

# Around the House

The Magazine for Ronald McDonald House New York. Volume 6, Issue 1



RONALD MCDONALD  
HOUSE® NEW YORK



Winter 2011





Above: A Home for the Holidays thanks to the generosity of New Yorkers  
On the front cover: The Rodriguez family turns heartache into hope for new beginnings.

Cover and inside front cover: by Natalie Greaves



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.

## Contents

- 1 **President's Letter**
- 2 **What's New at Your House?**  
ISE Adopt-A-Room
- 4 **Donation Highlights**
- 5 **Spotlight on Your Board**  
Welcome to New Board Members
- 6 **Spotlight**  
Making a Difference with Warnaco
- 8 **Feature**  
The Rodriguez Family's Hopeful Journey
- 11 **Volunteer Highlights**
- 13 **Programs**  
Meet the Press Crew
- 15 **Fundraising**  
The Tree Of Life  
How to Help: Events
- 16 **Calendar Of Events**  
TD Bank Five Boro Bike Tour  
Spring Theatre Benefit: "Wonderland"  
19<sup>th</sup> Annual Gala

### Publisher

William T. Sullivan  
*President & Chief Executive Officer*

### Editor/Writer

Natalie Greaves  
*Director Of Communications*

### Art Director

Erika Ladanyi  
*erikaladanyi@yahoo.com*

## President's Letter

Dear Friends,

2011 ushered itself into the Ronald McDonald House with a renewed commitment to our mission of caring for our special kids and families who are battling cancer. For that reason, we thought it appropriate to share some inspirational stories about our families, leadership, and volunteers who are working hard here at the House to make a difference. Our theme in this issue of *Around the House* is one of renewal and commitment to our survivors and the support of their families.

Holiday giving was at an all-time high this year, not only with regard to donations, but also in-kind contributions of love. The House's hallways saw guests of all ages and walks of life. For families who were dealing with emotions, feeling melancholy and missing their homes, the outpouring of support from New York City was exceptional! With their help, our evening meal program and other activities provided nourishment for their battle-weary spirits alongside home cooked meals seven days a week.

In this issue you will meet Victoria Ferrara, a former guest who, motivated by her own experience as a mother who has stayed with us, worked tirelessly for more than 20 years to engage the Staten Island community to support Ronald McDonald House. There are no words to describe the unspeakable toll of loss and devastation caused by a diagnosis of cancer.



Photo: Bob Ray

Lizbeth Rodriguez and her two boys Carlos and Eduardo show us in this issue how a leap of faith toward healing can lead to a new life in New York City reaching back to help families facing the same difficult set of circumstances.

Faith and healing were very top of mind as we were honored and inspired by a Christmas Eve visit from Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan of New York. Hope filled the halls with the thoughtful time he spent with our children. Strength and courage were shared both ways as members of the U.S. Armed Forces joined us for a spaghetti dinner (a very popular dish around the House!) and a "Toys for Tots" celebration and distribution.

We welcomed seven new leaders to our Board of Directors. These individuals are committed and inspired to do great things for our charity. And as for our future leaders — our story on The Press Crew will give you reason to see that our kids may be sick, but their talents and cleverness are beyond measure.

Finally, we would like to extend a heartfelt thank you and congratulations to the International Securities Exchange (ISE) for a successful "Ten in Twenty-Ten" program as part of their first corporate responsibility initiative. ISE's creativity and passion for connecting with our families led to the enrichment of many lives. The organization recently joined our "Adopt-A-Room" program, and we are honored to have their name be a permanent part of the House's history.

Please continue to support our fundraising events and campaigns and give consideration to our Wish List on page 4. We welcome your ongoing support and friendship and hope that 2011 continues to bless you with good health and happiness.

Sincerely,

William T. Sullivan  
President & Chief Executive Officer

## Ronald McDonald House New York

### OFFICERS

Stanley B. Shopkorn  
Chairman of the Board

Milton R. Berlinski  
Vice Chairman

Harris Diamond  
Vice Chairman

William T. Sullivan  
President & Chief Executive Officer

Richard J. O'Reilly, MD  
Vice President

Peter L. Samaha  
Vice President

George Simeone  
Vice President/Finance Committee Chair

Shelly S. Friedman, Esq.  
Secretary

Rick Richardson  
Treasurer

James F. Flanagan  
Assistant Treasurer

Vivian Harris\*  
President Emeritus

### DIRECTORS

John M. Angelo

Steven J. Bensingler

Terry Bovin

Louise Camuto

William L. Carroll, MD

Bruce D. Colley

Jerry de St. Paer

Randel A. Falco

James E. Fitzgerald, Jr.

Casey Gard

Peter C. Georgiopoulos

Judy Gilbert

Joseph R. Gromek

Robert Grubert

James A. Jacobson

Jacques Jiha, Ph.D.

Thomas M. Joyce

Robert E. La Blanc

Sacha Lainovic

Kenneth G. Langone

Candace Leeds

Tina Lundgren

James P. MacGilvray

Timothy J. Mahoney, Jr.

Edward J. Malloy

Tom Murry

Joel Newman

Frank Pellegrino

David A. Preiser

Michael E. Roemer

Myron "Mike" Shevell

Clifford A. Sterling

Felicia Taylor

Michael A. Weiner, MD

### MEMBERS AT LARGE

R. Peter Altman, MD

Michael J. DeSola, Jr.

Barbara Eig

Michael A. Giunta

Michael Hegarty

Theodore P. Janulis

George F. Mikes

J. E. Reeves, Jr.

\* deceased



## What's New at Your House?

### International Securities Exchange Adopts Ronald McDonald House New York



First impressions are lasting impressions. For the International Securities Exchange (ISE), one of the nation's leading options exchanges, working with Ronald McDonald House® New York represented the organization's first exercise in a formal corporate responsibility program. Throughout 2010, ISE celebrated its anniversary through the "Ten in Twenty-Ten" program, hosting 10 volunteer events at and for Ronald McDonald House New York — one for each year of service to its industry. The experience proved to be so rewarding, that ISE ultimately became the newest member of our Adopt-a-Room program, donating \$80,000 to name a family room on behalf of the U.S. options industry.

