

NEWS

Winter 2013

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Published for the friends and supporters of
Ronald McDonald House Charities of Jacksonville, Inc.



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Celebrating 25 Years of Caring For Children and Their Families

25 years ago, the Jacksonville Ronald McDonald House opened its doors for the very first time. On the other side stood two scared parents of a newborn baby boy with a serious heart condition. 25 years later, the Wrights have not forgotten how important the services they received were to them when they needed it most.

Tanner's mom, Cindy tells the story of their stay here. Our son Tanner was only a few days old when he was flown by helicopter to Jacksonville for a life-threatening condition called coarctation of the aorta. We could not go in the helicopter with him, so we got in the car and just drove to Jacksonville. We did not know where we would stay or what we would do; we just knew we had to be with our child. When we arrived at the hospital, we met with the doctor and among all the scary news he had to share, he had some good news for us too. "I believe the Ronald McDonald House just opened," he said. He called, and sure enough we went to that brand new house and were greeted by a friendly face right away. We were tired, scared, hungry, far from home, and I was still recuperating from childbirth. Our time at the House was exactly what we needed in order to be there for our son. Everyone was so hospitable, comforting, accommodating and friendly faces were always a great welcome in the evening when we had to drag ourselves home at night after tough decision making, surgical procedures, testing and post-surgery ups and downs. Then the day came that Tanner was released from the hospital and we were ready to leave the House, but our story does not end there! Read more about how our stay at the Jacksonville Ronald McDonald House impacted our lives! (Continued on page 5)

Anniversary Kickoff

Ronald McDonald House Charities of Jacksonville invited the Jacksonville community to help us kick off a year long celebration of the 25th anniversary with a fun-filled morning full of food, fun, games and pop tabs! This wonderful celebration was made possible through the hard work of the 25th Anniversary Celebration Committee, led by Chair Lauren Lazenby. For more information, see the full story on page 5.



Chairman of the Board



Dear Supporters,

In November our House started a yearlong celebration of its 25th anniversary. Hundreds of community members showed up with tens of thousands of pop tabs as a show of their support of our organization. Pulling a tab off a can -- this simple gesture is symbolic of the far-reaching support the House receives. From classrooms to offices to college groups to individual family kitchens, the Ronald McDonald House is admired far and wide and has been since the day our community committed to build this first class institution.

Over these 25 years, thousands of children and their families have benefitted from the generosity of countless donors, volunteers, employees, board members and supporters. Their days have been a little more comfortable and smiles a little bigger thanks to you.

Our community is a better place because of Ronald McDonald House Charities of Jacksonville. Thank you for playing such an important role in our past and future success.

Kindest regards,

Ryan A. Schwartz

Chairman of the Board

Executive Director's Report



As 2013 draws to a close I have been reflecting on our 25th Anniversary and how blessed we are to have had so many people in our community that serve our mission. 25 years of kindness has taken on many faces. From the little Daisy Troop who excitedly bring their earnings of their lemonade stand to our front door to our incredible volunteers who faithfully support the day in and day out operations of our House baking cookies, preparing meals or checking-in families. Families who have stayed with us return with appreciation in their hearts and the desire to help other families in their time of need. They drive to our House from as far away as Michigan or as close as Middleburg in Clay County bringing with them the understanding of this experience and the power of what an encouraging word means at this time. Many people from our wonderful community: healthcare partners, corporations, small businesses, foundations and civic organizations find their way to our House contributing to our families with their time, In-Kind and financial

contributions. Supporting all of these efforts are our donors who make the operation of our House financially possible. With their contributions we are able to serve our mission to provide a home away from home for every child and their family who come to Jacksonville seeking pediatric healthcare. Together with our dedicated Staff and Boards we form the Ronald McDonald House of Jacksonville Family providing a safe and heartfelt experience for all families who need us.

In reaching our 25 year milestone, I am grateful for all those who have gone before me. I am reminded of the many individuals, since 1988, who have provided leadership and served on the many Boards providing counsel that has made us the organization what we are today. Importantly, my thanks and gratitude to Ryan Schwartz, our outgoing President of the Board of Directors, who has long served on the Board and provided challenging and unwavering leadership and vision for the House for the past two years. And, for those of you who know us well, you know our staff of 25 years has made everything possible with their incomparable professionalism and compassion. To all I am grateful.

