



# AROUND the HOUSE

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



## LOUIS SCHAGER'S LITTLE HERO

**SPECIAL  
ANNIVERSARY  
ISSUE**  
Part 4  
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# AROUND the HOUSE

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Cover Photo: Aircrew VFA-32 during their August visit to Ronald McDonald House of New York.  
Back Row (left to right): Lieutenant Commander Scott Miller, Leslie Schager, Lieutenant Michael Brown,  
Commander Louis Schager. Bottom Row: Lieutenant Peter Langley, Griffin Schager

## RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE OF NEW YORK, INC.

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



## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

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### DEAR FRIENDS,

NOT SINCE THE "GREAT DEPRESSION" HAS THERE BEEN SUCH UNCERTAINTY IN OUR COUNTRY, AND FRANKLY, THE WORLD. The last several months have been a whirlwind of radical change and daring moves to stabilize our fragile economy.

It's difficult to determine whether we've hit bottom or if there is light at the end of the tunnel. This mindset, while most troubling and serious, mirrors, in many ways, the traumatic events a family experiences when they learn their child is sick with cancer. This uncertainty and fear is never easy to encounter or endure.

As we close 2008, we recall difficult periods but also remember – fondly – all the good that was accomplished during our 30th Anniversary year here at Ronald McDonald House of New York, Inc. We value, more than ever, our dedicated supporters, volunteers and our many friends who are the backbone of our organization.

In this issue of *Around the House*, you'll meet our Board Treasurer, Rick Richardson – the wonderful guy who oversees our internal financial controls and provides financial stewardship to our charity. Likewise, you'll meet the Schager family and hear their amazing story. We'll recap Season 2 of Camp Ronald McDonald and you'll learn about the generosity behind the funding of our two new vans used to transport our kids and families to and from the hospitals.

Our famous "House Seats" program is still popular but we could always use your help. The official launch of "The Vivian Harris Society" and the "Planned Giving" effort are worth a look at as well! Finally, the third and last installment of our three-part series, "Our Story: The Future, The Infinite Well of Hope and Possibility" will close our 30th Anniversary year.

I know I communicate with you often, many times asking for your help. And whenever you could, you gave and gave generously. For that and more, Ronald McDonald House of New York, Inc. owes you a special debt of gratitude.

As you celebrate Thanksgiving with your family and friends, as I will with mine, I'm sure each of us has many things for which we are grateful. But, I hold your support of our organization and your friendship as a very special blessing, indeed.

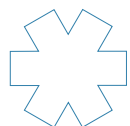
Very truly yours,



William T. Sullivan  
President and Chief Executive Officer



# WHAT'S NEW AT YOUR HOUSE?



## NEVER TOO YOUNG TO GIVE

**THIS SUMMER, SEVEN-YEAR OLD ALEXA PETRICK AND HER FIVE-YEAR OLD SISTER, NICOLE, WANTED TO RAISE MONEY FOR CHILDREN BATTLING CANCER. TO DO THIS, THEY SPENT THEIR ENTIRE SUMMER DRAWING, PAINTING AND TAKING PHOTOGRAPHS.** They planned a big art show at their home where family and friends were invited to view and purchase the artwork. Aside from creating the art, the young sisters planned every detail of the event from invitations to appetizers to background music (Andrea Bocelli). They charged \$1 admission and \$1 for each work of art, though, according to Donna Petrick, their mom, most people were so touched by their mission, they gave much more. Alexa and Nicole began the event with a ribbon-cutting ceremony and speeches where they thanked their guests for attending and proposed the idea of creating a new fundraiser each year. Alexa and Nicole gave all of the money they raised to the children at Ronald McDonald House of New York. "They really enjoyed working to help other kids," Donna Petrick said. "I'm very touched by their efforts on this project and their awareness of the needs of others."

For thousands of young people in the New York Metro area, this is not an unusual gesture of generosity. The past year has witnessed several remarkable acts of kindness by children who have come to the realization that only through giving can one truly receive. A group called the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) credits part of this growing trend in youth philanthropy to in-service learning programs in schools today.

During the 2007/2008 school year, students from across the New York City school system collected pennies in an annual event called the Penny Harvest. These young people collected over 70 million pennies—or \$70,000! Each school organized a group of students to research deserving organizations and then made grants to them. Many of the schools selected RMDH of NY as their charity of choice.

