



RONALD McDONALD
HOUSE® NEW YORK



Around the House

The Magazine for Ronald McDonald House New York, Volume 5, Issue 3 Summer 2010



Remembering Vivian Harris

Our Founder, Our Inspiration



Clifton A. Bazar



Ronald McDonald House New York 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 New York is the largest facility of its type in the world.

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Vivian Harris *

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President's Letter



Photo Bob Ray

Dear Friends,
Seeing the faces of the families, staff and volunteers who give their all to fight cancer, I am often reminded of the tremendous contributions that Vivian Harris made to our institution as our founder and president for 26 years. Her passing in June gives us pause to remember Vivian's huge heart and loyal service, but most importantly the incredible kindness she offered so freely and abundantly to each individual that entered this house of hope.

Vivian Harris had an unusual and immeasurable capacity for giving, with a heart that melted at the thought of a child in need. It was with that same intensity that she carried out her personal mission of providing comfort to those children. She was honest, sincere, unpretentious, visionary and resourceful beyond measure. We will miss her greatly, but in the words of Saint Augustine: "She has left life, but not our lives. How can she be said to have died who lives in our hearts?"

We also remember volunteer Jon Lawrence Shevell, whose legacy gift has enabled the renovation of the outdoor terraces on the third and seventh floors. In the time that he spent with us, Mr. Shevell gave tremendously from his heart to help our families. We are grateful to his family for their thoughtful approach to honoring his memory by providing a beautiful and functional place for family entertainment and educational opportunities. We know that Mr. Shevell's "Legacy of Kindness" will continue to live on in the hearts of many.

While our original mantra at Ronald McDonald House has always been, "Kids First, and Patients Second," we decided to expand on that theme with our first annual "Spring Social" event. A magical evening for our kids, their families, our volunteers and the staff, this Spring Social transported everyone away from a world where cancer took center stage, and allowed for an evening of elegance and fun. There was an amazing emotional energy in the room that evening that transformed all who attended as true believers in the significant mission of our important cause.

In this issue, we've highlighted Board Member Harris Diamond, the CEO of Weber Shandwick Worldwide. His personal commitment as well as that of his company toward our mission is exemplary! You'll also enjoy meeting nine-year-old Ben Brewer, a wise, courageous young man from Denver who is fighting neuroblastoma. Ben just celebrated his birthday with us at the House, and his story continues to inform, empower and inspire.

"Kids First" has been the order of the day for the past seven weeks, as Camp Ronald McDonald has taken our kids to the heights of creativity and exploration in this great city that we call home. And we're also pleased to present the highlights of our music education program, organized by the New York Pops Orchestra.

Although our annual volunteer fundraiser was called "A Little Piece of My Heart," loving emotion was in total abundance during this successful event. Held at a new venue, "Guastavinos" in midtown, it set the tone for a number of fall fundraising activities that are just around the corner.

I'd like to extend a special invitation to our Third Annual Block Party on the weekend of October 2nd, where we will open our doors to celebrate our many supporters who give generously, kindly and passionately of their time and resources. We continue to value your involvement and friendship, and consider our association a privileged opportunity.

Sincerely,

William T. Sullivan

President & Chief Executive Officer

In Memoriam

Vivian Harris: Our Founder, Our Inspiration

Friends and Family Discuss How One Woman's Passion for Helping Children Has Helped to Save Lives and Bring Hope to Thousands of Families Around the World



She was a visionary leader, a constant motivator, wise mentor and a compassionate friend to all who knew her.

When Vivian Harris was initially approached in 1978 about opening a New York-based Ronald McDonald House, she was reluctant. A prominent philanthropist and community activist, she was already deeply involved a number of other charities, including the Handicapped Scouting Program of the Boy Scouts of America. However, she soon came to the conclusion that providing a voice to children fighting cancer was not only a worthwhile cause, but also a necessary one.

Ms. Harris began the effort as a temporary, part-time volunteer job, however her passion for the mission became a driving force within her life. Within a year, she became President. Originally named the Children's Oncology Society of New York, Inc., the first New York City House was located on East 86th Street and had 24 guest rooms. Foreseeing the need to assist more families, Ms. Harris spearheaded a massive expansion effort that led to the creation of a new Ronald McDonald House at its present location on East 73rd Street – which serves 84 families at capacity almost every night, and is now the largest Ronald McDonald House in the world.

It was a major accomplishment that impacted thousands of lives from the organization's leadership to its beneficiaries. In the more than 30 years since the founding of Ronald McDonald House New York, Ms. Harris' voice has been a vital force within these walls, almost as though it were embedded into each brick laid to create a true "home away from home" for kids fighting cancer, and the family members who care for them while they undergo some of the most progressive cancer treatments in the world.

But it wasn't just the bricks-and-mortar that made such a big difference. It was the love and kindness that she showered on each family that walked through the doors, with her welcoming smile and her radiant warmth.

She held a gifted ability to identify and recruit people of similar hearts and minds. It was her passion to motivate them to action in the name of a simple, yet incredibly significant mission: providing love and healing care to sick and disabled children. It was her legacy.



Mrs. Harris was a constant advocate for children's rights, and never hesitated to discuss Ronald McDonald House with anyone

Ellyn Harris On Her Mother's Leadership

My mother was a role model for me. Watching her achieve her goals was empowering.