2013 has also brought a change in leadership for our House. I had the good fortune to become a part of the RMHCJAX family this past summer and it has been a very exciting time. We now look to the future and the expanding need of our services. As occupancy for the House is at an all-time high because of the demand for increased pediatric health services from our local hospitals we are exploring ways our House can meet the increasing demand. 25 years is a turning point in our history as we plan for expansion.

So now we roll up our sleeves as we look to the future and we ask for your continued help and support as we plan for the next 25 years. Please reach out to us as you always have done and continue to support our mission with your time and contributions. Bring a friend to the House, ask a co-worker to come and learn about us, host a third party fundraiser or reach out to us with your great ideas. Together we will make a difference in the lives of so many children.

Thank you from all of us at the Ronald McDonald House for your blessings.

Best wishes to You and Yours for a Happy and Healthy 2014.

Spreading Holiday Cheer at the House



The Christmas season kicked off at RMHC with the arrival of Santa's elves and their crews. The elves decorated the Christmas trees and made the house beautiful. Smiles were plentiful as each new tree was found.

Many of RMHC volunteers joined in the holiday spirit at the Annual Volunteer Christmas Party. An inspiring group of carolers from CSX ushered in the yuletide cheer with several traditional songs of the season.

The holiday party for the volunteers is just a tiny way to say Thank You for the thousands of man-hours which are contributed to the mission of RMHC. We could never execute our mission without our legions of dedicated volunteers. We are "snow" thankful for you.

Reed's Report

Never in my wildest rabbit-chasing dreams did I imagine how awesome my job as the Ronald McDonald House would be! I have had my nose measured and kissed, my tail fluffed, teeth examined, both paws shook, ears and belly scratched. The kiddos say I am okay! I have explored all over the House and think the courtyard is the best place ever. Out there I have found all kind of balls, kick balls, basketballs, soccer balls, and tennis balls, especially for the kids and I to play with. It is also the perfect place to bask in the sun and get in a quick snooze while having my ears or belly scratched. The kiddos and I have even found a rather comfy chair to snuggle in together.

There are always things to do and reasons to celebrate. It was a whole lot of fun on Halloween night to trade in my blue cape for a red Super Dog cape! The kids were surprised when they saw me ready to trick or treat with my very own Halloween bucket! It was tail wagging good time with many of my favorite Super Heroes staying here who dressed up too.

Now it's the holiday season. The decorations are out everywhere as staff and volunteers are sharing the holiday cheer. I can't wait for our Family Christmas Party and hope Santa will let me help deliver the presents. We could get quite a few in my big red wagon that I love to pull. I have a brand new Santa hat that looks quite dapper. WOOF!

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

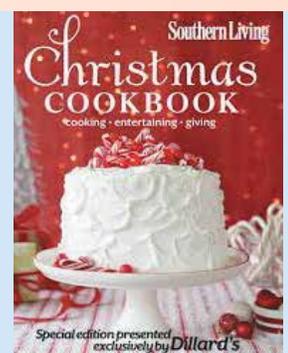
WOOF, WOOF (With Love)

Reed



Dillard's Offers Exclusive Southern Living Christmas Cookbooks to Benefit Ronald McDonald House

Since 1994, Dillard's has supported RMHC with a fundraiser benefiting its Ronald McDonald House® program. For the sixth time, Dillard's is offering a special custom edition of the Southern Living Christmas Cookbook. This exclusive hardbound cookbook is filled with more than 200 fabulous holiday recipes, color photos, menus, decorating tips and entertaining ideas- all for just \$10. These cookbooks make wonderful holiday gifts and 100% of the proceeds of the cookbooks purchased at local Dillard's stores directly benefit Ronald McDonald House Charities of Jacksonville.



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Annual Fries With That Wine - Another Great Success!

Every year the Discovery Circle seems to outdo itself with their annual Fries With That Wine event and this year was no exception! This year's event marked the 5th annual Fries With That Wine, a wine tasting event that pairs a variety of wines with everyone's fast food favorites like cheeseburgers, chicken nuggets and of course, French Fries! Live music by Ron Rodriguez, Clayton Bush and Bread and Butter had the crowd dancing and the beautiful decorations by Anne Evans and Sight & Sound productions gave the Garden Club of Jacksonville a atmosphere that had the Discovery Circle's signature style.

Thanks to the hard work of the 2013 Fries With That Wine committee, led by committee chair, Bryan Russell and co-chair Caroline Close, the event raised close to \$25,000 for RMHC Jacksonville.