But even outside of in-service projects in

the schools, many children have chosen, on their own, to give to their peers in need. Last Christmas, for example, Vanessa, Vincent, Paul and Lia Salvaggio asked their mom if Santa could redirect the cost of their Christmas

his Confirmation preparation. In his letter to RMDH of NY, he stated, "I had fun while raising money for Ronald McDonald House of NY. I wanted to help all the sick children and their families."



presents to the children of RMDH of NY, recognizing how grateful they were for what they already had and more importantly, how fortunate they were to have each other. As 8th grader Jacob Dimenstein prepared for his Bar Mitzvah, he needed to complete a project. In keeping with themes of the Bar Mitzvah – maturity and a call to service – Jacob decided to sponsor fundraisers. After a discussion with his parents, he chose to give the money he raised to RMDH of NY. When asked why, his response was, simply, "It just felt good." He'd learned by watching his parents, who also give to the House. William Sessa, 15, of St. Leo's Church, raised money as part of

These incredibly inspiring stories of children helping children are just a few of the many wonderful works of giving by young people in our very own community. The children, families, staff and volunteers of RMDH of NY thank them for their big hearts and great acts of compassion. ✿

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON GIVING,** please contact Patrick Lenz, Director of Major Gifts, at 212.639.0600 or [plenz@rmdh.org](mailto:plenz@rmdh.org).





## SPOTLIGHT ON YOUR BOARD: RICK RICHARDSON

"CANCER DOESN'T CARE IF THERE'S A RECESSION GOING ON OR IF THERE'S A FINANCIAL CRISIS IN THE WORLD," says Rick Richardson, Board Treasurer for Ronald McDonald House of New York. "It turns a blind eye. Which makes it even more important for Ronald McDonald House to be there as a foundation in this storm, to be a rock for our families who are having difficulties of their own."

Rick Richardson began his work with RMDH of NY in 2004, first as a member of the Audit Committee and now, as Treasurer. As a Senior Partner of PricewaterhouseCoopers, having served as US Financial Services and Banking Leader as well as the Global Banking/Capital Markets Leader for many years, Rick spent a number of his more than 32 working years in several different cities, both here and abroad. When he returned to New York from Boston in 2004, he was anxious to get involved with something important. So, when the opportunity came up to join the Board of RMDH of NY, he jumped at the chance. "For people like me who work all day long in global commerce to be able to step back, take a breath and get involved in something like this is incredible – just seeing how the business community pairing with the medical community pairing with the volunteer community make it all happen."

As Treasurer, Rick oversees the House's financial functions from an inside point of view. "I've been involved with recruiting and assist with the things that come up with the House's day-to-day finance. The senior leadership in the organization is well aware of the current environment and the potential consequences on the financial well-being and operations of the House," he says. "The Board of Directors has spent a lot of time thinking about how

this could potentially impact the families and where alternative sources of revenue could come from. The ultimate goal is not impacting what's important about Ronald McDonald House. We're concerned about where the next dollar is coming from and how can we manage through this difficult time, but, at the end of the day, this is all about the kids. What makes Ronald McDonald House so special is the care that it provides to the children and families."

Having grown up in a military family, Rick learned at a young age the value of service to others. After graduating from Duke University in 1972 and just prior to joining PricewaterhouseCoopers, Rick served as a Lieutenant in the US Navy, spending three years on a nuclear submarine in Spain and a year at the Pentagon as an Aide-de-Camp to a Senior Admiral. After joining PricewaterhouseCoopers, he earned his MS from Boston University through its London campus. In 1992, Rick became a David Rockefeller Fellow with the New York City Partnership and over the years, has dedicated time to many charitable organizations including New York Cares.

What he'd like to see in the future is a House that could accommodate all of the children and families who need help. "No child with a serious, life-threatening illness would need to be placed on a waiting list to get into a facility like ours," he explains. "But that would mean a larger, newer facility. It's the dream of many of us. It's something that's evolving but we still have work to do."

Rick remembers one particular moment about two years ago, when the Board of Directors made a visit to Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center. "We walked through a lab and saw the children going through their treatment. Most of us have seen the children



through Ronald McDonald House, either before or after treatment. But spending time with them actually receiving treatment in such a special environment and meeting the doctors and nurses made me feel good about humanity. With all that's being done for these children and to see how dedicated the medical staff was, really drove home how important it is for the whole community to come together – Ronald McDonald House providing the infrastructure, the incredibly talented team of oncologists and everything associated with that, and of course, the business community supporting all of it. It crystallized for me how many good people there are in the world."

RMDH of NY thanks Rick Richardson for his special kind of insight and dedication to our children and families. ✨



## THE SECOND ANNUAL HOPE AWARDS

WITH THE 2008 INTRODUCTION OF THE DISTINGUISHED HOPE AWARDS, Ronald McDonald House of New York established a new way of honoring those men and women who help create hope in the lives of children with cancer. The Hope Awards will be presented annually to honor and recognize those individuals with an outstanding commitment to RMDH of NY.

The recipients of the First Annual Hope Awards for 2008 were Jef Campion, Phyllis Hahn, Vivian Harris, Stephen Petrillo and Niki Sideris.

The Second Annual Hope Awards ceremony will take place in April 2009. The members of the selection committee who will review the award applications are: Neville Bean, Erin Byram, Jennifer Reilly, Jo Lowndes Sevely, Carol Toscano, Robert Vandeweghe and past Hope Award recipients.

Applications will be available beginning November 1, 2008 and are due no later than February 2, 2009. ✨

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE HOPE AWARDS OR TO REQUEST AN APPLICATION,** please contact Ralph Vogel, Director of Human Resources, Volunteers and Programs, at 212.639.0180 or [rvogel@rmdh.org](mailto:rvogel@rmdh.org).





