuesday Team Leader] and asked him what I could do to help. It was right before Easter, and I saw the other volunteers filling plastic eggs with brightly colored chocolates and candy. So of course, I started to help. Mark turned to me and said, “No, this is for you.” He was holding up the biggest, furriest bunny costume I had ever seen. Apparently, the bunny costume is a rite of passage for all Tuesday night volunteers. “But Mark, I’m in heels!” Mark replied, “Wini’s office is right over



there. Be ready in 5 minutes. The kids are waiting for the Easter Bunny!" Right then

"This place has renewed my faith in the human spirit."

and there, I knew I was in the right place.

ATH: Every night of the week at RMDH has its own special events and 'personality,' developed by the volunteers for that night. What are the characteristics or special events of your night?

Campion: The mantra for Thursday night is INTERACTION: get to know each child, sibling or patient, and the parents too. Whether it be sitting at a different dinner table each night or planning fun interactive events for all to be involved in, we try and offer creative and innovative activities that bring the house together as one.

LaMont-Garmong: Anything goes. My favorite event that we ever did was a "Winter Wonderland" event. It was quite ambitious and took an army of people and an entire day to turn the playroom into winter. We filled the place with fake snow and used a "snow" covered wood plank to create a hill for sledding. The clean up was a nightmare, but the kids loved it!

ATH: What is your favorite part about being involved at RMDH?

Barrett: Such an easy question. The KIDS! They're remarkable! Every single one of them.

Campion: The joy of a child's smile or an all out belly laugh, the way I am challenged and humbled by the complexities of the families going through the toughest and most painful of what life has to offer, keeping a brave face and believing tomorrow is another day. This place has renewed my faith in the human spirit.

ATH: Can you name a special memory from your time at RMDH?

Barrett: A few years ago, I met a girl named Kristina. She was 17, tall, bright-eyed, graceful, sweet, and just a joy to be around. We became fast friends. We both shared a love of theatre and dance, and spent most Tuesday nights chatting about a million and one different things. She wasn't a girl I knew from the house anymore; she was my friend. I'm lucky to have known her.

LaMont-Garmong: The week before running my first NYC Marathon, a little girl named Emma passed away. I was particularly close to her family. The dad asked me to give her eulogy at a memorial service the day before the Marathon. It was not an easy thing to do, but during my speech I said that I would dedicate my last six miles, the hardest, to Emma because she showed such strength and courage. The family was so touched that they came out at mile 17, near the House, to cheer me on. It was a very touching moment when I stopped to greet them along the way and their young son Joe handed me a water bottle.

ATH: What benefits do you see children and families getting from the volunteers?

Lekow: I think the volunteers offer the parents support through the evening activities. It is very important to offer the families the experience of having positive interactions together during these most difficult times. Something as simple as playing bingo together is a positive, bonding experience for the family.

Campion: The benefits are friendship, a sense of an extended family and a shoulder to lean on through the tough nights. If we can provide an hour of peace, a good meal, or just conversation then we as volunteers have made a difference.

TEAM LEADERS:

***Sundays:**

Lynda LaMonte-Garmong - Team Leader;
Ruth Schlossberg - Co-team Leader

***Mondays:**

Pamela Strazicic - Team Leader;
Karen Stasiak - Co-team Leader

***Tuesdays:**

Mark Morrison - Team Leader;
Elaine Louis - Co-team Leader

***Wednesdays:**

Anne Lekow - Team Leader;
Earl Rix - Co-team Leader

***Thursdays:**

Jef Campion - Team Leader;
Patricia Berrian - Co-team Leader

***Fridays:**

Steve Simon - Team Leader;
Doris Palazzo - Co-team Leader

***Saturdays:**

Robert Finale, Jr. - Team Leader

Special Events:

Leslie Barrett - Team Leader

THE Graduate

Long-term patient Alyssa Sylva starts a new chapter



Jennie Sylva can recall the moment that sums up her daughter Alyssa's time at Ronald McDonald House.