"It's been a great experience, each event better than the next," said Gary Katz, president, chief executive officer and co-founder of ISE. "We talk about it all the time here, whether it's the people that came and helped serve dinner on the porch, or the group that helped to set up the Halloween party, or the group that cleaned the kitchens. Everybody walked away from it fulfilled, feeling that they were involved with a world-class organization."

"Before launching the program it was important to us to

find a New York-based charitable organization that was the right fit for our company — one that we believe represented ISE's culture and values," added Mr. Katz.

As the year progressed, the ISE family became a part of the Ronald McDonald House New York family. On a given night, one might spot Mr. Katz and his wife Shelley among the organization's volunteers, working alongside their own family members to serve dinner to families battling pediatric cancer.

"When ISE expressed a desire to do something special for our families, it turned out to be a gratifying experience for our families, as well as the exchange's employees," said William T. Sullivan, president & CEO of Ronald McDonald House New York. "Seeing how everyone came together so seamlessly, it was obvious from the beginning that it was the right fit."

Over the year, ISE contributed in a number of ways, going beyond sponsoring a table at the annual gala in May. The staff participated in a cleaning day to help maintain a spotless environment for our children many of whom have compromised immune systems. For Halloween, the families were treated to a party filled with games and treats. And for the holidays, the

All photos courtesy of ISE. 1. RMH-NY families enjoyed a delicious, healthy dinner served by the ISE employees and their family members. 2, 3, 4. Summer fun was had on all sides as ISE took the dinner festivities out on the third floor terrace. 5. There was no "masking" the fun had at ISE's Halloween party for RMH-NY families.

exchange sponsored a dinner for the families, and generously donated 100 gift cards in \$100 denominations.

When representatives from the U.S. options industry attend their "Adopt-A-Room" room dedication ceremony in March, the event will hold a special significance. Mr. Katz believes it will be a new opportunity for corporate responsibility industry-wide, and to create more personal connections for families in need.

"I have received numerous phone calls and emails telling me about personal experiences that people have had with Ronald McDonald House Charities, not just in NY, but in the US — complimenting ISE for its vision and decision to work with this group. That just confirms the decision we made in the beginning of the year. It also confirms that people who are using the facilities at Ronald McDonald House New York are having positive experiences with the House. But there are also some sad stories, and hearing them from these peers makes this a very personal experience."

## Staff

**William T. Sullivan**  
President & Chief Executive Officer  
[wsullivan@rmb-newyork.org](mailto:wsullivan@rmb-newyork.org)

**Daniel Badillo**  
Evening Manager  
[dbadillo@rmb-newyork.org](mailto:dbadillo@rmb-newyork.org)

**Michael Ballew**  
Director of Donor Management Systems  
[mballew@rmb-newyork.org](mailto:mballew@rmb-newyork.org)

**Nelida Barreto**  
Director of Programs  
[nbarreto@rmb-newyork.org](mailto:nbarreto@rmb-newyork.org)

**Edward Cho**  
Information Technology Manager  
[echo@rmb-newyork.org](mailto:echo@rmb-newyork.org)

**Winifred Cudjoe**  
Director of House Operations  
[wini@rmb-newyork.org](mailto:wini@rmb-newyork.org)

**Teresa Eggers**  
Assistant to Director of Human Resources Volunteer Services  
[teggers@rmb-newyork.org](mailto:teggers@rmb-newyork.org)

**Mel Farrell**  
Building Engineer  
[mfarrell@rmb-newyork.org](mailto:mfarrell@rmb-newyork.org)

**Cherilyn Frei**  
Director of Family Support  
[cfrei@rmb-newyork.org](mailto:cfrei@rmb-newyork.org)

**Natalie Greaves**  
Director of Communications  
[ngreaves@rmb-newyork.org](mailto:ngreaves@rmb-newyork.org)

**Joseph Guidetti**  
Chief Financial Officer  
[jguidetti@rmb-newyork.org](mailto:jguidetti@rmb-newyork.org)

**Suzanna C. Houston**  
Assistant to the President & Director of External Affairs  
[sbhouston@rmb-newyork.org](mailto:sbhouston@rmb-newyork.org)

**Jerome Kelton**  
Development Officer  
[jkelton@rmb-newyork.org](mailto:jkelton@rmb-newyork.org)

**Pauline Kim**  
Senior Accountant  
[pkim@rmb-newyork.org](mailto:pkim@rmb-newyork.org)

**Karen Kirk**  
Assistant Director of Development, Director of Special Events  
[kkirk@rmb-newyork.org](mailto:kkirk@rmb-newyork.org)

**Patrick Lenz**  
Director of Human Resources & Volunteer Development  
[plenz@rmb-newyork.org](mailto:plenz@rmb-newyork.org)

**Darlene Lord**  
Assistant to Director of Operations/Manager  
[dlord@rmb-newyork.org](mailto:dlord@rmb-newyork.org)

**Richard H. Martin**  
Director of Development  
[rmartin@rmb-newyork.org](mailto:rmartin@rmb-newyork.org)

**Fordham Murdy**  
Evening Program Director  
[fmurdy@rmb-newyork.org](mailto:fmurdy@rmb-newyork.org)

**Antonio Neto**  
Executive Assistant to the President's Office & Office Manager  
[aneto@rmb-newyork.org](mailto:aneto@rmb-newyork.org)

**Jim Rooney**  
Evening Manager  
[jrooney@rmb-newyork.org](mailto:jrooney@rmb-newyork.org)

**Niki Sideris**  
Chairman, Greek Division  
[nikisideris@rmb-newyork.org](mailto:nikisideris@rmb-newyork.org)

**Helen Stafford**  
Volunteer Director  
[hstafford@rmb-newyork.org](mailto:hstafford@rmb-newyork.org)

**Stephen Yarri**  
Controller  
[syarri@rmb-newyork.org](mailto:syarri@rmb-newyork.org)

## 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 New York-Presbyterian Hospital  
The Mount Sinai Medical Center  
New York-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



## 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.

### FOR THE HOUSE:

For further information regarding this Wish List, or to make a donation (NEW items only), please contact Lucrecia Ortiz at 212.639.0200 or lucy@rmh-newyork.org.