# CAMP RONALD MCDONALD SEASON 2! Every Picture Tells a Story







Images courtesy of MSG Photos.

**BOARD MEMBER JUDY GILBERT REMEMBERS ONE OF THE FIRST BOARD MEETINGS SHE EVER ATTENDED AT RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE OF NEW YORK.** “There was a lot of high-level finance flying around the room and I was overwhelmed,” she said. “I’m not ashamed to admit that. I come from the advertising world. I’m creative. I thought, ‘Why am I here?’ Then, I reverted back to my creative brain and found a way to contribute.”

Judy created RMDH of NY’s House Seats program, where “in-kind” donations of unused tickets for sporting events and entertainment are donated to the House for use by our families. “There’s no shelf life to a ticket that’s not being used,” she said. “It’s wasteful.”

Judy already had a lot of insight about the children at RMDH of NY through her daughter, who was a volunteer at the House. “I knew what was needed,” she

explained. “We live in the greatest city in the world. We have so much more to offer than just housing.” Through her husband, hockey legend Rod Gilbert, and his work at Madison Square Garden, Judy was aware of just how many seats regularly went unused. It immediately occurred to her that the families could really benefit from time spent with good-quality entertainment at no cost to them. “It just took off from there,” she said.

One of the House’s biggest supporters is Madison Square Garden’s own Garden of Dreams Foundation, whose mission is “to bring joy and comfort to children suffering enormous hardship.” Rod Gilbert explained that the Garden of Dreams Foundation partners with the whole of Madison Square Garden including the NY Knicks, the NY Rangers, the NY Liberty, MSG Entertainment, MSG Media, Fuse, Radio City Music Hall and the Beacon Theater. “Kids can come to events like Liberty games

or Knicks games,” he said. “The players go meet the children, sign autographs and make them feel special.” In 2008, the Foundation planned several special events especially for the children and families of RMDH of NY, including attendance to a pre-show and catered reception with the Radio City Music Hall Rockettes and Santa. The families also received a private, behind the scenes tour of Radio City Music Hall and tickets to attend the Radio City Christmas Spectacular.

Almost instantaneously, the program branched out and expanded across the city. NYC & Company brought in Disney on Broadway. Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts joined along with The Starlight Starbright Children’s Foundation, The Make-A-Wish Foundation, Ruth’s Chris Steak House, SAB Capital, Pokemon, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, David Wright Foundation, Hudson Valley Bank,



Bank of America, Ticketmaster, The Happy Faces Foundation, IMS and many, many private donors who are all committed for the long-term.

“The seats are amazing,” said Fordham Murdy, RMDH of NY’s Program Manager. “Many of them are donated seats from season ticket holders, corporations and

These events take the families away from their troubles for a few hours.

individuals who happen to know about the program. They’re great trips,” he added. “These events take the families away from their troubles for a few hours. They’re at the hospitals all day focusing on doctors and insurance. If they can go to a game on a Friday night and not have to worry about anything, not have to buy a ticket, that’s a help to them. We often provide the transportation as well.”

Judy Gilbert agrees. “Entertainment is always a great distraction,” she said. “And it’s two-fold for the parents. They get a needed break but they also get to see their kids happy. You really feel good about it.” \*

For more information about the House Seats program or to donate tickets to sporting events, theater, museums or other special events, please contact Fordham Murdy, Program Manager at 212.639.0181 or [fmurdy@rmdh.org](mailto:fmurdy@rmdh.org).



# RMDH HOPE MOBILES: WHERE HOPE GETS A RIDE!

SPOTLIGHT ON RMDH VANS



THE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OF RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE OF NEW YORK CAN BE SEEN SPORTING AROUND NEW YORK CITY THESE DAYS IN EITHER ONE OF OUR TWO HOPE MOBILES.

The state-of-the-art Turtletop vans were generously donated to RMDH of NY by private and personal donations from distinguished members of the Associated Builders and Owners of Greater New York.

Our Hope Mobiles are critical to the functioning of the House as the primary transportation for our families to and from the 14 partner hospitals/cancer treatment centers that care for our children daily. These vitally important, accessible vans were specially designed to accommodate the needs of children with cancer with amenities such as a wheelchair lift, an extended roof for easy walk through and the ability to transport up to three patients in wheelchairs at one time. The new vans replace “Old Faithful” our former van (now retired).

“We are so grateful to the men and women of the Associated Builders and Owners of Greater New York for funding our vans at no cost to the House, with many new donors and friends introduced to us as well,” said Bill Sullivan. “The benefit to our families is tremendous. We thank them for their great generosity.” \*

**“House Seats”**  
 When you can't use your tickets please call the House.  
 212-639-0100  
 405 East 73rd Street NY, NY 10021

The Ronald McDonald House of New York



# LOUIS SCHAGER'S LITTLE HERO

There aren't many experiences that affect a family as profoundly as pediatric cancer. Nor are there careers as demanding as that of a US Navy Pilot in wartime.