At last November's Charity Fun Run in Central Park, Alyssa was struggling in her battle against Stage Four Astrocytoma – a type of brain tumor – had gained weight from the steroid treatments and couldn't walk. Jef Campion, Ronald McDonald House volunteer and member of the Yonkers Fire Department, offered to push Alyssa the whole length of the Fun Run in her wheelchair. After all the other kids finished the race, Jennie still couldn't see Jef and Alyssa anywhere and started to get worried. All of a sudden Jef and a smiling Alyssa rounded the corner with the entire Yonkers Fire Department cheering them on. As the crowd approached the finish line, Alyssa stopped the wheel chair, stood up, and walked across the finish line by herself.

"It was an amazing moment," Jennie says, tears in her eyes. The Sylva's time at Ronald McDonald House has been full of amazing moments, and also very difficult ones. Through all the treatments and

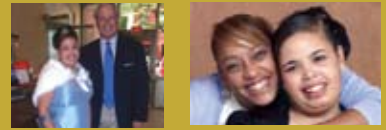
Through all the treatments and hospital time, Jennie has watched her daughter become a simply amazing human being.

hospital time, Jennie has watched her daughter become a simply amazing human being. "Through it all," Jennie says, "Alyssa's smiled, she's laughed – done it all with style and grace. She's handled everything with such dignity."

Alyssa feels the same affection for her mother, and it's clear that the two rely on each other as a team. "My mom is a beautiful young lady, I know that," Alyssa says. "She's always been beautiful to me."

As she celebrates her recent graduation from high school – tutors at RMDH taught her the last three years – a healthy and cancer-stabilized Alyssa prepares to leave Ronald McDonald House for a new home in Queens. "We're leaving family behind," Jennie says. "This is one big family. Whether you're here for a short stay or a long stay, everyone's a family here. And we're going to miss everyone."

Perhaps as much as anyone at Ronald McDonald House, the Sylvas understand exactly what "family" means here.



Family means watching each other's children while mom or dad is at the hospital with a sick sibling. Family means there's always a plate of food for everyone, even when someone doesn't have a dollar to their name. "Who better understands this than the people who are here going through the same thing?" Jennie says.

The Sylvas came to Ronald McDonald House after Alyssa had begun treatments at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. Jennie was a single, working mother commuting back and forth to MSKCC from their apartment in Middlesex County, New Jersey. The financial strain of missing work and all the medical bills started to take its toll. A social worker at MSKCC hooked her up with RMDH, and as Alyssa's condition grew more serious, Jennie was forced to give up her apartment and move into Ronald McDonald House full-time. "It was so overwhelming," Jennie says. "You make the best of a bad situation."

Despite all the health challenges Alyssa has faced, Jennie has watched her daughter thrive

at the House. Alyssa continually went out of her way to welcome new children to RMDH, showing them around and introducing them to other kids and families. She, in a very personal way, embodies the invitation of Ronald McDonald House to families in need. "Alyssa is known as the 'Queen' of the House," says Director of House Operations, Wini Cudjoe. "She is known for her beautiful smile, her lovely demeanor and her robust attitude towards life...and for her extensive wardrobe collection."

"When Wini asks me to help her, I always do," says Alyssa of her unofficial ambassador role. "I'm really excited to move into my new house, but I'm really going to miss the Ronald McDonald House."

Indeed, the Ronald McDonald House of New York will dearly miss Alyssa, too. But we are excited at what she has accomplished in the last three years. "I'm just so proud of her," Jennie says. All of the Ronald McDonald House family joins her in that feeling, and wishes them well in their new home. ✨

THE WILD CATS

By Alyssa

This cat lives in the wild.
It does not hunt, it eats during only
In the spring, when it eats grass.

She hangs out with a lot of other cats.
I think Sabrina is a good name for her,
Because the name Sabrina reminds me
Of my cousin Sabrina, whose cat is
also Sabrina.

The color of this cat's eyes
Are what makes her look beautiful
To me, always the color of the eyes.

Light lime green, friendly, glowing.
Sabrina and her cat friends like to run
around,
They climb rocks, but she always
Has to be with her family

So she won't get lost.