When I first saw the sketches for the new building on East 73rd Street, I was just amazed that she was going to make it happen. It seemed like such an enormously overwhelming task, and then to see her actually complete it...it was fascinating. And I had the feeling of 'if she can do it, I can do it.'

My mother always talked about the children at the House. She talked about each individual child and what they were going through. She knew many of their names and when some of them didn't survive, she was very sad.

She had a tremendous amount of humility about her achievements. She had many characteristics that were very powerful. She was very smart about people and she motivated people to want to help and participate, because it came from her sincere enthusiasm and her sincere beliefs.

I'm so proud of her.



In 1994, Ms. Harris launched "Skate with the Greats" an annual fundraising event with the New York Rangers, and established a long and fruitful relationship with some of hockey's greatest legends of all time.

Board Chairman Stanley Shopkorn on Her Motivational Presence

During her tenure, Ms. Harris expanded the Board of Directors to include some of the most influential and successful business leaders of our time. Stanley B. Shopkorn, chairman of the board, and managing partner at Hilltop Park Associates LLC, shares his thoughts on Vivian's leadership.

Vivian was a remarkable leader, and her energy and spirit were contagious. Through her recruitment efforts, we developed a roster that includes Home Depot Co-Founder Kenneth Langone; former AOL Chairman and CEO Randel Falco; and Michael Hegarty, former senior vice chairman and chief operating officer of AXA, and the former president and chief operating officer of Equitable Life Assurance Society of the United States.



L to. r: Board Member Jerry de St. Paer, Ronald McDonald and Vivian Harris



Ed Flynn, Former President of the McDonald's Owners-Operators Reflects on Mrs. Harris' Vision

When the concept for the new building was introduced, Ed Flynn was president of the group of New York McDonald's Owner-Operators. He witnessed firsthand how Mrs. Harris' vision won unanimous support among some of New York's most seasoned businessmen, and how the experience changed his perception of our mission:

When I first heard about the plans for expansion to the new building, I was against it. I thought it was too ambitious. The costs were originally given at \$17 million, but little did we know at the time that it would go as high as \$23.5 million.

On a personal note, I didn't want to see children suffering because it would have broken my heart. I didn't want to go to the House, period.

But that changed.

The day of the press conference announcing the plans to build the new House, I was approached by two men who were fathers of children staying there; one from Iowa and the other from Ohio. One of the fathers said to me, "We want to thank you because without you, we wouldn't be here." It changed my life and I saw that there was hope here.

The Rivera Family Discusses Vivian Harris' Generosity

Ricky Rivera and his family members from Puerto Rico had an especially difficult experience, having lost both of their young daughters, Sara and Karla, to cancer. They moved into the original Ronald McDonald House building while Karla underwent treatment, and ultimately stayed on during the transition into the new building.

We started in the old House. My daughter had no antibodies fighting for her and we were waiting for a cure. They were able eventually to find a treatment, but for her, sadly enough, it was too late.

I didn't get to stay at the House in 1986 with the first daughter. [With my second daughter] there was no room for us at the time and they told us, "Come over, we'll find a spot." The House was full, but a family was supposed to leave, and they let us into a smaller room for free until a bigger one opened up. That's when I found out why the House was there. It was Mrs. Harris.

By January, we moved to the new House and I stayed in New York City with Karla for five years. My daughter was 10-months-old when we first went to New York so her first birthday, her first New Year's celebration, we did it there. To some people, it's called a "home-away-from-home." For my daughter Karla, it was her home.

I was blessed that I knew good people that helped me with both of my daughters. The original rule was after three months you had to leave. Mrs. Harris would say, "That little girl is going nowhere," and she let me stay for longer than three months. Mrs. Harris was one of those good people. She was a very peaceful, very believing woman in many ways. Those days are very important to me.

To our Founder, and a great inspiration for all that we do, on behalf of the hearts touched by Ronald McDonald House New York, we honor the memory of Vivian Harris and her legacy of hope.

On Tuesday, September 28th at 6 p.m., Ronald McDonald House New York will host a special memorial service honoring the life of Vivian Harris. For more information or to RSVP, contact Chaplain Cheryl Frei at cfrei@rmh-newyork.org, or (212) 639-0100.



The Vivian Harris Society

Ronald McDonald House New York created its *Vivian Harris Society* to honor our late President Emeritus Vivian Harris. During her 26-year tenure as founding President of Ronald McDonald House New York, Vivian nurtured our families and inspired staff and volunteers. She was a tireless and gracious leader with innovative vision.

The members of the *Vivian Harris Society* embody Vivian's triumphant spirit by recognizing the House in their estate plans or retirement plans, and we invite you to join those members by considering us in your future planning. We invite you to join our *Vivian Harris Society* by making a gift to the House in your Estate or Retirement Plan.

If you are moved by the idea of becoming a member of the *Vivian Harris Society*, please contact Patrick Lenz, Director of Human Resources & Volunteer Development, at 212.639.0600 or plenz@rmb-newyork.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 tax-saving implications and a gift to the House. A discussion never places you under obligation.

What's New at Your House?

Outdoor Spaces and Relaxing Places



Marian Goldman

On a recent visit to Ronald McDonald House New York, the family of the late Jon Lawrence Shevell fondly recalled his dedication to helping our families, and the personal impact that it had on him as a volunteer. They asked what they could do on behalf of the House and its guests that would serve to carry on his legacy of kindness and generosity.

