

Fall 2009

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A publication of
Ronald McDonald House Charities of Southeastern Michigan

SPECIAL 30th ANNIVERSARY ISSUE – The Ronald McDonald House of Detroit was officially established on November 2, 1979. Special thanks to Gary Granader and his life-long investment in our charity.

Baby Connor – A Miracle...

by Laura Tudor

Connor was born in August 2008. He had been diagnosed as having Down Syndrome with a congenital heart defect. Knowing this, didn't dampen the hope and happiness surrounding his birth. Mom and Dad were no strangers to children with special needs. Connor's big brothers both have autism. Connor would be a perfect fit as these special children bring more joy than they can explain.

In November 2008, Connor had his first of three surgeries to repair his heart. The couple from the Howell area was in need of a place to stay while their son was being treated at Children's Hospital of Michigan. The Ronald McDonald House of Detroit was that place. As life would have it, the Ronald McDonald House would become a place of refuge for Connor's family on multiple occasions.

On August 18th, 2009, baby Connor had his final heart surgery and was released September 1st from Children's Hospital of Michigan. On September 4th, he returned to the hospital via helicopter after suffering a cardiac arrest at home due to an infection and pneumonia in his lungs.

Diagnosed with severe brain damage, the couple vigilantly remained at baby Connor's side, knowing

that somehow he would find the strength to make it through each day a little stronger and a little better.

Doctors gave the couple the worst news imaginable. Little Connor was not expected to ever recognize his parents, talk, eat on his own, make movement or breath without support.



However, his parent's faith did not let them down. By October 5th, Connor was not only awake and making small gestures and movement, he was moved out of the Intensive Care Unit. They both believe, with unwavering faith that their baby will continue to make progress and beat all odds.

This couple's positive attitude and faith is steadfast. They are so grateful for the Ronald McDonald House of Detroit because it has given them a chance to rest and heal so that they can be there for baby Connor.

"It helps to know we are not alone. We lean on each other. We get to be here for the other families and they are here for us. It is a 'quilted' support system. Every family is in the same situation," Dad explained.

"Going through all of this with three special needs children has not been a challenge to the family," as mom explained. "My heart is full and my hands are empty...every step with my three sons is a pleasure."

Please remember your year-end gift and make an investment in a family at the Ronald McDonald House of Detroit.

Please Note: The enclosed donation slip and return envelope is part of our **Thanksgiving and Holiday Season**, fundraising appeal. Please remember the Ronald McDonald House of Detroit for your year-end, tax-deductible donation.

Successful 30th Anniversary

Heartfelt thanks to **Gary Granader** and his legacy of helping to build the Ronald McDonald House of Detroit! Because of him, we are celebrating an amazing 30th Anniversary!

Over 35,000 families, from all over the world, have called our establishment their 'home-away-from home'.

Sunshine, high attendance, great food and entertainment and lots of fundraising highlighted this year's 30 year celebration. It started with an awesome golf outing and will end with the Holiday Tea at the Townsend Hotel!

Thanks to everyone who was part of this year's events. Whether you attended, volunteered, sent a check or just supported our staff, our families appreciated your support. Your commitment is vital and important to our charity.



7th Annual Vinni's Children's Charity Golf Outing

The celebrations were launched this year with the **7th Annual Vinni's Children's Charity Golf Outing**. This year's outing had the best weather in its history! The event hosted 140 golfers who teed-off for a really great day of golf at the Fieldstone Golf Club. The 7th Annual Vinni's Children's Charity Golf Outing netted close to \$14,000 for the Ronald McDonald House of Detroit on June 5th.

Chair and board member, **Cary Adragna**, worked closely with the staff and other board members to assure a successful outing for the seventh time!

BIG KUDOS to our Vinni Golf Outing Title Sponsors: **Coca Cola; USA Today; Dr. Pepper; McCann Foods; Pepsi Bottling; Jaguar; Outback Steakhouse; Group Associates; Take 2 Authentics; Papa Joe's; Nino Salvaggio; Jo Ann MacWilliams/Raymond James; LaFontaine Cadillac and CK Diggs.**



Chairman, **Cary Adragna** and his team take a moment to pose with **Mrs. Michigan, Jeannette Greco-Pawlowski**.