FUNDRAISING EVENTS



HOLIDAY CARDS

Cards for a Cause



AT THIS SPECIAL TIME OF YEAR, RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE CREATES A UNIQUE HOLIDAY CARD that brightens faces and saves lives. For just \$20, you can purchase a set of 12

RMDH Holiday cards specially designed for the Ronald McDonald House of New York, with over 75% of the proceeds going directly to the House. These collector's items are a must-have for every friend, colleague, and loved one on your list. Ask about our large quantity discount! Order them while they last!

* previous price listed in error



To order contact Arlene Mirabel, amirabel@rmdh.org, 212.639.0191.



LIGHT A LIGHT! SHARE A NIGHT! HELPING FAMILIES IN NEED

DEC

5

THE RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE OF NEW YORK IS THE LARGEST FACILITY OF ITS KIND IN THE WORLD. With room for 83 families – and filled to capacity nearly every night – the House is within minutes of 13 major cancer treatment centers that provide life-saving experimental treatments

not yet available anywhere else in the world. Since its founding in 1978, nearly 25,000 families have stayed at the RMDH of New York regardless of their ability to pay.

We ask families to pay just \$35 of the actual cost of \$210 per night. The Light a Light! Share a Night! campaign will help us provide many of our families with the wonderful services they need, even those who cannot pay this fee.

For every \$20 donation, a light will be lit on our Holiday Decorations for the month of December. As President Bill Sullivan says, "These lights represent hope...the greatest gift we can offer to support our families." With every donation, we will send Holiday wishes to your family member, client, friend, or loved one to let them know you made a gift in their name.

And on the evening of December 5 – the first night of Hanukkah – join us at the House for our official throw-the-switch ceremony, including a special lighting of the Menora, celebration of the Christ nativity, Kwanzaa, a Jazz Quartet from NY Pops and a Rockette. We hope you'll join us!



For more information please check out our website: www.rmdh.org or contact Richard Martin, rmartin@rmdh.org 212.639.0206.

SAVE the DATE

Mark your calendar with these upcoming RMDH Fundraising Events you won't want to miss.

Kids Charity Fun Run

Date: Saturday,
November 3, 2007

Location: Central Park
7th Ave @ 59th Street
Entrance

Casino Night

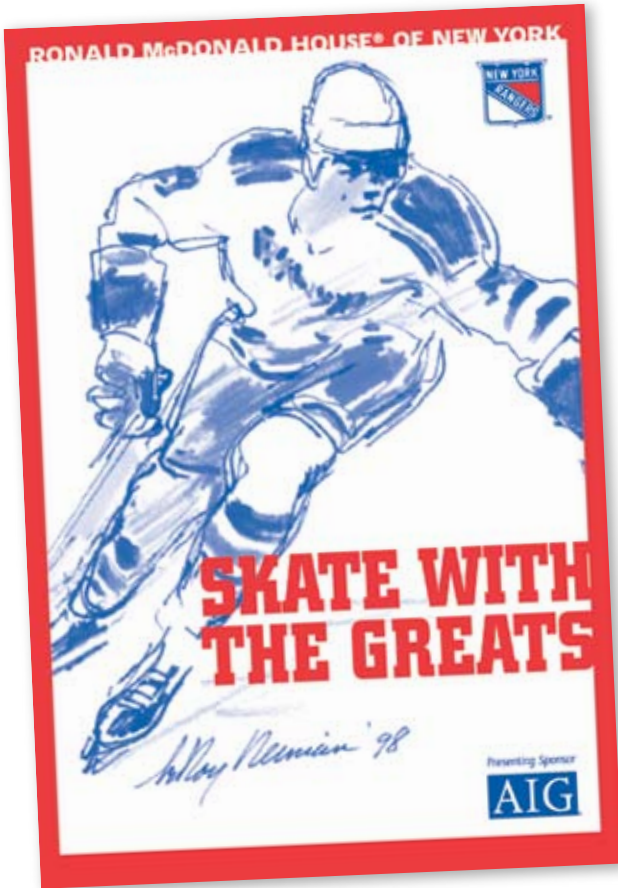
Date: Thursday,
November 8, 2007

Location: Ronald McDonald
House

Little Mermaid Broadway Show

Date: Wednesday,
November 14, 2007

Location: Lunt-Fontanne
Theatre
Broadway, New York



✳ SKATE WITH THE GREATS

A cornerstone of Ronald McDonald House



AT RMDH OF NEW YORK, THE ARRIVAL OF WINTER BRINGS TWO EXCITING DEVELOPMENTS: HOLIDAYS AND THE HOCKEY SEASON!