At the time of the family's decision, the House's Operations department was grappling with a very important structural issue. The popularity of home improvement television shows and do-it-yourself magazines are a constant reminder of how expensive and time-intensive it is to maintain a home. For a facility that houses 84 families at full capacity almost every night, the challenge becomes exponentially greater. After 20 years of withstanding the sometimes harsh weather conditions in New York City and the resulting water drainage issues, it was apparent that the House's rooftop terraces needed a major overhaul.

Rebuild and Renew—With Love

Throughout the building process, they set out to address several concerns: How could we maximize the limited space available? Would the amenities be able to withstand the wear-and-tear inflicted by more than 80 families at a given time? What would really give our families a sense of

"home" during a summer spent in New York? How could we get wider usage out of the terraces, so that they spaces could also be used throughout the entire year?

A little more than eight weeks after the provision of a \$1.8 million donation, the Shevell family returned to Ronald McDonald House New York to attend a dedication ceremony reintroducing the "Jon Lawrence Shevell Third Floor Terrace." Transformed into a modern play space and entertainment area, its highly durable and attractive furniture welcome each visitor with a streamlined space for better efficiency.

Stunning teak chairs are laid out with matching storage containers that offer increased capacity for toys and games, while a kitchen and beverage center was installed specifically for family entertainment. And for the special days when everyone wants to enjoy the great outdoors, the terrace is also outfitted with a convertible sandbox that also doubles as additional seating. To

add a splash of color, weeping willow trees dot the fencing, while new planters filled with hydrangeas line the border areas in-between.

The terrace's engraved pavers serve as a constant reminder of the very emotions and attributes shared by all who are touched by Ronald McDonald House New York: embrace, believe, kindness, create, trust, inspire, remember, and love.

While the third floor terrace is currently being enjoyed by our summer camp participants, and all families throughout the House, additional repairs are still underway on the seventh floor. This fall, the House will introduce its outdoor educational center with an expanded butterfly garden that includes a greenhouse where kids will learn the latest techniques about gardening and sustainable living.

We are very grateful for the generous support of our donors and volunteers, as well as for the lasting relationships that they help to build simply by being there for our families. With hearts of gold, each gift helps to change lives, and we know that the new terraces will be enjoyed for years to come.

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Partner Hospitals

- Bellevue Hospital Center
- Beth Israel Medical Center
- Hospital for Special Surgery
- Manhattan Eye, Ear & Throat Institute
- Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center
- Montefiore Medical Center
- Morgan Stanley Children's Hospital of NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital

- The Mount Sinai Medical Center
- NewYork-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center
- NYU Hospital for Joint Diseases
- NYU Langone Medical Center
- Rusk Institute of Rehabilitation Medicine
- St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital Center



Please turn the page for a handy shopping list!

Wish List

Thank you for your thoughtful donation of items that help to make the transition a little easier for families staying at Ronald McDonald House New York. Following is a list of items that are urgently needed. Our needs change daily at the House, and for a more comprehensive list of Wish List items, visit us online at www.rmh-newyork.org/wishlist.

FOR THE HOUSE:

To make a donation of NEW items only, please contact Lucrecia Ortiz at 212.639.0200 or lucy@rmh-newyork.org.

FOR THE CHILDREN

DVD player (Blu Ray)
Diapers (the bio "green" type)
Baby wipes
For the Moms and Dads
Gift cards: Visa, MasterCard, American Express, Target, Walgreens, Payless Shoes, JC Penney, Starbuck's

FOR THE FAMILIES

Hand sanitizer bottles
Postage stamps
Umbrellas
Laptop computers
Oxygen Concentrators Tips
Wheelchairs Tips
Suction Machine Tips
Home Nebulizer Tips
Rollator & Walker Tips

ITEMS FOR THE HOUSE

Paper goods: cups, plates, napkins
Toilet paper
Paper towels
Clear shower curtain liners
Pillows
Clear plastic containers
Cereal (individually sized)
"Green" laundry detergent
Clorox or Lysol wipes
Copy paper
Photo paper
Gardening supplies for summer (gloves, garden tools, garden cart)

SPECIAL

Sponsor a room night payment (\$35/night)
Sponsor a birthday party or special program party

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT OUR "WISH LIST" PAGE AT WWW.RMH-NEWYORK.ORG/WISHLIST.

21st Century Giving: Spotlight on Technology



There's something remarkable about the way a child learns to master new technology in record time. Whether its texting, video games, or social networking – or just about anything that involves the use of the Internet – the young minds at Ronald McDonald House New York are no exception.

Thankfully, several intuitive volunteers have created new ways to help children staying at the House stay connected and remain competitive in their academic studies.

The Mikey's Way Foundation made its milestone 2,000th donation with the delivery of handheld portable games, DVD players, laptop computers and electronic games for all children at the House, including the siblings of kids undergoing treatment. Founded by Michael "Mikey" Friedman, who was diagnosed with cancer at age 15, the organization's mission is to provide handheld interactive enjoyment to children in need.

Long Island teen Adam Camiolo leveraged his "network" of local resources when he led a community-wide effort to provide 20 netbooks with a portal site that provides links to educational resources, as well as Skype, Facebook, Twitter and email to share their experiences with friend and family back home.

You may recognize Jason Wu's TekServe as the guest-star who saves the day on NBC's Law & Order, and HBO's Sex and the City. The team recently brought their tech savvy up-town with a donation of six iMac computers to assist with afterschool tutoring and homework.