### FOR THE CHILDREN

- DVDs (movies, G-and PG-rated)
- New clothing (seasonal, all sizes)
- Diapers (the bio "green" type)
- Baby wipes
- Toddler Stroller
- MacLaren Major Special Needs Stroller
- Rain Protectors, Throws and Bundles for Strollers and Carriages

### FOR THE MOMS AND DADS:

**Gift cards:** Visa, MasterCard, American Express, Target, Walgreens, Payless Shoes, JC Penney, Starbucks, Dunkin' Donuts, Duane Reade, CVS, Borders and Barnes & Noble

### FOR THE FAMILIES

- Postage stamps
- Rain Ponchos
- Rain Boots
- Snow Boots

### ITEMS FOR THE HOUSE

- Paper goods: disposable cups, plates, napkins
- Plastic goods: disposable forks, knives, spoons
- Toilet paper
- Paper towels
- Pillows
- Cereal (individually sized)
- Cleaning products:
  - "Green" laundry detergent
  - Clorox or Lysol wipes
- Copy paper

### HELP A FAMILY TODAY WITH A SPECIAL GIFT!

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

### FOR THE PLAYROOM

For further information regarding Playroom donations, please

contact Nelida Barreto, Director of Programs, at 212.639.0205 or nbarreto@rmh-newyork.org.

### FOR ARTS & CRAFTS:

- Backpacks (regular and wheeled)
- Small hand sanitizers
- Feathers
- Drop cloths for tables
- Oil cloth table cloths
- Play-Doh
- Glue guns and glue sticks
- LEGO blocks, people and BIONICLE sets
- Plastic lacing for lanyards
- Pom poms
- Glue dots
- Glitter glue

### FOR THE GAME ROOM:

- Foosballs
- Ping-pong balls and paddles
- Xbox 360 Games
- Playstation 3 Games
- iTunes Gift Cards (for our new iPad Programs)

### FOR THE TOT SECTION:

- Soft foam building blocks in assorted colors, shapes and sizes
- Baby dolls
- Baby doll clothing and accessories

### FOR TEENS

- Sony Snap Lab (UP CR20L)
- Blu-Ray DVDs
- Portable Organ
- Upright Piano
- MTA Metro Cards (for school transportation)

### BULK DONATIONS:

If you, your community group or company would like to share donations of new goods, seasonal surplus merchandise or other large-scale contributions, please contact Wini Cudjoe, Director of House Operations, at 212.639.0400 or wini@rmh-newyork.org.

### MACY'S GIFT REGISTRY:

The RMH-New York "Wish List" is also available through the Macy's Gift Registry (First Name: ronald Last Name: mcdonald). For more information, visit our "Wish List" page at [www.rmh-newyork.org/wishlist](http://www.rmh-newyork.org/wishlist).

## Donation Highlights

Our Operations staff prides itself on anticipating the needs of our families before their arrival at Ronald McDonald House New York; with birthday parties rating pretty high on the list.

A few months ago, House Operations Director Wini Cudjoe received the unfortunate news that a local supporter had changed management and wouldn't be able to support us. Board Director Terry Bovin stepped in to help save the day.

"Wini mentioned to me that they had a place that went under new management and they no longer had cakes for the children. So I decided to be nery and to start canvassing wherever I could, and I came with these four vendors who were wonderful in agreeing to supply these cakes for us once a month," said Mrs. Bovin.

Not only did Mrs. Bovin secure interest from four local bakeries, but her efforts proved more fruitful than we could ever have imagined. We are very thankful to Ms. Katherine Paredes, store manager of Food Emporium, for her donation of gift cards in support of our mission.

Owner Rosie Weisberg of State News was so moved by Mrs. Bovin's efforts that she donated more than \$10,000 worth of assorted party goods. Included in the donation were cups, plates, matching table cloths, blowers and other decorations to really get the party started!

As we all know that the House serves as a home-away-from home for families battling cancer, we can't forget the role that our community at-large plays in making that a reality. As we continue to provide love, hope and happiness in search of recovery from cancer, we are thankful for our neighbors for their support.

Once construction was completed on the third and seventh floor terraces, the Operations Department began work on another roof project.

Seeking to use the best materials for longevity, the Sol and Margaret Berger Foundation provided a \$350,000 gift of funds to help with the renovation.

In 2009, The Gertrude and Louis Feil Family Foundation played a major role in the renovation of our "hope" kitchen, donating \$150,000 to provide a state-of-the-art facility with top of the line appliances and storage space.

Our families were thrilled to find a space that was better suited to their individual needs.

The Feil Family Foundation was generous enough to consider Ronald McDonald House again and provide additional support to our roof project with a renewed \$150,000 grant.

With the help of these organizations, the House can greet the spring season with a new roofing system that employs a modified bitumen system over tapered insulation. We are very grateful for the generosity that is helping to keep a roof over our heads at Ronald McDonald House New York — literally.

## Spotlight on Your Board — Welcome to New Board Members

Ronald McDonald House recently added seven new members to its Board of Directors. Each Director brings a wealth of knowledgeable insight related to their specific fields of specialty, as well as a strong passion toward the task of furthering our mission. Please join us as we welcome:



**William L. Carroll, M.D.**  
Professor, Julie and Edward J. Minskoff Professor of Pediatrics; Director, Cancer Institute Departments of Pediatrics (Oncology Division) and Pathology, NYU Pediatric Hematology Oncology

As the head of NYU's Cancer Institute, Dr. Carroll oversees research and treatment operations at NYU Medical Center. He also serves as the head of the Children's Oncology Group's Acute Lymphocytic Leukemia Committee, where he and his peers apply their passion for eradicating leukemia to the creation of better treatments and eventual cures. Dr. Carroll joined the Board in October 2010.