For the fourteenth year in a row, the New York Rangers sponsors a legendary event that will bring a much-needed boost to our kids while providing essential funds for the House. *Skate with the Greats* successfully raised an astonishing \$1.2 million last year, and is poised for

another phenomenal night on January 23, 2008.

Benefit Chairman Steven J. Bensinger (American International Group, Inc.) is joined in leadership once again by Founding Chair Jerry M. de St. Paer (AIG) and Rangers Hall of Famer Rod Gilbert. This night brings joy and laughter to the faces of so many of our Ronald McDonald House kids. Past and present New York Rangers players will join you and your family for a fun, magical evening of skating "with the Greats" at the rink at Rockefeller Center. Events also include autograph signing, a live auction of unique sports memorabilia and a special salute to former NY Ranger Brian Leetch as his number is retired by the Rangers.

Since its inception, *Skates with the Greats* has raised over \$5 million for Ronald McDonald House, and over the years has become a cornerstone of our annual events. Please join us for this unforgettable night.

Sunday, January 23, 2008, Rockefeller Center, NYC



For more information please check out our website: www.rmdh.org or contact Richard Martin, rmartin@rmdh.org, 212.639.0206.

GIFTS FOR YOU AND YOURS: ARTS & CRAFTS 2007

A GIFT MADE WITH LOVE IS A SPECIAL GIFT INDEED. Every year, the wonderfully talented artists and craft-makers that just-so-happen to love Ronald McDonald House donate their efforts to our annual Arts & Crafts Fair. Come peruse the beautiful hand-made art, charming knick-knacks, and perfect seasonal gifts created by our own volunteers, staff, parents, and even some by the kids! This heartwarming day of gift shopping is a family affair, from ours to yours. So please, join us for the fun!



November 17, 2007
10:00 PM to 3:00 PM



For more information please check out our website: www.rmdh.org or contact Wini Cudjoe, wini@rmdh.org, 212.639.0600.

Arts & Crafts Fair 2007

Date: Saturday, November 17, 2007

Location: Ronald McDonald House

Light a Light! Share a Night!