In their own unique way, each of these gifts of technology have provided a new pathway for children and families and staying at Ronald McDonald House New York to grow, be nurtured, and to share. On behalf of the House, we express our deepest gratitude.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW YOU CAN DONATE A WISH LIST ITEM, VISIT WWW.RMH-NEWYORK.ORG.

Spotlight on Your Board: Harris Diamond



As Chief Executive Officer of Weber Shandwick, one of the world's leading global public relations firms, Harris Diamond provides high-level strategic communications counsel to an array of clients. When he joined the Ronald McDonald House New York Board of Directors in 2006, Mr. Diamond provided the organization with strategic communications counsel to help engage and educate the public with a better understanding of who we are and what we do- all with a focus to encourage continued support. He currently chairs the Long Range Planning Committee, creating a strategic blueprint that will proactively address the House's

needs within New York City's unique and dynamic landscape.

How did you become involved with Ronald McDonald House New York?

I have been involved with the healthcare industry for many years as well as serving on the boards of several healthcare companies. I have always had a strong interest in public health and the delivery of healthcare services. Helping the Ronald McDonald House combined both a passion for seeing critical services delivered to those that need it most and knowing that I could make a positive impact to improve the health and well-being of those children in need.

What influenced you to get involved?

The first time I went to the Ronald McDonald House in New York, what impacted me was seeing that people can make a real difference – that you can help be a part of a support structure for these families during a difficult time. There are very few places or times in life where one can really feel that way. And when I walked into the Ronald McDonald House, I instantly felt that way. It has become my family's cause. It is something we all believe in and allows us to make a positive impact.

How is the Long Range Planning Committee working to make a

difference in for the future?

One of the things we're looking to do is make sure that we meet the needs of not just today's children and patient population, but long-term needs as oncology treatment protocols changes, and as delivery of services change. We want to make sure that the House is fully equipped to continue to be the place where hope lives. We're spending a lot of time working with doctors, and working with some consulting firms to get a better understanding of what we need to do to make sure that the House is prepared to meet the changing needs over the next 10-15 years.

What has volunteering at the House meant for you on a personal level?

Like all volunteers who are involved with Ronald McDonald House, we never cease to recognize how lucky we are. It is a privilege to work with these families, to try to make life a little easier at a very difficult time. I think we all take away a sense of how important it is to be involved with organizations like Ronald McDonald House. It's important for people to be involved. To help be a steward of all that happens at the House is something that is humbling. But the one great thing about the Ronald McDonald House is every day we know that we are trying our best to make a difference. And when you can see the difference made – it is beyond rewarding.

Who's New at the House

Natalie Greaves recently joined Ronald McDonald House New York as Director of Communications, where she is responsible for production of the Around the House newsletter, the RMH-New York Web site, and all other external communications. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Rhetoric & Communication from the University at Albany in New York, and lives in Queens.

Jerome Kelton is Ronald McDonald House New York's newest Development Officer, bringing more than 15 years of experience in the planning and execution of special events as part of multi-million dollar fundraising campaigns throughout the tri-state area. A native of New Brunswick, New Jersey, Jerome has previously served as a volunteer with RMH-New York, and lives in Manhattan.



Spotlight

Spring Social Brings Magical Memories



Clifton A. Bazar

Caption: L to R: Esther Checkroun, Yalisa Leyba, Day Stanchi, Santiago Rozo, Anthony Leyba

It started out as an inspired spark, and ended in an evening of magical memories that would last a lifetime. On Thursday, May 27th, Ronald McDonald House New York held its first annual Spring Social event, where resident families received the red carpet treatment and celebrated the many bonds made while staying at the “House of Hope.”

Held in the historic New York Athletic Club, the Spring Social was inspired by the concept of prom season – and entirely underwritten by the generosity of donors and volunteers. Guests of all ages from 39 families received a day of pampering before putting on designer gowns, suits and tuxedos, and rode in style to an evening of dinner and dancing. They laughed, they danced, and most importantly – for one night, they were transported to a place where fun was the focus – and not cancer.

“Many of our families don’t get the chance to enjoy traditional

social events due to their circumstances,” said Nelida “Nel” Barreto, director of Programs for Ronald McDonald House New York. “Why not bring the party to them? The Spring Social was an uplifting experience where we all had a chance to dress up, celebrate life, and give the children and parents an opportunity to look and feel beautiful.”

Magic in the Making

The idea for the event came to Neli the year prior when she noticed a group of teens preparing for a “prom” event sponsored by a partner hospital.

“I realized how much our families missed out on socially; spending days and sometimes months in treatment for cancer leaves little time for much else,” she said. “I figured why not create an opportunity for everyone to feel special and restore a little bit of that social fabric back into their lives.”



Sara Jaye Weiss

L to R: Tracey Bardowell with daughter Casey Bardowell, Mother-in-Law Claudette Gilmer, and Tracey’s mother Zita Glassglow

Soon after, a volunteer committee led by Alan Herman and Rebecca Lainovic got to work. Supported by Hope Award Winner Lou Riccio of Bank of America, Lisa Hollman of the New York Athletic Club and Wednesday-night volunteer Ann Lekow, the team worked with Nel and Ronald McDonald House Director of Operations Wini Cudjoe toward one major goal: transformation, relaxation and rejuvenation.