**James F. Flanagan**  
US Leader, PricewaterhouseCoopers Financial Services

Mr. Flanagan will join the Board of Directors as an officer in the newly created position of assistant treasurer. At PriceWaterhouseCoopers Financial Services, his group helps clients to strategically navigate developing trends within the banking and capital markets, insurance, and asset management sectors. An active member of the "Skate with the Greats" event committee, Mr. Flanagan's vision as a leader in the industry is a welcome addition to Ronald McDonald House New York.



**Peter Georgiopoulos**  
Founder and Chairman, General Maritime Corporation

With more than 20 years in the international shipping

industry, Mr. Georgiopoulos is founder and chairman of General Maritime Corporation, a leading crude and products tanker company. Under his direction, General Maritime Corporation grew from a single ship-owning company to the second-largest midsize oil tanker company in the world. For the past two years, General Maritime Corporation has served as title sponsor of our annual Maritime Industry outing in the fall.



**Jacques Jiha**  
Executive Vice President, Chief Financial Officer and Chief Operating Officer, Black Enterprise, Earl G. Graves, Ltd.

Mr. Jiha holds many responsibilities as the executive vice president, chief financial officer, and chief operating officer for the nation's "premier financial and business news and investment resource" geared toward African-Americans. Having served as a deputy controller for both New York City and Nassau County, Mr. Jiha's knowledge of our great city and its resources is unparalleled.



**Thomas M. Joyce**  
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Knight Capital Group, Inc.

Since 2002, Mr. Joyce has served as chief executive officer of Knight Capital Group, Inc., the leading source of off-exchange liquidity in U.S. He has served as Chairman of the Board of the Company since December 2004

(a Director since October 2002), and has more than 30 years of experience in the securities industry. Mr. Joyce serves as the event chairman for the New York Pops Gala. He joined the Ronald McDonald House New York Board of Directors in October 2010.



**Tom Murry**  
President and Chief Executive Officer, Calvin Klein, Inc.

Tom Murry is the president and chief executive officer of Calvin Klein, Inc.. As head of a wholly-owned subsidiary of Phillips-Van Heusen Corporation and a legendary brand, Mr. Murry is one of the leading executives in the designer fashion industry. He joined the Board in October 2010.



**Myron "Mike" Shevell**  
Chairman and CEO of New England Motor Freight

Mr. Shevell's involvement with Ronald McDonald House New York came about as a result of his son's own volunteer experience. When the late Jon Lawrence Shevell left a bequest to the House that would ultimately resolve severe structural issues affecting our outdoor terraces. Mr. Shevell ultimately became a part of the Ronald McDonald House family, joining the Board in October 2010.



Spotlight on House Activities

Warnaco Leads the Retail Industry to “Make a Difference”



Sara Jaye Weiss

Pictured l to r **Back:** Allen Sirkin, president and COO, Phillips Van-Heusen; Helen McCluskey, chief operating officer, Warnaco; William T. Sullivan, president and CEO, Roeald McDonald House New York; Stanley Shopkorn, Board Chairman, Ronald McDonald House New York; Emanuel Chirico, CEO of PVH; Joe Gromek, president and chief executive officer of Warnaco Inc.; Frank Tworecke, president, Warnaco Sportswear Group. **Front:** Make a Difference Honorees Lawrence Rutkowski, executive vice president & CFO chief financial officer, Warnaco Inc.; and Dwight Meyer, president, Global Sourcing, Distribution and Logistics, Warnaco Inc., pictured with Ronald McDonald House New York children.

On Tuesday, November 9, Warnaco, Inc. hosted the second annual “Make A Difference Evening” to benefit Ronald McDonald House New York. The evening featured performances from RCA Recording Artist David Cook, American Idol Winner Ruben Studdard and former American Idol Finalist Melinda Doolittle. Joseph R. Gromek, president and chief executive of Warnaco, Inc., chaired the event, which honored two other respected Warnaco executives, Lawrence Rutkowski, executive vice president and chief financial officer, and Dwight Meyer, president of Global Sourcing, Distribution and Logistics.

“For many years, the House has been fortunate to have extraordinary supporters who offer the best of their worlds to bring the most creative and inspiring ideas to life,” said William T. Sullivan, president and CEO of Ronald McDonald House New York. “In this case, it was a perfect opportunity for key people in the apparel and entertainment industries to come together and do something extraordinary and inspirational.”

The idea for Make a Difference Evening came about two years ago, around the time that Mr. Gromek joined the Board of Directors. The House had already begun to explore ideas for exciting new fundraising events that would be fresh, unique and entertaining. Mr. Gromek suggested an event that was inspired by the concept of the hit FOX TV show, “American Idol.”

Although the show brought people together through music, its success was built on the ways in which viewers developed an attachment to contestants in their efforts to beat the odds — something that our families and supporters could identify with very well.

“The night brings together the retailing community and the families at the house. Our Warnaco family is honored to support the Ronald McDonald House New York and have the families be a part to this special night,” said Mr. Gromek. “It’s great seeing the kids enjoy the music and closeness with the talent.”

The House then approached Tuesday night Team Ronald McDonald volunteer

Kenneth Schulman, a partner of Pryor Cashman, LLP, to lend some insight. As an attorney working with the show, Ken took it a step further by helping to secure the talent. With his expertise and the support of Warnaco’s executive leadership, the event was destined for success.

The first Make a Difference Evening was held in 2009, and featured American Idols Ruben Studdard, Jordin Sparks and American Idol Contestant Brooke White. The event’s honorees were Warnaco executives Helen McCluskey, chief operating officer, and Frank Tworecke, president of the Sportswear Group. When all was said and done, more than \$525,000 had been raised to help provide housing for families battling pediatric cancer. An encore was inevitable.