Date: December 5, 2007

Location: Ronald McDonald House

The Greek Division Christmas Party

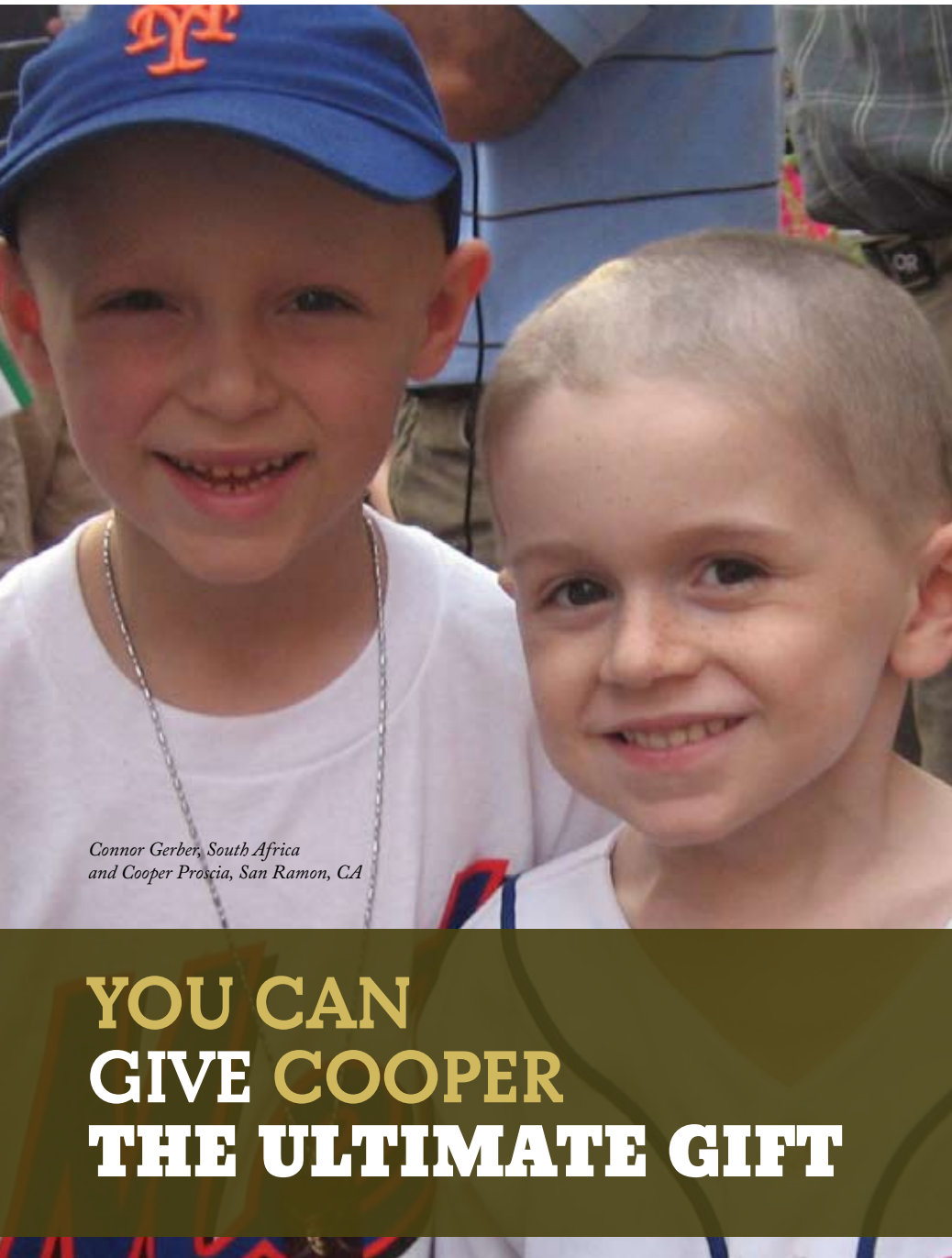
Date: Monday, December 10, 2007

Location: Ronald McDonald House
(Contact Niki Sideris at NikiSideris@rmdh.com or call (212) 639-0188

Skate With the Greats

Date: January 23, 2008

Location: TBD



*Connor Gerber, South Africa
and Cooper Proscia, San Ramon, CA*

YOU CAN GIVE COOPER THE ULTIMATE GIFT



ESTATE PLANNING

SUPPORT THE HOUSE **NOW** . . .

Use appreciated stock to make a tax-savvy gift to Ronald McDonald House. No capital gain tax is paid—so the full value of your stock is put to use here. And you earn a charitable deduction for that full fair market value.

Make a gift from your IRA. If you are 71 or over, you can make a distribution to us directly from your IRA. Your gift counts against your required minimum distribution and gets excluded from your income—you don't pay tax on it. This works great if you are required to take more than you need from your IRA because it helps you meet your minimum distribution in a tax-free way.

AND IN THE **FUTURE**.

Your Ronald McDonald House has inaugurated a program to encourage you to remember us in your will. Perhaps a bequest in your will is the best way for you to make your ultimate gift to support our critical work with children and families away from home.

A bequest to us is simple. Have your attorney use our legal name, The Ronald McDonald House of New York, Inc. and our federal tax ID number, 13-2933654 when they prepare or revise your will.

For more information about these ways of giving, contact Rick Martin, Director of Development, at 212-639-0206 or rmartin@rmdh.org.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF
AROUND
the **HOUSE**

30 YEARS **SPECIAL**
ANNIVERSARY
ISSUE