**For the Schager family, both of these are the case.**





**LAST NOVEMBER, COMMANDER LOUIS SCHAGER WAS SET TO EMBARK ON THE AIRCRAFT CARRIER USS TRUMAN, READY TO TAKE COMMAND OF A SQUADRON OF FA-18F AIRCREW DEPLOYING TO THE PERSIAN GULF** (in what would have been his fourth tour there).

He'd been preparing to leave on November 5th from the Naval Base in Norfolk, VA, but on November 4th, Commander Schager's then four-year old son, Griffin, was diagnosed with Stage IV Rhabdomyosarcoma, a soft-tissue cancer most frequently occurring in children between the ages of one and five. In Griffin's case, ultrasounds confirmed a grapefruit-sized mass that had spread to his abdomen pushing against his bladder. With the devastating news, Commander Schager called the US Navy. "I made one phone call," he said, "One phone call and the Navy put everything in motion. They shuffled to replace me and I didn't have to call again. It was a wonderful thing."

Commander Schager and his wife, Leslie, began their journey in November when they brought Griffin to Children's Hospital of the King's Daughter in Norfolk, VA for his initial care. The tumor, inoperable at the time of diagnosis, was to be reduced with chemotherapy so that another decision could be made at a later date. The original treatment plan included 20 rounds of chemotherapy over 54 weeks, radiation and possible surgery. The Schagers also knew they wanted as many opinions as possible, eventually meeting with doctors from Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York. "We really liked the doctors and what they had to offer," Commander Schager explained. "It was the best option for the next round of radiation and surgery based upon the expertise." And so, in February 2008, the Schager family moved from Norfolk, VA to New York City and into Ronald McDonald House of

New York. Because Griffin had responded so well to the original rounds of chemotherapy, the tumor was significantly smaller. With the doctors at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, it was decided that a new treatment plan with 28 rounds of radiation, in what Griffin calls "the big Star Wars machine," would be the best protocol going forward (at the time of the writing of this story, 14 rounds have been completed on a three-week on/three-week off schedule). Good reports from scans over the summer have shown the tumor reduced to two small pieces of scar tissue. "It's a miracle but Griffin will continue the treatments," said Commander Schager. "He's our little hero."

Life at RMDH of NY for the Schagers has been a great experience and a comforting one. Commander Schager talked about one of the things all parents worry about in these cases: how other children will react to a child without hair or with tubes in his chest. "It's more comforting at Ronald McDonald House," he explained. "The kids do have something in common and can relate to each other, comparing scars and tubes and understanding why a friend is tired from chemo and can't play." Leslie Schager agrees. "Living at the House is the best thing that's happened to us. A part of our healing and a huge part of Griffin's healing is being around the other families going through the same process – all of the little kids running around with this, none of them knowing there's anything different about them."

"Living at the House has helped Leslie and me in huge ways," Commander Schager continued. "For parents, I think, whether you like it or not, when you are in this situation, sometimes it's difficult to talk to other people who are doing everything they can to relate and comfort

*(continued on following page)*







The positive prayers and love and energy are 50% of Griffin's treatment, if not more...It helps Griffin directly and it helps Leslie's and my mindset knowing that there are so many people out there thinking about Griffin.

celebrate. This time, the squadron organized a "Griffinpalooza" party on July 11th at the Oceana Officers' Club in Virginia Beach, complete with a band and a silent auction that raised nearly \$9,000 in Griffin's name. In August, Lieutenant Commander Scott Miller, Lieutenant Michael Brown, Lieutenant Timothy Walsh and Lieutenant Peter Langley, four members of VFA-32, flew to New York to present the funds to President Bill Sullivan, specifically to support the programs and activities the House provides to the children, the same programs that have helped Griffin in so many ways. "Ronald McDonald House has been unbelievably beneficial to everything relating to Griffin's recovery," Commander Schager explained. "There are so many families here that need this and the little trips we take on the weekends or in the afternoons really help the kids. Ronald McDonald House is absolutely the best place to be." Lieutenant Michael Brown noted how impressed and surprised he was visiting the House. "I didn't realize how much it would personally affect me to see the kids. It was so uplifting. And really emotional."

Leslie Schager believes that her family is "surrounded and blessed" by all of the people who've taken this journey with them. "The Navy, the other families, the incredible staff and volunteers at the House and people from all over the world

have all touched us in so many different ways. We're so blessed to have Griffin at the point he's at now." The Schagers have set up a website so friends and family can view Griffin's progress. They've named the collective group of people helping them and praying for Griffin "Team G-Force." "I think that this is much bigger than Griffin," Commander Schager maintains. "The effect of so many people all over the world – people we don't even know emailing us with positive thoughts and energy – I think that's what it's all about. All of the wonderful, positive energy, prayers and thoughts that have helped Griffin get through this, I believe people will carry over into their own lives. The same thing for all of the people we've met at Ronald McDonald House. We're here for a reason and we're meeting some wonderful people with whom we'll have lifelong bonds and relationships. It's so much bigger than Griffin's November diagnosis. Maybe that's what this is really about." \*

To visit Griffin's website, go to [www.caringbridge.org](http://www.caringbridge.org) and type "griffinschager" as the website name.