For the 2010 event, more than 250 guests filled the Ronald McDonald House New York Macy’s Living Room, again featuring many of the fashion industry’s most prominent executives including Phillips Van Heusen Apparel Group Chairman Allen Sirkin and Chief Executive Emanuel Chirico.



All photos: Sara Jaye Weiss

American Idol and Grammy-Nominated Singer Ruben Studdard



RCA Recording Artist David Cook



Former American Idol Finalist Melinda Doolittle

“Warnaco again did a phenomenal job of raising money, everything came together, and it’s like a magical night,” said Mr. Schulman “Especially with the kids being there. This year, I invited Steven Van Zandt (of Bruce Springsteen’s E Street Band and HBO show the Sopranos) to attend, and his presence added some pizzazz to the whole evening.”

When the evening’s performances were over, the celebrities stayed afterward to spend time, sign autographs and pose for pictures with the Ronald McDonald House families and supporters.

“[The performers] spent time with the kids at the House and with the adults; everybody wanted autographs and pictures, and it just turned out to be this feel-good night,” Mr. Schulman added. “It’s a great

feeling that you’ve accomplished this event for such a great cause. Everything about it is so win-win-win - it’s one of the most exciting nights of the year for me.”

In total, the evening raised over \$600,000 to benefit Ronald McDonald House New York. Thank you once again to the apparel and entertainment industries, for making a difference.



Natalie Greaves

Push-Up Challenge Made a BIG Difference!

It was called “Make a Difference Evening,” and for one attendee, the message was heard loud and clear. Hoby Shapiro, 64, a founding member of the Shapiro, Goldstein, Moses & Artuso, LLP accounting firm in Syosset, immediately came up with a creative and remarkable way to answer the call. Standing in the Macy’s Living Room, surrounded by celebrities, Ronald McDonald House families, staff and volunteers, enveloped by an outpouring of emotional support for our mission, Mr. Shapiro understood the urgency to be a part of the community that works so hard to provide hope to our families. “I said that’s it. I’m doing it,” said Mr. Shapiro. He just needed a vehicle.

After two weeks of preparation, the task was underway. Mr. Shapiro announced that he would be participating in a push-up challenge, and he solicited donations in support of his goal. Two hundred and thirty-five push-ups later, he raised more than \$20,000.

And what a difference it’s made!

The cost to operate a room at Ronald McDonald House New York averages \$270 per night. Mr. Shapiro’s donation will help to underwrite the costs of support nearly 75 families for one night within our 84-room facility.

For more information about ways in which you can help take up the challenge of helping to support families battling pediatric cancer, contact Development Director Richard Martin at (212) 639-0206, or [rmartin@rmh-newyork.org](mailto:rmartin@rmh-newyork.org).



Spotlight

The Rodriguez Family: Reaching Back to Give Hope



You may remember reading about the Rodriguez family in a previous issue of Around the House. However, their story is so inspirational that we thought you might like an update. When Lizbeth Rodriguez's eldest son Carlos was diagnosed with osteosarcoma at age 13, they had no idea that their journey toward healing would take them away from the lush, vibrant landscapes of their native Puerto Rico, and lead them to become a source of strength and encouragement for families worldwide.

Five years later, the family has since overcome cancer and together with Carlos' younger brother Eduardo, they have discovered new opportunities for the future — all while helping other families facing similar circumstances as their own.

Carlos, Lizbeth and Eduardo Rodriguez found new life in New York City, and they still return to help their families at Ronald McDonald House.

Photos provided courtesy of the Rodriguez family



A Place Called "Home"

Ronald McDonald House served as the backdrop for a lot of first experiences for the family from the very beginning. The House was their first stop in New York City when Lizbeth and Carlos arrived in January 2006. And to this day, they still consider the facility to be "home base" in case of emergencies.

"Carlos was 13 years old when he was diagnosed, so for him it was like a big adventure. He said, 'I'm going with my mom to New York!'" recalled Lizbeth. "When Carlos started at the high school where he's in his senior year right now, he was the first cancer patient that they took. He told me, 'Mom, one thing that I don't want to change — although we're having a lot of changes with treatment and everything — is that I would like to be in one school my whole high school.'"

Now 17 years old, Carlos successfully beat osteosarcoma, a type of cancer that originates within the bone. Approximately 60 percent of osteosarcoma cases are diagnosed during a child's adolescent years, and the disease is more common in boys than girls. With the help of Carlos' homeschool teacher at Ronald McDonald House New York, Lizbeth was able to enroll him in recently opened Eleanor Roosevelt High School. It was the best option, considering its smaller size and facilities with an elevator.

Eduardo joined his mother and brother at age 9 just three short months later. Together, they experienced numerous milestones while living on East 73<sup>rd</sup> Street.

"He caught the English very well, and he made a lot of friends here. In the first summer camp, Eduardo was one of the siblings that participated, and the House had a lot of sports activities. I have pictures of him doing the trapeze, and he did kayaking," she added. "I think that in one way the House helped to develop skills in what he really likes. And I remember when we moved, he would spend more hours here than at home. He said, 'No Mom, I don't want us to leave the House. I want to keep playing with my friends. So he was here for awhile until he started to make his own friends in the neighborhood.'"

The decision to stay close to the House would ultimately lead to new opportunities, not just for the children, but also for their mother who stayed on to become a volunteer.

Scrapbooking for Moms — From a Mom

Every week on a Friday night, our residents gather for a very popular event. While most activities are geared toward children, "Scrapbooking for Moms" holds a special distinction primarily because it's a program for moms, created by a mother staying at the House who understood their situations better than anyone else.

Carlos speaks very proudly of his mother's accomplishments as a volunteer. "Most people do stuff for kids, which is great. But then she came up with a thing for the moms; something that she loved to do, and other moms loved to do. When the moms have time, all they do is worry. The patients, the kids, even the teenagers; they have distractions and the moms usually don't. And it's a good thing, it's a good distraction, I think. And it's at a time when all the kids are asleep, so they have time to talk and be moms."