The result was an event that surpassed expectations on every level. Hair and makeup was provided for the families by Elizabeth Arden Red Door Spa. Members of Central Synagogue, Youngland Stores, and students at both the Convent of the Sacred Heart School and Harrison High School were all instrumental in securing an assortment of trendy, timeless and ultimately breathtaking outfits for the families to wear.

And to help smooth out the last minute details, Thursday Night Volunteer Team members also joined in and even



Clifton A. Bazar

Christopher Taylor with his daughter Phoebe Taylor

entertained the kids while their parents were being pampered.

Of course no glamorous evening would be complete without a red carpet entrance, and Deutsche Bank made it over-the-top spectacular. Organized by Black Car Program Manager Johny Vican, the investment bank generously provided the transportation where our families were whisked away to their night out on the town.

By the evening’s conclusion there were smiles all around, and several burdens had been lifted. The caregivers and their charges had received an extra helping of much-deserved loving care. Ronald McDonald House New York thanks its donors, supporters and volunteers who helped to create the magic.

FOR MORE PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SPRING SOCIAL, VISIT WWW.RMH-NEWYORK.ORG.

Feature

Ben Brewer: Strength, Courage and Wisdom



Photos by Sara Jaye Weiss

Happy Birthday Ben! Ben Brewer with Yoshi cake, a special birthday surprise in the form of his favorite Mario Brothers character.

The best thing about a birthday is you get to eat cake for dinner. At least, that's the thought from a nine-year-old's perspective. However, Benjamin "Ben" Brewer is not your typical nine-year-old. Fighting cancer since the age of 2 ½, this brave young man's special day has meant more than you can imagine. After successfully beating his cancer the first time around, Ben is now undergoing antibody therapy for high-risk neuroblastoma at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. And that's how his relationship began with Ronald McDonald House New York.

"When he was first diagnosed, we basically lived in the hospital," said Ben's mother Sarah Brewer. "He had been misdiagnosed for several months, and we just thought that he kept picking up some virus that was going around. We were at church one morning and Ben had been playing with some other kids. He was trying

to chase after them and collapsed. That was on a Sunday, and by the following Thursday, we had an answer – that Ben had cancer."

Six weeks after the diagnosis, Sarah gave birth to Ben's younger sister Madeline. Together, the three of them would spend the first year of her life in a Dublin, Ohio hospital while Ben underwent a barrage of treatments. It would take a bone marrow transplant, radiation therapy, oral antibody treatments, and intravenous and oral chemotherapy over 15 months, but they would beat it. At four-years-old, Ben was a cancer survivor.

Seeking a fresh start, the family moved to Denver, Colorado, paid down their medical bills, and settled in to a new life in one of the healthiest cities in the country.

Hearing the news that their son had cancer was the furthest thing from Sarah and Ben's father Matt's minds when Ben

received his initial diagnosis. Almost as shocking was the call that came four years later: the oncologist had found something behind his heart and the fight wasn't over.

First Impressions Not Always Lasting Impressions

When Sarah and Ben first arrived in New York City, the timing couldn't have been worse. It was a cold day in February, and New York had been hit with a series of blizzards that were playfully nicknamed "Snowmageddon."

"It was overwhelming to think of this totally different lifestyle," Sarah recalled. "Getting to New York, as soon as we walked out the door, all we heard were honking horns."

It was all too overwhelming for Ben, as well. As they stepped out of the airport, he turned and hugged his mother tightly, buried his face in her coat, and said, "I don't like it here."

"The first time I met Benjamin I knew he was a special soul, wise beyond his years at eight," said Chaplain Cheryl Frei, who serves as director of Family Support at Ronald McDonald House New York. "His eyes tell a lifetime of experience."

The staff, volunteers and other families at Ronald McDonald House New York would assist with the transition, helping to provide a haven from the harsh realities of the weather outside and being so far away from home.

Fighting, Surviving and Thriving

"Mom, I just really want my life back." Those words pierced Sarah's heart one morning as Ben reflected on all that he had been through. Cancer had caused him to drop out of Cub Scouts, miss school, and many of the kids who began treatment alongside him years ago had never made it this far.

Their initial consultation in New York was a mixture of good news and disappointment as doctors believed that Ben would have a very good chance at recovery. However, scans had identified a suspicious spot on his rib, and it would take much more than the four trips that the Brewers had originally expected to make. The physical, emotional and financial burden on the family would be significant. Back in Denver, they held a series of fundraisers to help pay for medical expenses, and established a blog to report on his progress.

By their second trip to New York the following month, Sarah and Ben had become more adventurous. Their two favorite activities were walks through Central Park, and daily visits to a local pet store where Ben liked to play with the puppies. It was a welcome reprieve from a grueling schedule that included radiation twice a day, and chemotherapy in-between. And waiting. Waiting for clearance that Ben could finally receive the 3F8 antibody therapy that would meet the cancer that had formed at his nerve endings, and cut off its ability to grow and spread.



Sarah Brewer with son Ben at Ronald McDonald House New York



Ben Brewer continued

In the meantime, Sarah and Ben would gather more support while staying at the House, with Ben making friends with the other kids, and Sarah gaining valuable advice from mothers who gave her their own special insight.