Congratulations to the Schager family for being the 25,000th family to walk through the doors of our House!

## OUR STORY: THE FUTURE



# THE INFINITE WELL OF HOPE AND POSSIBILITY

*President and CEO  
Bill Sullivan  
visits the Ronald  
McDonald House  
playroom.*

**I**N 2005, WITH THE CURRENT HOUSE ON EAST 73RD STREET SETTLED AND DEEPLY ROOTED WITHIN THE COMMUNITY, Vivian Harris retired from her post as President after 26 years of service to the children and families of Ronald

McDonald House of New York. As the organization had always been in a continuous process of growth, the Board of Directors took on the difficult task of replacing Vivian Harris, now President Emeritus, with an experienced non-profit executive who could move the House even further into the future and to yet, another level. The Board of Directors, under the Chairmanship of Michael Hegarty, formed a selections committee and hired an outside headhunting firm to review candidates with strong fundraising capabilities in the non-profit world. From his 23 years of service to The Boy Scouts of America, as both the Director of Development and Chief Operating Officer, William T. Sullivan ("Bill") emerged as the top candidate and a clear choice for the post. In his position as the Director of Development for the last 13 years of his respected career with The Boy Scouts

of America, he'd acquired a wide range of business knowledge and a network of contacts that was both expansive and varied. Bill Sullivan was hired as the President and Chief Executive Officer of RMDH of NY and on April 1, 2005, he began the task of moving the House forward. "I was ready for a change," he explained. "The thing that attracted me about working with the House was the variety of areas I'd have to oversee, not just fundraising but staff administration and managing the facility. Some things I learned as I went along but the most important thing at the time was building a strong Board of Directors to support and sustain the organization."

With the baton of leadership now successfully passed to the new President and CEO, the Board of Directors was ready to expand upon the House's past success and had placed their trust in Bill Sullivan to accomplish this on behalf of the House's mission to support and serve children and families battling pediatric cancers.

Bill Sullivan's drive to create an improved House that would better serve its community, however, was not just motivated by past business success and a desire to do good work. As a cancer survivor himself, he had empathy for others going through the many

and difficult processes of cancer treatment, particularly children and families suffering through the medical, financial and emotional maze that usually accompanies the diagnosis. "I'd always had an appreciation for what Ronald McDonald House did," he explained. "I'd seen and admired the organization from afar, and in terms of looking at it and comparing the choices I had, it turned out to be a wonderful match."

His work began immediately. For a charity its size, RMDH of NY had, for so many years, been a quiet and laid back operation. It was the right time for a change. "We've tried to make the building and the business practices of Ronald McDonald House a little more relevant and functional for both the guests and the staff," Bill explained, though it was clear from the start that many things were needed, including the commencement of a major capital campaign. Additionally, the House required a number of upgrades to bring it up to standard and to meet the needs of those it was serving each day. Almost immediately, a \$3.5-million renovation was underway. Along with the renovation project, Bill Sullivan revamped the fundraising, increasing the House's operating budget over the last four years. A new full-time staff has been able to manage the fundraising effort



and monitor expenses. With these changes and comfortable with both the Board of Directors (currently under the Chairmanship of Stanley Shopkorn) and the staff he'd developed (a combination of new and existing staff who were advanced to new positions), Bill Sullivan was confident that the House had been rejuvenated with a new professionalism and could now better serve its intended community. And thus, the new model was in place.

But there is still more to accomplish. At present, the mission of the House is to serve pediatric cancer patients and their families, although the Board of Directors has been exploring the possibility of future expansion of the mission and services of the House based upon current and expected trends in the treatment of pediatric cancer and perhaps, some additional childhood diseases that mirror cancer. Studies are currently underway to assess the medical demand and the potential needs of the pediatric community going forward. While it's difficult to predict the future, especially with the rapid progress of treatment plans in certain types of cancers, the current trends and the expectation of prospective trends being studied would reasonably assess what the demand on the House could look like as soon as 2010 both with and without an expansion of the current mission. Most recently, the leadership of RMDH of NY met with all of the House's hospital partners in New York City to discuss how current and future need is accounted for in order to assure that the House is positioned properly not only for today but for tomorrow as well.

Future demand for rooms at the House would, at first, be dictated by the type of cancer

or disease and the progress in its treatment protocol. Neuroblastoma, for example, a childhood cancer of the sympathetic nervous system is now treated successfully with antibodies administered through Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center. While not all of the medical community agrees that this is the only way to treat Neuroblastoma, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center is the only hospital currently offering the antibody treatment. If the hospital can effectively license the antibody or offer it to other hospitals, it could lower the demand for rooms at the House for Neuroblastoma patients in the next few years, as they would begin to receive treatment at their home hospitals. Most doctors agree that it's a good possibility but it also depends upon what newer treatments come out in the next few years and whether the shift in patients receiving the majority of their cancer treatment at their home hospitals continues with shorter trips to New York for components of their treatment.