Vinni Golf Committee gather for a group photo.

Get your clubs ready for the 2010 outing on June 4th!

If you or your company would like to be a sponsor, there are all kinds of opportunities! Call Jennifer @ 313-745-5911 for more details – OR check out our website: www.rmhdet.org and register or become a sponsor via PayPal!

Honda Pilot Raffle Coming to a Close – Get your Tickets Soon!



As part of the new partnership between McDonalds and the **National Hockey League** (NHL), a brand new **Honda Pilot** was donated to the Ronald McDonald House Charities of SE Michigan!

The Ronald McDonald House of Detroit is raffling this beautiful 2009 Honda Pilot. The drawing will take place on November 30th!

Only 5000 tickets will be sold @ \$20 each.

If you want a 1-5000 chance of winning the Honda Pilot, you can purchase tickets by calling 313-745-5911.

Celebrations went on all year!

Roast and Toast to Jerry Young – Wine in the Garden

Once again, the sun shown down on the gardens of the Ronald McDonald House of Detroit. On June 18th, over 100 guests turned out to celebrate **Jerry Young's** 31-years of service. Jerry started volunteering at the House well before it was built in 1979.



Jennifer Litomisky, Executive Director, presents Jerry Young with one of his awards.

Since the day the House was built, Jerry has volunteered as the grounds maintenance supervisor, working closely with Facility Chair, **Frank Martin**. Every Tuesday, for those 31 years, Jerry Young volunteered at the House. Jerry was awarded a beautiful anniversary clock and his own parking space at the House.

The gardens provided a peaceful setting for food, drinks and entertainment:

- The pig roast was supplied/donated by **Chuck Dochenetz**, Sous Chef at the MGM Grand. Chef's **Cindy Randolph**, **Steve Rasmussen**, **Bob Angelinas**, **Paul Mann**, **Marla McCowan** and **Valerie Newman** donated their cooking expertise and furnished several kinds of appetizers and specialty foods.
- **Sander's** donated the delicious chocolate desserts!
- **Ray Boley** provided the gorgeous decorations, transforming our outside patio into a beautiful Hawaiian garden.
- Organizer, **Laura Dochenetz** worked on securing the chefs and volunteers for the evening.
- The band **Kroon** played Hawaiian tunes as the mild summer breezes greeted the guests.

The celebration went well into the night and will be fondly remembered by all.



Resident Manager, Irma Hudson and Ronald McDonald danced the night away!

"Cruising" into 30 Years" – A Gorgeous Night of Sailing and Celebration!

Sunshine, great food, awesome drinks and an amazing band highlighted the **30th Anniversary Cruise** on the Princess Cruise Ship. Over 100 guests enjoyed the evening of celebration! A high-end raffle and 50-50 topped off the evening.



Board President John KostECKI and guests enjoy a Night on the Princess Cruise

Big kudos to Walmart, our title Sponsor and our other top sponsors: **Sam's Club** and **Volkswagen America**.

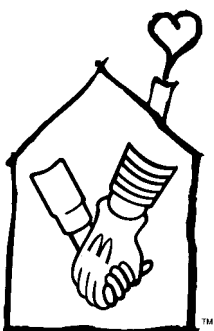


Special thanks to the committee:

Laura Dochenetz, <i>Chair</i>	Ray Boley
Bob Angelinas	Steve Rasmussen
Cindy Randolph	Valerie Newman
Michael McCoy	Irma Hudson
Paul Mann	

BIG KUDOS to:

John Jackson, *Vice President (Ad hoc Committee Member)*
Marty and Lori Testasecca (*Printing and Graphic Design*)
Patrick Brennan Band (*Entertainment*)
Paul Mann (*Photographer*)
Ray Boley (*Decorations*)
Ronald McDonald House Charities
Board of Directors (*General Support*)
Sanders Ice Cream – Walter Pilon (*Party Favors*)



RONALD McDONALD
HOUSE CHARITIES

RMHC Gala

The RMHC Gala – an upscale fundraising celebration to benefit the Ronald McDonald Houses in Detroit and Ann Arbor – took place at the DIA in September

The event raised much needed funds to contribute to the excellent work that each of the Houses (Detroit and Ann Arbor) do to provide positive environments for families of children who are ill and undergoing serious treatment.