“Now that we’ve been there a few times, we’re getting to know the families who are going through the same thing, and it’s nice to be able to say, ‘We’re just starting this, what can we expect?’,” said Sarah. One particularly difficult morning while she waited for Ben to complete a biopsy, another mother from the House comforted her while her own child underwent a similar procedure. “I just walked out into the waiting room and I was just sitting there and she put her hand on my back and she said, ‘Whatever it is, it’s ok.’ And she held me for a few minutes, and I thought, she doesn’t really know me but she knows what it’s about. And it’s very touching because I think that any one of the people at the House would be that way.”

But there wasn’t a distraction big enough to help the family through their next disappointment. For the first time ever, the Brewer family would be apart for Ben’s ninth birthday with his father and his sister 1,800 miles away back in Denver.

It had been almost a year since his relapse, and this birthday was a testament to Ben’s bravery, his strength and how his life inspired others, including strangers on the street who would stop to encourage them during their walks.

When the big day arrived, cards poured in from around the country. A specialty cake company named Icing Smiles delivered big time when Ben received a visit from Yoshi, a character out of his favorite Super Mario Brothers video game. But the biggest surprise would not be for Ben. When his parents asked him what he wanted for his birthday, they expected him to say he wanted anything—Super Mario Brothers. Instead, he asked for a puppy.

“Sarah is very in tune with her son and his illness, and is sensitive to his every need. It’s quite touching to see how loving and tender they are with each other,” said Chaplain Frei, who is also administrator of the “Angels on a Leash,” therapy dogs program. “Ben loves animals and nature, and was obsessed about getting a new puppy for his birthday. In fact, he told me he couldn’t think of anything else.”

Well, he made a wish and he got it. Ben received his clearance shortly after his birthday, and by the week’s end the Brewer family had been reunited – plus one new member. “Yoshi,” a Sih Tzu and Havanese mix joined Ben and Sarah on their way to the airport where they were greeted by Matt and Madeline back home in Denver. Though his fight with cancer continues, there is no doubt that this little boy is getting his life back.



Sara Jaye Weiss

On one of their trips to New York, Ben and Sarah attended our first-annual Spring Social (see story on page 10). Here is Ben in his signature green Crocs with Katie Klein at the event.

Programs

What Makes A Home Away From Home for a Child Fighting Cancer?

From everyday afterschool programs to outings, to summer camp and beyond, the Programs Department of Ronald McDonald House New York works to ensure that our mantra holds true: children staying at the House are “Kids First, and Cancer Patients Second.” Here are just a few highlights of the exciting activities made possible thanks to their efforts:

New York Pops’ 27th Birthday Gala



NY Pops/Rob Rich

When the New York Pops Orchestra celebrated its 27th anniversary at the famed Carnegie Hall, the Ronald McDonald House Chorus and our rock group “Bad Habit” joined them for the celebration. Under the direction of Conductor Steven Reineke the kids sang a rousing rendition of “High Hopes” with Tony Award-winning actor/musician Michael Cerveris. We’d also like to extend special recognition to James Johnson, executive director of the New York Pops and Dr. Sherrie Maricle, the orchestra’s director of Education, for their vision in bringing these opportunities to our children.

Summer Fun Starts at Camp Ronald McDonald



Keeping a child entertained during the summer months can be a daunting task. With more than 100 participants ranging in age from three to 21, the Programs department of Ronald McDonald House New York has made it something of an art form.

Camp Ronald McDonald opened on July 7th with the seven-week program offering a newly renovated Playroom and a revamped itinerary. For the older kids seeking more adventurous exploits around New York City, activities included fine dining at nearby restaurants.

Highlighted with trips to the Bronx Zoo, the Jersey Shore, local museums and even deep sea fishing; the Camp Ronald McDonald experience is without a doubt exciting and entertaining for kids of all ages.

Spotlight

Little Piece of My Heart



Photos by: Frank Farina & Co. Photographers, New York

No greater gift could have been shared when Team Ronald McDonald held “A Little Piece of My Heart,” their annual volunteer fundraising event, at Guastavino’s on June 15th. The event was attended by more than 750 people and organized by Ronald McDonald House New York’s seven volunteer teams (one for each night of the week) who sold event tickets, raffles and silent auction items to successfully raise more than \$140,000.

Led by Committee Chair Bruce Dimpflmaier of Tony’s DiNapoli restaurant, who was supported by co-chairs Jef Champion, Clemencia Colon-Neyland, the annual event is the only occasion where all of our volunteer teams assemble on the same night for a common purpose: to raise funds to help underwrite the costs of activities for the children and families staying at Ronald McDonald House New York year-round.

“The cost to support one family averages \$270 per night. Events such as these help to give each one of our families a better chance at overcoming cancer without the additional burden of

finding affordable housing in New York City,” said William T. Sullivan, president and CEO of Ronald McDonald House New York. “What makes A Little Piece of My Heart so powerful is how it allows our volunteer teams to demonstrate their collective regard for our families through unique and innovative themes. Every year, they find ways to show the New York City community how lives are touched and ultimately changed on all sides.”

An Inspired Heart

The theme came to Ms. Colon-Neyland as she was conducting her Thursday night volunteer activities: “Bringing a smile to the children and in turn to the parents makes it all worthwhile. To let the families see that a complete stranger will take time out of their daily schedules to spend time playing, talking and sharing in their struggles is awesome.”

“It actually just comes from the heart,” she added. “That’s why it was so important for us to name our event, “A Little Piece of My Heart.”