Distance from treatment centers is another factor under consideration. Many of the families who stay at RMDH of NY likely receive treatment from one of the three main hospitals that specialize in the majority of pediatric cancers: Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, NYU Langone Medical Center and Morgan Stanley Children's Hospital of New York Presbyterian Columbia Medical Center. Depending upon the type of cancer or cancer-like illness, hospitals that are significant distances away from the House may prevent families from using the facility based upon proximity, alone. If the mission

As it stands now, the well of possibilities for the future of the House is vast and deep and though more research is needed, the House will continue to address the needs of its community, both now and in the years ahead.

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was to expand in the future to include more childhood diseases that are currently specialties at hospitals far north of the House, one of the questions to be answered is how likely would it be for a family to stay at a location a significant distance from their sick child. Would the availability of rooms designated for families of non-cancer patients make sense if the family cannot live together as a unit in one location? Currently, there is a high demand in northern New York City and The Bronx for non-cancer patients. Some of the non-cancer diseases that could be considered and might benefit from a possible future expansion of the House's current mission include heart and liver transplants, cranial reconstruction, neurosurgery, aneurisms, vascular trauma and epilepsy. But even under the current mission, with progress being made in treatments such as that for Neuroblastoma, it may be likely that other innovative cancer treatments and clinical trials would make up for the gap. At the moment, growth in the cancer population, though arguable, appears to be stable. Treatments are better, more often given locally and treatment time has become shorter, thus affecting patient volume, which currently drives the demand for rooms at the House.

*Members of the Ronald McDonald House of New York Board of Directors*



*(continued on following page)*

What the Board of Directors is considering 10 years down the line is a new facility serving more children so that the House would never be in a position to turn any family away. Slightly altering the mission to include other childhood diseases that mirror cancer could accomplish this. "If we took care of all the kids with all of the childhood diseases, we would need at least three Ronald McDonald Houses and we are not in a financial position to do that at this time," said Bill Sullivan. "But having a facility double the size of the current location would not double the operating costs. It is projected as being about one-third more than the cost of operating the current facility."

At this time, RMDH of NY owns a piece of property on East 60th Street in Manhattan purchased in 2000 for the purpose of expanding the mission of the House and to serve even more children on a daily basis (it would approximately double the number of families that could stay each day). At this time, the Board of Directors is concerned with having the right amount of money in reserve so that when the new facility is built, it would never suffer financial difficulty. With the current economic climate, however, and given the Wall Street crisis, the Board has made the decision to hold off on giving the green light to the construction of the new facility but continues to go through the permitting processes with the Board of Standards and Appeals and City Planning in order to build the best and largest facility on the site. In addition, plans are underway with the architects to design the inside of the building for the best functional capability for children with cancer. The new building will also be a "green" facility with care taken to address the hygienic and practical elements specifically designed with pediatric cancer patients in mind such as installing "green" carpeting, free of chemical processing, and window blinds specially designed not to collect dust. With input from the medical community, the new facility would receive a "green certification." A new facility would also alter the long-range planning. Some of the issues that need to be addressed would be an increased need for a significantly larger volunteer effort and double the fundraising capabilities.

As it stands now, the well of possibilities for the future of the House is vast and deep and though more research is needed, the House will continue to address the needs of its community, both now and in the years ahead. The "Wish List" of possibilities seems to grow each day so that as many children as possible can be served and impacted. The list includes the prospect of building family rooms within the children's wards at the



*Opening day at our current location on East 73rd Street*

hospitals complete with bedrooms and living spaces for parents with critically ill children that would leave them only steps away from their child as opposed to a ride away. For families with the most critical situations, they would be able to stay in the family room until their child's condition improved and they could return to the House. Family rooms are like satellite offices that would be manned by RMDH of NY staff and volunteers.

Another prospective area under consideration for the future would be to establish mobile health units to serve the local community of children not eligible for general services. The Ronald McDonald House Charities have had success with Ronald McDonald House mobile health vehicles that are either health care units or dental units. With an expansion of this type of service, the House could reach out to children in New York City whose health needs are not being met through normal channels. A health mobile could go into impoverished neighborhoods within the five boroughs where children might not have the proper health or dental care and provide a direct service to communities in crisis and need. A partnership with a health care organization would promote the overall charity and serve children with the most desperate need, locally.