The McDonald Owner/Operators are grateful to the growing list of Sponsors that have committed to underwriting the RMHC Gala.

Big kudos to **Ford Motor Company**, **DTE** and the **Southeastern Michigan McDonalds Operator's Association** for their continued sponsorship and commitment to this spectacular event!

McBikers and Children's Day Rally – Biker Events Bring in Bucks!

This year, the RMHC was fortunate enough to have two benefit motorcycle rides for the Detroit House!

- On Sunday, July 12th, McDonald Owner/Operator, **Peter Donaghue** hosted his ride in Waterford, Michigan (ABC Harley)!
- McDonald Owner/ Operator, **Bill Saputo, Jr.**, hosted the Second Annual Children's Day Rally on Sunday, August 30.

Combined, these two biker events raised over \$13,000 this year!

BIG KUDOS TO Peter and Bill Jr.!



2009 Biker Events raise Big Money!



Peter Donaghue sells Raffle Tickets at the McBiker Event

Pulte Playhouse Tops 2008 Efforts!

The **Pulte Safari Playhouse** raffle netted over \$18,000, topping the 2008 efforts for the Ronald McDonald House of Detroit!

Several new venues to display the House were added this year, making the traveling playhouse a much sought after display at carnivals, soccer fields, concerts and art shows.

Pulte Playhouse Raffle Committee Members, lead by **Jeremy Huntoon, Jennifer Swoish, Allison Elmer, Larry Jonas, Dennis Riemer** and **Peggy Santel**, managed and staffed the playhouse almost every weekend during the summer.

Ronald McDonald House of Detroit staff, board and key volunteers spent many weekends promoting and selling tickets for this one-of-a-kind event!

Winners were drawn July 31st in the RMH Pulte Playhouse Raffle. One lucky winner, **Tanya Burgess**, won the custom-built children's playhouse designed by Pulte Homes and built by the generous talents and donations of the Pulte Homes of Michigan trade partnership council and numerous other prizes.

Other winners (who won the big screen TV; custom landscaping and barbeque set) were: **Amanda Balogh, Nathan Duby**, and **Andrea Dansby**.

A big thank you, from everyone at the Ronald McDonald House of Detroit, to PULTE HOMES and the PULTE HOMES of MICHIGAN TRADE COUNCIL for the generous donation of time, building materials and funds.

Congratulations one and all – and thanks to everyone who purchased a ticket – it ALL helps RMH/Detroit!



Pulte Safari Playhouse

ACN Conference a Huge Hit for Detroit and the RMHC!

Over 20 volunteers along with staff spent the weekend of September 12, 13 and 14th fundraising at Joe Louis Arena at the International **ACN Conference** – a Global RMHC Partnership Company.

ACN, a communication company, has partnered with RMHC Global and the House Chapters around the world on a new fundraising initiative. At every ACN conference where there is a RMHC Chapter/ House, the ACN conference will highlight the Ronald McDonald House with a presentation and make a substantial donation to that RMHC.



Volunteers at the ACN Conference, Carolyn Stieger and Bob Angelinas

During the whole weekend, attendees of the ACN Conference are asked to donate to the RMHC in that city. ACN matches all donations and by the end of the conference, the chapter is presented a grand total. This year, RMHC of SE Michigan received over \$75,000 in donations from ACN.

Big kudos to all of the volunteers who spent the weekend helping raise a major donation for the Ronald McDonald House Charities of SE Michigan.

Chocolate for Children

The **Detroit Yacht Club** hosted Chocolate for Children on September 20th. This first-time event raised over \$2,000 for the House. The Westin's Spa **1924 Grill** provided massages, manicures and pedicures, while the Detroit Yacht Club provided chocolate desserts and martinis. Don't miss this event next year!