"We always love to show pictures and say, 'Look at my baby,'" said Lizbeth. "It's really a relief time. I founded the program with another mom, just looking to get something for us and for the families, and I'm proud that the program is still running."

"I commonly call upon Carlos and Lizbeth to provide what we refer to as peer support where Lizbeth will speak with parents of teens/young adults who are battling cancer, and Carlos will speak to the patient and siblings," said Chaplain Cheryl Frei, director of Family Support for Ronald McDonald House New York. "They provide optimism and hope for the future, hope for a good quality of life, cancer-free. They also administer a healthy dose of reality, of the struggles and strife which occurs when a family faces a life-threatening diagnosis of cancer."

When speaking to new families, Lizbeth shares her own experience of helping her kids to adjust to life at the House, and how Eduardo's presence helped his older brother. "When I talk to the families that have teenagers, and the child stays in all the time, it's easy for me to explain to them that I was in the same situation because Carlos was staying in his room all the time. As a teenager, he didn't want to see anybody. But once Eduardo came, when Eduardo wanted to go to different activities, then he helped me — indirectly — to say 'Carlos, come over, we can do

(continued)







THIS.' Because Eduardo was always on top of everything."

"It's incredible how the people here, the staff are helping you out," she continued. "They try to identify your needs — and I'd say to all the mothers, don't be afraid to ask for help. Because the resources are there, it's just to ask. I really feel proud that Cheryl or someone can call me and say, 'I have a family here and they need someone to do something,' If I have the information, why not? Because people did it for me."

#### New Inspiration for the Future

When Lizbeth arrived in January of 2006, she'd left behind her career as a marketing executive in Puerto Rico to be a full-time mother to a sick child. Today, she has reestablished that career here in New York City, and her son is preparing to go to college.

"It feels kinda surreal. Because I remember in ninth grade, I would watch the seniors in my school who got all these college acceptance letters," said Carlos. "And I was like, I hope I get to that point where nothing gets in the way that I won't be able to graduate and go to college."

And that hope has become a reality. The Rodriguez family is in the middle of the college application process, with Carlos "testing the waters" to see what he might become.

"For me, the House is my family and I keep wanting to help people and volunteering my time," said Lizbeth. "It was a good beginning for us. The House gave us the steps to integrate into the city. So this is our family, and we work together. And I will do for other families. We're still in the process. Carlos is ok with his condition, but still going to the hospital. As a volunteer, I really have to say thank you to the House for giving me the opportunity to keep coming, and that I can feel part of the staff in helping other families."

"Now that they've moved out into the community, Lizbeth continues to attend our religious services and assists with the *Catholic Healing Mass* and the *Bilingual Hope & Healing Prayer Service*, which she was instrumental in starting with other Spanish-speaking moms over two years ago," said Chaplain Frei. "As for the benefit of families returning to the House to assist others, there's no greater gift staff can receive as the gift of self from a past resident of our House. Those families we had the privilege to serve in good times and times of crisis are now serving with us and for us. Volunteers who used to reside here know everything about the House, and have a sense of ownership and pride associated with being a member of this community; which is invaluable."

*We hope that the Rodriguez family's story inspires you in the same way that we have been touched simply by being able to serve them. To find out more about how you can make a difference in the life of a family battling pediatric cancer, please contact Ronald McDonald House New York at (212) 639-0100.*

## Volunteer Highlights

### *(Making a) Home for the Holidays at Ronald McDonald House New York*

The holidays at Ronald McDonald House can be filled with mixed emotions. Many of our families struggle with the sadness of being away from home, on top of the stress of battling cancer. The thoughtful generosity of our donors and volunteers are a key element of helping to bridge the gap and ease the pain felt by so many of our families at that time.

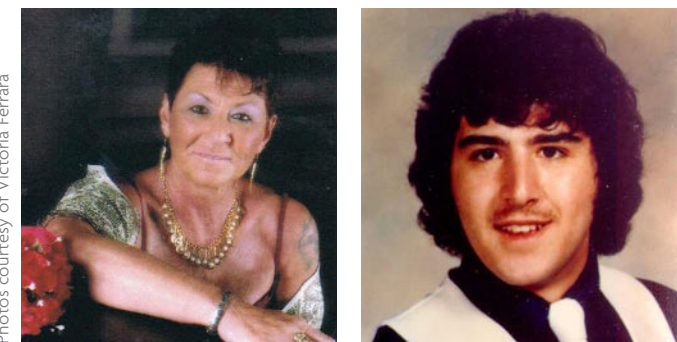
At a given moment, you can never be certain who might visit the House bearing the gifts of hope, love and laughter. "Part of what makes this city so great is the extraordinary ways in which New Yorkers reach out to our families," said William T. Sullivan, president & CEO of Ronald McDonald House New York. "It begins well before and extends beyond our Share a Night house lighting ceremony, bringing people together to celebrate life and hope for renewal in ways that cannot be imagined."

### Victoria Ferrara's Heart of Gold

Expect that when the Ferrara family pulls up to East 73<sup>rd</sup> Street each December, their truck is always filled to the brim with the gift of love and remembrance. Victoria's son Michael was diagnosed with cancer in 1980 at age 17, and she and her son (both pictured below) stayed at the 86<sup>th</sup> Street Ronald McDonald House New York facility while he fought with the illness. They stayed at the House for the next year until Michael's passing in 1981, and it's what happened next that shows how truly remarkable the Ferraras are.

Since 1981, Mrs. Ferrara and her family have run a fund-raising campaign to raise awareness throughout Staten Island. Through their efforts, they educate their neighbors about the work done at the House, and solicit donations to purchase toys and much-needed goods for our families. She writes and distributes her own press releases to publications like the penny saver newspapers and the *Staten Island Advance*. When all of the donations are tallied, the Ferrara family (including her two remaining sons — now in their late 40s) drive up to East 73<sup>rd</sup> Street with more than 1,000 toys for children staying at Ronald McDonald House New York.