One thing is certain, though: Bill Sullivan, with the aid of the Board of Directors, will continue to make sure the appropriate population is served now and well into the years ahead. "We are a growing organization

that is careful to stay true to our mission of taking care of the 84 families entrusted to us every day. At all costs, we are expanding in a prudent manner so that we don't fall upon hard times," he said. "But no matter how hard current times are or what kind of a day you're having when you come through our doors and you see our kids and our families, especially in the mornings, going off to treatment, your problems tend to seem miniscule in the world, in the spectrum of things. I've been given the chance to reflect upon how lucky I am in many ways that my own cancer was sustained, hopefully forever. I enjoy the atmosphere here. It definitely is a happy one. We try to look at the glass half full. We have our sad moments but we try to temper that with the whole concept of hope. And we hope, always, for the best, both now and into the years ahead." \*

**Correction** (*Volume 3, Issue 2, Page 7*) to the Feature Story entitled *Soaring: Former guest Eric Crowley achieves his dream*. The sentence: "And when Eric made the decision five years ago to pursue his dream of becoming a pilot, former RMDH President, Vivian Harris, helped the Crowleys find loans and sponsors to pay for flight school," should have read, "In 2003, Eric made the decision to pursue his dream of becoming a pilot."



# The Vivian Harris Society

RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE OF NEW YORK HAS INAUGURATED its *Vivian Harris Society* to honor our President Emeritus Vivian Harris. During her 26-year tenure as our founding President, Vivian nurtured our families and inspired staff. She was a tireless and gracious leader with uncommon vision.

The members of our *Vivian Harris Society* embody Vivian's triumphant spirit by recognizing the House in their long-term plans. We invite you to join our *Vivian Harris Society* by making a gift to the House in your Estate or Retirement Plan.



**ELIGIBLE GIFTS FOR MEMBERSHIP INCLUDE:**

**Charitable Bequest:** A gift in your Will is the simplest way to remember our House in your Estate Plan. There is no lifetime cost and your estate may qualify for a charitable deduction.

**Life Insurance:** A life insurance policy you no longer need makes an excellent gift to the House. You may either designate the House as a beneficiary or grant us ownership of the policy.

**Retirement and Pension Plans:** RMDH of NY can be the beneficiary—or partial beneficiary—of your IRA, other retirement plans or pension plans. Using percentages that add up to 100%, you have the ability to name the House as a recipient of funds from these plans after providing for your loved ones.

**Life Income Gifts:** There are several varieties of charitable trusts that pay lifetime income to you alone, or to you and a loved one. At your passing, what remains is a gift to the House.

If you are moved by the idea of becoming a member of our *Vivian Harris Society*, please call or e-mail Patrick Lenz, Director of Major Gifts, at 212.639.0600 or plenz@rmdh.org, to set up time to discuss how to arrange a gift that best fits the needs of your own beneficiaries, your goals for asset protection, generational wealth transfer along with the tax-saving implications and a gift to the House. A discussion never places you under obligation.

## Planned Giving

YOU GIVE TO THE HOUSE BECAUSE YOU UNDERSTAND THE NEED TO SUPPORT THE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES AFFECTED BY PEDIATRIC CANCERS. Your gifts are important to us. We couldn't help today's families without them.

Would you consider helping tomorrow's families as well?

A bequest in your Will or Estate Plan would help us provide a comfortable home-away-from-home filled with love, stability, respite and hope. Childhood cancer continues to affect so many families who will need our help for years to come.

For more information on Planned Giving programs, please contact Patrick Lenz, Director of Major Gifts, at 212.639.0600 or plenz@rmdh.org.

If you have already included us in your Will or Estate Plan, please let us know. We'd like to thank you and welcome you into our *Vivian Harris Society*.

*Mail to:*  
**Patrick Lenz**  
 Director of  
 Major Gifts  
 Ronald McDonald  
 House of New York  
 405 East 73rd Street  
 New York, NY 10021

CUT HERE

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

- I would consider including Ronald McDonald House of New York in my Will or Estate Plan
- I'd like to learn more about including Ronald McDonald House of New York in my Will or Estate Plan
- I have included Ronald McDonald House of New York in my [ ] Will [ ] Estate Plan
- Other \_\_\_\_\_  
(please describe)

## Donate Your Airline Miles

RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE OF NEW YORK NEEDS YOUR AIRLINE MILES!

As many of you know, most of the major airlines have now made it possible to donate your frequent flyer miles to recognized 501 ( c ) 3 organizations such as RMDH of NY.

When you donate your miles to us, you help support and maintain the programs of the House.

To donate your miles to RMDH of NY, please contact your airline's frequent flyer program manager. For other questions regarding your donation of miles to the House, please contact Joseph Guidetti, Chief Financial Officer, at 212.639.0900 or jguidetti@rmdh.org.

# EVENTS

DECEMBER

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## LIGHT A LIGHT! SHARE A NIGHT!



**THIS HOLIDAY SEASON, GIVE THE GIFT OF TOGETHERNESS.** Join us on December 3, 2008 at 5:30 PM at Ronald McDonald House of New York as we kickoff the Holiday Season.

The Light A Light! Share A Night! campaign is designed to help families who are unable to sustain the \$35 per night rate we ask our families to contribute in order to continue the services we provide.