A Big Thanks to our Major Donors of 2009

- CBS
- Coca-Cola
- Detroit Yacht Club
- Dr. Pepper
- Georgia-Pacific
- JC Plumbing
- Johnson Controls Inc.
- Lachinva and Loverich
- M and M
- McCann Foods
- ME Consultants
- Pepsi Bottling Co.
- Radisson
- Ronald McDonald House Board Members
- Sam's Club
- Sander's
- Southeast Michigan McDonald's Owners Association (SEMMOA)
- The English Touch - Heather Roberts
- USA Today
- Volkswagen America
- Walmart
- Westin Book Cadillac
- Wisner Electric

...and to all of the donors, sponsors and volunteers
of all of the 30th Anniversary events this year!

We need your donations!

- ♥ **Money** – Cash/ Check/Charge
- ♥ **White Sheet Sets** – Queen
- ♥ **Gift Cards** – Meijers, Best Buy, Home Depot, Office Depot, CVS, etc.
- ♥ **Toys** – NEW
- ♥ **Beanie Babies** – New or in good condition
- ♥ **Non-perishable Foods**
- ♥ **Cleaning Goods**
- ♥ **Office Supplies**

You can either supply the House with non-perishable foods or prepare a meal for the families at the House. Canned food drives are a wonderful gift to the House!

Toys! Toys! Toys! We accept toys for children of all ages. Please help by donating toys for the children that stay at our House.

Remember, its **cash and gifts-in-kind** that will help the families that stay at the Ronald McDonald of Detroit. Please make your donation today!

Please contact: **Jennifer Litomisky**, Executive Director at 313-745-5911 for more information.

Kudos Corner!

Every year there are so many people, donors and companies that give to our Ronald McDonald House Charities of SE Michigan. All of the donations are GREATLY appreciated!

- **The International Association of Home Stagers** (IAHSP) Greater Detroit Chapter, renovated the downstairs living room at the House. Kudos to RMHC Board Member, Carolyn Stieger and her chapter for this awesome donation!

- We like to highlight the donations of a new group every newsletter. This issue we want to recognize **Johnson Controls Inc.** (JCI).

This year, JCI adopted our House. They beautified the inside and the outside with several team members.

Melanie LaPointe, team captain of the room renovation project spent several weeks preparing her team to renovate a room at the House. On Friday, October 1st., the entire JCI team and JCI VP's attended a tour and special ribbon cutting of the newly renovated room. Additionally, a check for \$500 from

Johnson Controls was presented at the ceremony.

JCI raised funds through a golf outing and bowling event. They also secured donations from **Gardner White, Niko's Hardwood Flooring** in Clinton Township, **Beaver Tile** in Farmington, **The Great Indoors** in Novi, **KSI Kitchen** in Brighton, and **Lowe's** in Canton.

Big kudos to Melanie LaPointe and the JCI volunteers: **Tom Horne, Lonna Brewer, Yogesh Pawar, Kevin Razor, Kevin Suppelsa, Jerry Porter, Dan VanHouzen, Nancy Frenette, Diyana Todorovska, Neil Bush, Liviu Rus, Dorel Baciu, James Whitted, John Courson, Karen Pepin, Lisa Kithas, Dawn Kruszewski, Melissa Scully,** and **Tracy Jones.**



Melanie LaPointe in the new JCI Room.

Board of Directors and Staff – 2009

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Last Event of the Year – Don't Miss It!

December 5 – Holiday Tea @ the Townsend

The Ronald McDonald House of Detroit will host the 4th **Tea at the Townsend** scheduled for Saturday, December 5th at the Townsend Hotel, from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Tickets are \$55 each.

Please call the Ronald McDonald House of Detroit @ 313-745-5909 (or www.rmhdet.org) for tickets and/or more information.

Every year over 75 guests join the festivities where there is a small auction and beautiful party gifts for each guest. There will also be appetizers, small bite desserts, and plenty of yuletide fun for those who attend the Tea at the Townsend benefit.

This event sells out every year, so those interested in reserving a spot at this holiday extravaganza should contact the Ronald McDonald House of Detroit at 313-745-5911.

Visit our NEW Website
www.rmhdet.org

Address Service Requested

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