Many hearts were dedicated to those they knew and loved

“There was an unmistakable energy in the room that evening,” said Patrick Lenz, director of Human Resources and Volunteer Development. “It’s the outpouring of love and compassion that we see daily at the House. Working side by side with our volunteers to produce A Little Piece of My Heart reminds us all that the over 250 members of Team Ronald McDonald, and the volunteers who serve on other projects are such tremendously talented and remarkable individuals.”

“I have made a total commitment to these families and kids, as if they were all my own children,” said Jef Champion, a firefighter with the Yonkers Fire Department who has served as a volunteer with the House for nearly 10 years. “Ronald McDonald House New York is a place where the children come first. It’s a charity that has taught me some of the most valuable lessons in life – how

Marsh “Insurance Gives Hope” Golf Tournament and Award

It was the perfect day to support a worthy cause in the great outdoors when 140 prominent representatives of the insurance industry joined together during the fifth annual Marsh Inc. Ronald McDonald House New York Golf Tournament this past June. Held at the Hudson National Golf Club in Westchester, 35 foursomes raised \$350,000 to support children and families fighting cancer.

Chaired by Timothy J. Mahoney, Jr., president of Global Risk Management at Marsh, Inc., the tournament was held for the first time at Hudson National, which was recently named one of America’s Top 100 Greatest Golf Courses by Golf Digest. With its 260 acres of stunning beauty, participants experienced breathtaking views of the Hudson and peaceful vistas from virtually every hole.

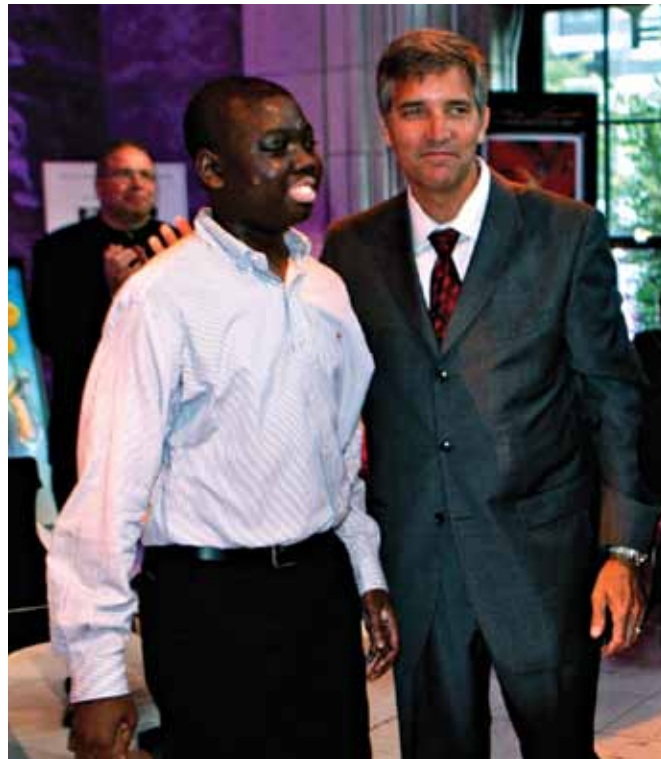
The new venue wasn’t the only “first” at this year’s event. The day concluded with the inaugural presentation of the “Insurance Gives Hope” Award, given to Dennis Kane, chief executive of North America Property & Casualty XL Insurance. Mr. Kane’s leadership and commitment to helping further our mission has helped make a major difference in the lives of families staying at Ronald McDonald House New York.

“The Marsh-sponsored event holds a special significance,” said William T. Sullivan, president and CEO of Ronald McDonald House New York. “We look forward to this event every year where professionals from the insurance industry – an industry that we rely on for its ability to bridge the gap in uncertain circumstances – join together to support a cause that has served to bridge the gap for thousands of families seeking housing in a time of crisis. On behalf of the families served at Ronald McDonald House, we are grateful for their support and dedication.”

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT PARTICIPATING IN OUR NEXT GOLF OUTING, OR OTHER FUNDRAISING EVENTS, PLEASE VISIT WWW.RMH-NEWYORK.ORG.

Feature

Little Piece of My Heart



Ronald McDonald House guest Shaquille St. John and event Chair Bruce Dimpflmaier.



Mother Sharon and her son Shaquille St. John share their story of their fight against cancer, and their life at Ronald McDonald House.

precious childhood is and the difference your time can be to these beautiful children and families.”

Among the many sponsors who helped make the evening possible were Tony's DiNapoli family-style Italian restaurant – who provided a full open bar as well as a lavish spread of its most popular Italian specialties – and entertainment was provided by DJ Mr. Biggs. Additional sponsorship support was also provided by John Rose of Guastavino's, who provided a spectacular event space; Elizabeth Arden Red Door Salon & Spas; Con Tees; and Celebrate Flowers; all of whose contributions resulted in the evening's success.

The event also introduced some very special guests in the

“hearts” themselves. Volunteer and Director of the Saturday Art Program Maureen Berge worked with the children of the House over five months to create a papier-mâché heart exhibit for the event.

“I wanted the children to be a part of the event and asked to have them paint hearts; to show a little piece of their hearts,” said Colon-Neyland. “It was extremely therapeutic since we lost so many children this year. Many hearts were dedicated to those they knew and loved.”