"Every year, it gets bigger and bigger. This [2010] was the 29<sup>th</sup> year that we did it. It's just, I think it gives me more satisfaction, and it makes me know that I'm keeping my son's memory alive," said Mrs. Ferrara. "He was the type that would do something like this. When he was in the transplant unit, he'd go around and talk to all the babies. That's the kind of kid he was."



Photos courtesy of Victoria Ferrara



RMH-NY guests with the U.S. Marines.

Christopher McNeerney

### Toys for Tots

Marines from 6th Communications Battalion teamed up with the Army Corps of Engineers to bring a special helping of strength and bravery to the families. While it was more smiles and playfulness as they served a spaghetti dinner (a House favorite!), the quiet hum of healing later gave way to raucous laughter in the Macy's Living Room during their Toys for Tots distribution.

### (Little) Heroes Helping the Heroes

This year, Ronald McDonald House New York has made a commitment to support our troops who are stationed overseas. In years past, we've taken excess items and donated them via care packages to members of the Armed Forces. As part of a new program called the "(Little) Heroes Helping the Heroes," we will continue to work with our local support organizations to continue that effort. If you would like to know more about how you can help us with this initiative, please contact the House at (212) 639-0100.

*(continued)*





Christopher McNerney

A holiday Toys for Tots celebration thanks to the U.S. Marine Corps and the Army Corp of Engineers.



### Archbishop Dolan Visits with the Kids

Known throughout the world for his welcoming smile, New York Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan brought smiles to the House on Christmas Eve. With an inspirational message, hugs and blessings for everyone, families, staff and volunteers gathered together to celebrate the season of peace.

Photos by Natalie Greaves



### Introducing... The Press Crew!

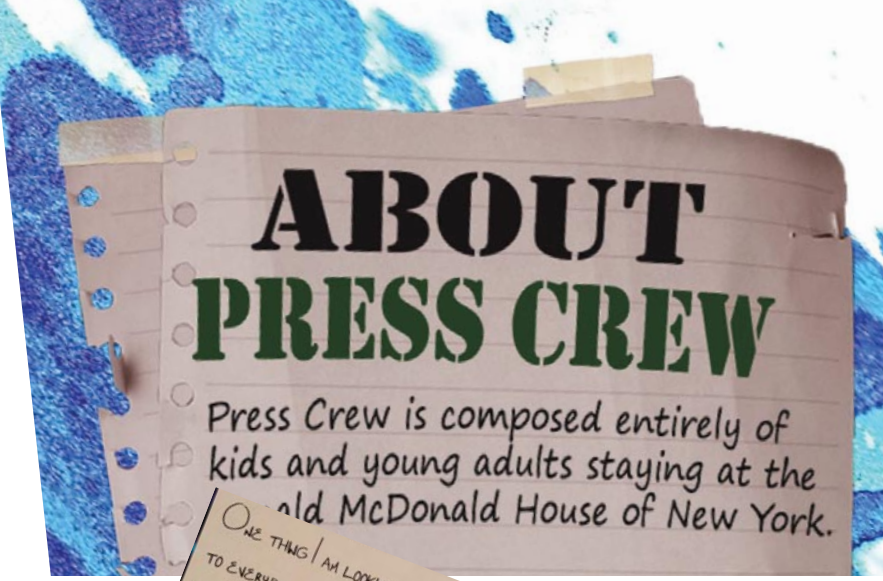
When it comes to the creative young minds residing at Ronald McDonald House New York, the sky's the limit. That expression was especially true when the idea for the Press Crew was born.

A group of budding young journalists who tell the story of life at the House from the perspectives of the children who live here, the Press Crew's conducted exclusive interviews with senior management of the House, reported on the fascinating lives of our volunteers, and even shot a segment at WCBS-TV!

Armed with their iPads, Flip cameras and genuine curiosity, Press Crew correspondents are always on the beat for a compelling new story. The team is led by Antoinette Fabian, 10, from California, whose recent interview with Team Ronald McDonald volunteers began with "I hope you're prepared. I'm going to do this like Oprah. Let's start."

Her colleague Fitzgerald Clarkson, 11, from Grenada, applies his own brand of wit to bring ease to his subjects. While interviewing Ronald McDonald House New York President & CEO Bill Sullivan, the grueling session included questions such as "Who is your hero?"

Here are a few excerpts taken from a recent issue. To download a copy of the Press Crew, visit [www.rmh-newyork.org](http://www.rmh-newyork.org).



#### Ana Vera Veliz, 15 Florida

"One thing I am looking forward to in the new year is Diva Day, where we give out clothes to everybody in the House. If I had one wish, I would want to go to Disney World with my family."



#### Ashlynn Hauser, 7, West Virginia

"I was scared, but after a little while, I started to make lots of new friends here at the House who are going through the same things I am going through."





**Deyja Moses, 9, Utah**  
 "2010 was a really hard year and I never want to go through all that again. But I will remember all about Ronald McDonald House and the good things I got to do there."

**Joely Ramo, 8, Florida**  
 "Now I can have friends which I have never played with since May 28th. That's a long time. I got to meet my tutor, and there was a country western night. Now I am allowed to go meet people if I have hand sanitizer and wear a face mask. So I can meet people, and race and play tag. I ride my heeleys everywhere around the House."

**Laura Sanchez, 13, Puerto Rico**  
 "I also like reading in the teen room which I get to use because I'm a twelve-and-a-half, which is close enough that I can go in there."



### How to Help

Throughout this issue and many others, we've highlighted extraordinary New Yorkers who found innovative ways to help our very important cause. Working alongside our donors and volunteers to develop new fundraising activities, we can say that the best fundraisers are the ones in which donors and volunteers are doing what they love.

Our Development professionals work hand-in-hand with our volunteers to help them succeed in their endeavors from conception to execution.