For every \$35 donation, one light will be lit amidst our Holiday decorations throughout the month of December. The lights represent Hope, the greatest gift we offer in support of our families. With each donation, we can also send Holiday wishes to your family, friends, clients and teachers to let them know you've made a gift in their name to RMDH of NY.

This is the House where Hope lives. Light a Light! Share a Night!

Happy Holidays from our families to yours!

**Date:** December 3, 2008

**Time:** 5:30 PM

**Location:** Lobby and Living Room of RMDH of NY



For more information on this event, please contact Patrick Lenz, Director of Major Gifts, at 212.639.0600 or [plenz@rmdh.org](mailto:plenz@rmdh.org).

## SAVE the DATE

Mark your calendar with these upcoming RMDH fundraising events you won't want to miss.

### Light A Light! Share A Night!

**Date:** December 3, 2008

**Time:** 5:30 PM

**Location:** Lobby and Living Room of RMDH of NY

### Greek Division Holiday Party

**Date:** December 8, 2008

**Time:** 6:00 PM

**Location:** RMDH of NY

### Jingle Ball

**Date:** December 12, 2008

**Time:** 6:30 PM Doors open  
7:30 PM Show

**Location:** Madison Square Garden



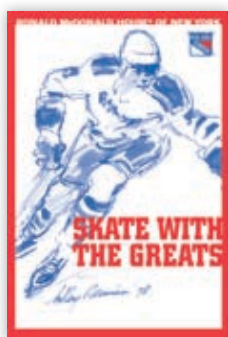
DECEMBER

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## GREEK DIVISION HOLIDAY PARTY

**Date:** December 8, 2008**Time:** 6:00 PM**Location:** RMDH of NY

For more information on this event, please contact Niki Sideris, Chairman of the Greek Division, at 212.639.0188 or [nikisideris@rmdh.org](mailto:nikisideris@rmdh.org).



## SKATE WITH THE GREATS

FOR THE 15TH CONSECUTIVE YEAR, THE NEW YORK RANGERS SPONSOR their annual event that not only gives a much-needed boost to our children and families during the long winter months but also provides the House with essential funds. In past years, Skate with the Greats has successfully raised in excess of \$1 million and is poised for another phenomenal night on February 10, 2009. Past and present New York Rangers will join you and your family for a fun, magical evening of skating at the legendary Rockefeller Center Ice Rink. Included in the evening is an autograph signing as well as a live auction of unique sports memorabilia. Since its inception, Skate with the Greats has raised over \$6 million for RMDH of NY. Over the years, Skate with the Greats has become a cornerstone of our annual event calendar. Please join us for an unforgettable night.

**Date:** February 10**Time:** 5:30 PM**Location:** Rockefeller Center

For more information on this event, please check our website: [www.rmdh.org](http://www.rmdh.org) or contact Richard Martin, Director of Development, at 212.639.0206 or [rmartin@rmdh.org](mailto:rmartin@rmdh.org).

FEBRUARY

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**Skate with the Greats***Date:* February 10, 2009*Time:* 5:30 PM*Location:* Rockefeller Center**New York Pops Gala***Date:* April 27, 2009*Time:* 5:30 PM Reception  
7:00 PM Show*Location:* Carnegie Hall**Winged Foot Golf Tournament***Date:* May 4, 2009*Time:* Two shotguns: 7:30 AM  
and 12:30 PM*Location:* Winged Foot Golf Club, Mamaroneck, NY**17th Annual Gala***Date:* May 18, 2009*Time:* 5:30 PM Doors open*Location:* Waldorf=Astoria



# THE TREE OF LIFE

RECENTLY, VISITORS TO RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE OF NEW YORK HAVE NOTICED A MODERN LUCITE WALL SCULPTURE ADORNING ONE OF THE WALLS OF THE HOUSE'S LOBBY.

This beautiful wall hanging, entitled The Tree of Life, is a vibrant symbol of hope and strength and provides us with a fitting way to honor, recognize or memorialize a Loved One. With each leaf that is added to the tree, it continues to grow and sustain the House.

The financial support generated by The Tree of Life enables the House to offer more than simply a place to sleep when families come to New York City to receive treatment for their child's cancer diagnosis. Like a tree, the House provides shelter, has many branches of support and gives us strength in times of turmoil. Our House is a Home, a place with family and friends who are there when you need them.

Each leaf is engraved with a message as well as the name of the person you are honoring and may be purchased for \$2,500. Your generosity is greatly appreciated and will help us continue to offer services to families arriving today, tomorrow and in years to come.

Memorialize a Loved One by purchasing a leaf on The Tree of Life in their name. For more information on how to honor your Loved One, please contact Patrick Lenz, Director of Major Gifts, at 212.639.0600 or [plenz@rmdh.org](mailto:plenz@rmdh.org).



## ORDER YOUR LEAF

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Message for your leaf: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Acknowledgement sent to: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*Please mail this form with your payment to:*

Patrick Lenz, Director of Major Gifts  
Ronald McDonald House of New York  
405 East 73rd Street  
New York, NY 10021