And loved they are indeed. To the many volunteers who give so generously of their time and resources to Ronald McDonald House New York, we thank you from the depths of our hearts.

Fundraising

The Tree of Life



Visitors to Ronald McDonald House New York have noticed *The Tree of Life* wall sculpture is flourishing with many new leaf additions over the last year. More and more families are honoring Loved Ones with the installation of leaves and have gathered with friends and family to install each leaf on *The Tree of Life* with a special ceremony. This vibrant symbol of life and strength provides each family with an extraordinary way to memorialize and celebrate the life of someone special. As time goes by and more and more leaves are added, *The Tree of Life* will continue to flourish and support the House.

The financial support generated for Ronald McDonald House New York from *The Tree of Life* enables us to offer more than just a place to sleep when families travel to New York City for their child's cancer treatment. Like a tree, the House provides shelter,

has many branches of support and gives us strength in times of turmoil. The House is a home-away-from-home, a place with an extended family and life-long friendships with those who are there when you need them.

Leaves are engraved with a message and the name of the honored person. Each leaf may be purchased for \$2,500. Your leaf will be placed on *The Tree of Life* and you will receive a beautiful glass tile to acknowledge the installation of the leaf in your Loved One's name. Your generosity is greatly appreciated and will help us continue to offer services to families arriving today, tomorrow and in the years ahead.

For more information or to purchase a leaf, please contact Richard Martin, Director of Development at (212) 639-0100, or rmartin@rmb-newyork.org.

Calendar of Events

Save the Date

AUGUST 23, 2010

An Evening with Maurice Hines
at Feinstein's at Loews Regency
Time: 6:30 PM
Location: Feinstein's at Loews Regency, 540
Park Ave at 61st St.

SEPTEMBER 21, 2010

"Children's Happy Faces Foundation"
Annual Golf Outing
Time: 9:00 AM Golf Registration
Location: Sleepy Hollow Country Club, with
overflow at Trump National Golf Club

SEPTEMBER 29, 2010

Lobster Fest
Time: 6:00 PM
Location: New York Athletic Club

OCTOBER 2, 2010

Third Annual Block Party
Time: 11:00 AM
Location: East 73rd Street (Between First and
York Avenues)

NOVEMBER 7, 2010

ING NYC Marathon, Team Ronald McDonald
Time: 6:00 AM
Location: Transportation from Ronald
McDonald House New York

NOVEMBER 14, 2010

Kids Charity Fun Run
Time: 10:00 AM
Location: Central Park, 7th Avenue at 59th
Street, follow signs.

DECEMBER 7, 2010

Event: Fall Theatre Benefit,
Spiderman: Turn off the Dark
Time: 5:30 PM Cocktails & Dinner, with
theatre presentation to follow

OCTOBER BLOCK PARTY

It's a major celebration when Ronald McDonald House New York hosts its third-annual Block Party!

This free event featuring food, live music, entertainment, safety awareness, health screenings and educational programs – offers something for family members of all ages. Join us as we celebrate YOU, our awesome community, and your support of our work to provide a true "home-away-from-home" for families dealing with pediatric cancer.



Date: Saturday, October 2, 2010 (Rain Date: Sunday, October 3, 2010)
Time: 11:00 AM
Location: East 73rd Street (Between First and York Avenues)

For more information on sponsorship and volunteer opportunities, please contact Wini Cudjoe at (212) 639-0100, wini@rmb-newyork.org.

ING NEW YORK CITY MARATHON

Ronald McDonald House New York has once again partnered with the New York Rotary Marathon Team to participate in the ING New York City Marathon. Thanks to your overwhelming support, our team is now full.

However, you can still support our dedicated participants as they race 26.2 miles to support our families in other ways.

For more information about sponsorship opportunities and event support, contact Mike Ballew at (212) 639-0100, mballew@rmb.org.



Date: November 7, 2010
Time: 6:00 AM
Location: Transportation available to Marathon Runners from Ronald McDonald House New York

FALL THEATRE BENEFIT: "SPIDERMAN: TURN OFF THE DARK"

Marvel Comics' magic hits the Great White Way this year when Julie Taymor's "Spiderman: Turn Off the Dark" opens this fall. A mega-musical scored by Bono and The Edge of the famous rock band U2, this long-awaited production promises to thrill audiences of all ages. Join us for this year's Fall Theatre Benefit as we welcome this exciting new show to our town. A great evening, with great entertainment for a worthy cause.



Date: Tuesday, December 7, 2010
Time: 5:30 Cocktails and Dinner, with theatre presentation to follow

To purchase a ticket to attend our Fall Theatre Benefit event, please contact Richard Martin at (212) 639-0100, rmartin@rmb-newyork.org, or visit www.rmb-newyork.org.

You're Invited!

Ronald McDonald House New York

3rd Annual

Block Party!



Saturday, October 2nd*

11 AM – 5:30 PM

East 73rd Street

**– between First
and York Avenues**

Ronald McDonald House New York salutes the many supporters throughout New York City who have worked tirelessly to help provide a “home away from home” for children and families affected by cancer.

Please join us as we celebrate YOU - the community!

- Food
- Games
- Face Painting
- Meet NYPD and FDNY
- Blessing of the Animals

*Rain date: Sunday, October 3rd

Event is free and open to the public.



**RONALD MCDONALD
HOUSE® NEW YORK**

www.rmh-newyork.org

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