#### Smart Transition Group's Second Annual Casino Night

When NYC-based networking organization Smart Transition Group designated RMH-NY as their charity of choice to benefit from their Second Annual Casino Night, they turned what would have been a regular gathering into a night of fun for a great cause.

Representatives from more than 50 companies enjoyed great food, games prizes and giveaways all while making connections, and helping to connect our families with greater hope. Their efforts resulted in a donation of more than \$1,500, and we are honored and grateful to have worked with them.

#### Corigin Real Estate Group's Inaugural Golf Outing and Launch Party

Corigin Real Estate Group incorporated their charitable endeavors into the launch of their newest development, Brynwood Golf & Country Club. The company's inaugural golf outing was held this past October, and raised nearly \$18,000 to support Ronald McDonald House. Participants spent a day on the greens, and later enjoyed poolside cocktails, fine dining and entertainment provided by "The Nerds" during the launch party. We're also grateful to Corigin for their efforts and congratulate them on a successful launch!

For more information about how you can turn your next inspired idea into an event or other fundraising activity to benefit Ronald McDonald House New York, please contact Director of Development Richard Martin at (212) 639-0206, or [rmartin@rmh-newyork.org](mailto:rmartin@rmh-newyork.org).

### The Tree of Life

Visitors to Ronald McDonald House® New York have noticed that The Tree of Life wall sculpture continues to flourish with new leaf additions; including a leaf placed for our beloved Founder Vivian Harris.

More and more families are honoring loved ones with the installation of leaves. This vibrant symbol of life and strength provides each family with an extraordinary way to memorialize and celebrate the life of someone special.

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 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 Director of Development Richard Martin, at (212) 639-0206, or [rmartin@rmh-newyork.org](mailto:rmartin@rmh-newyork.org).



# Calendar of Events

## Save the Date

### SUNDAY, MARCH 20, 2011

NYC Half-Marathon  
Starts at 7:35 AM  
Central Park's East Drive at 94th Street

### TUESDAY, MARCH 29, 2011

Spring Theatre Benefit: "Wonderland"  
5:30 PM Cocktails and Dinner at the Marriott Marquis  
8:00 PM Theatre at the Marquis Theatre, 1535 Broadway

### SUNDAY, MAY 1, 2011

TD Bank Five Boro Bike Tour  
6:30 AM  
Battery Park, Lower Manhattan

### MONDAY, MAY 2, 2011

An Evening with the New York Pops Orchestra  
5:30 PM Cocktails and Dinner, 7:00 PM Concert  
Carnegie Hall, 57th Street and 7th Avenue

### SATURDAY, MAY 14, 2011

Greek Walk-A-Thon  
9:00 AM Registration  
Ronald McDonald House New York

### MONDAY, MAY 16, 2011

19th Annual Gala  
6:30 PM  
Waldorf=Astoria, 301 Park Avenue

### SUNDAY, JUNE 5, 2011

Hogs For Hope/Hope to Ride Motorcycle Event  
9:00 AM Registration, 11:30 AM take-off, 1:00 PM Party  
New Roc Harley, 8 Industrial Lane, New Rochelle, NY



### TD BANK FIVE BORO BANK TOUR

Join thousands of New Yorkers as they race through the city streets in support of their favorite cause!

As the nation's largest cycling event, the TD Bank Five Boro Bike Tour gives New Yorkers a unique opportunity to rule the road en masse in a tremendous show of pride for the places, people and ideals most important to them.

**Ronald McDonald House New York's team is actively seeking participants for its team.** If you would like to join us as we cycle toward hope for our families, please contact Sue Houston at (212) 639-0500, or [shouston@rmh-newyork.org](mailto:shouston@rmh-newyork.org).

**SUNDAY, MAY 1, 2011 AT 6:30 AM**

**Location: Battery Park, Lower Manhattan**



### SPRING THEATRE BENEFIT: "WONDERLAND"

Take a journey with us as we revisit the Lewis Carroll classic in Broadway's hit musical, "Wonderland." This time around, Alice is a modern-day woman, and her Wonderland is right beneath our very feet here in New York City. Fresh and fun, yet still very familiar, this year's Spring Theatre Benefit production is also scored by the creator of Jekyll & Hyde. Guaranteed to bring a night of enjoyment to theatregoers of all ages, we hope that you'll join us. For tickets or more information, contact Richard Martin at (212) 639-0206, or [rmartin@rmh-newyork.org](mailto:rmartin@rmh-newyork.org).

**TUESDAY, MARCH 29, 2011**

**5:30 PM Cocktails and Dinner at the Marriott Marquis  
8:00 PM Theatre at the Marquis Theatre, 1535 Broadway**



### 19TH ANNUAL GALA

It's one of the most important nights of the year for Ronald McDonald House New York, as well as one of the most special events for so many reasons. Emceed by broadcast media legend Barbara Walters of ABC, this year's event will honor apparel industry executive Eric Wiseman, president, chairman and CEO of the VF Corporation. Enjoy an evening of dancing and live music provided courtesy of the New York Pops Orchestra and our very own Ronald McDonald House New York chorus. For tickets or more information, contact Richard Martin at (212) 639-0206, or [rmartin@rmh-newyork.org](mailto:rmartin@rmh-newyork.org).

**MONDAY, MAY 16, 2011 AT 6:30 PM**

**Location: Waldorf=Astoria, 301 Park Avenue**



# Our Families. Our Volunteers. Our City.



## Did You Know?

Ronald McDonald House New York has teams participating in endurance sporting events taking place throughout the City this year. To register or support our team, visit our Web site for more information.

March 20, 2011 NYC Half-Marathon

May 1, 2011 TD Bank Five Boro Bike Tour

November 6, 2011 ING New York City Marathon

[www.rmh-newyork.org](http://www.rmh-newyork.org)



**RONALD MCDONALD  
HOUSE® NEW YORK**

Ronald McDonald House New York  
405 East 73rd Street, New York, NY 10021