The Great McGala: Celebrating 25 years of the Jacksonville Ronald McDonald House

This year's McGala is 25 years in the making! 2014 McGala Chair Meg Kuchar and Co-Chair Emily Dostie invite you to help us celebrate 25 years of the Jacksonville Ronald McDonald House with a roaring 20's themed McGala. Ladies, break out your fringe and your pearls and gentlemen, get your zoot suits out and get ready to Charleston the night away! Join us on Saturday, May 3, 20 14 for a night you won't want to miss!

To join the McGala committee, please contact Annie Tutt at atutt@rmhcjax.org or 904-807-4236. For sponsorship information, please contact Carol Harrison at charrison@rmhcjax.org or 904-807-4672.



2014 Red Show Crew Board Members

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Julie Jacob
- Insert photo.4.2.1

Support Ronald McDonald House Charities of Jacksonville With Your Purchase From Amazon

Your purchase from Amazon, can help Ronald McDonald House Charities of Jacksonville! Earn 0.5 percent of the value of your purchases, just by shopping through our unique URL.

This is a wonderful opportunity to help RMHC Jacksonville, without any additional cost to you. All donations come directly from AmazonSmile. Why did Amazon decide to offer this program? Ian McAllister, general manager of AmazonSmile, says the company did it simply "because it thought customers would love it."

To start shopping please visit <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/59-2625008>



National Philanthropy Day 2013

We proudly recognized the Austin family at this year's National Philanthropy Day. The Austin family has played an important role at Ronald McDonald House Charities of Jacksonville since Patricia Austin formed its Advisory Board in the late 1980's and their involvement has grown from there. When Steve Austin founded MDM Commercial in 1990, the House was the first charity his company supported. This enthusiastic support has continued through the years with wonderful and generous gifts made in memory of Ed and Patricia Austin. These gifts have enhanced the quality of the guest experience for our children and their families staying at Ronald McDonald House .

Thank You Fries With That Wine Sponsors

Presented by:



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Thank You Sponsors!



Zimmerman Family Foundation

Mr. & Mrs. William Green



Thank You to our In-Kind Sponsors

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- Main Metal Recycling
- Martin-Brower Company
- McDonald's
- Peterbrooke
- Sweets by Holly
- US Assure
- Walgreens

Sponsorship of our annual events leads to many possibilities for children and families. The possibility of a healthier future for children happens when their families are close by their side during hospitalization or for medical treatment. The possibility for parents and families to spend important time with their child during this difficult time is known to help with the healing process. The possibility of Ronald McDonald House Charities of Jacksonville continuing to provide a home away from home for families at little or no cost to them.

It is because of our faithful and committed sponsors that our events continue to a success and so please allow us to thank you for the many ways you care for all of the families at the House and making the possibilities a reality!



Program Donations of \$100 & Up from 8/1/13 - 10/31/13

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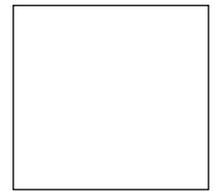
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Marcus Drewa
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MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

20th Annual McGala • May 3, 2014

Sawgrass Marriott Resort

Join us for fabulous evening of dinner, auctions and entertainment

6th Annual Fries With That Wine

Presented by the Red Shoe Crew

Date and location: To Be Determined

For information about the upcoming events, please contact us at 904-807-HOME (4663)
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 Facebook: www.facebook.com/rmhcjacksonville. Web address: www.rmhcjax.org

Volunteer Interns

The Jacksonville Ronald McDonald House® runs almost solely on volunteer commitment, hours and energy. A few times a year we ask for an even greater commitment from a few individuals to work as Interns on special events and programs at the House. These opportunities are perfect for college programs that require internships for hands on experience.

Possible Internships:

- Special Event & Public Relations
- Family Programming

To apply: Please submit a resume and cover letter to Christina Leone at cleone@rmhcjax.org. Include your availability, start date, end date and approximate hours you are available to work. If you plan to earn college credit, please send your internship requirements and advisor contact information.

Not interested in an internship? Consider volunteering once a week for a 4-hour shift for at least one-year. Find a volunteer application at www.rmhcjax.org under Ways to Help!

WISH LIST

Ronald McDonald House Charities® of Jacksonville needs many of the same items you use in your own home to successfully operate its Ronald McDonald House® and Ronald McDonald Family Room® programs. You can help by organizing a Wish List Drive. You can collect items at your church, school or office to help keep things running smoothly at the House and Family Room.

FOOD ITEMS

- *Individually Packaged Cereal, Chips, Cookies, Fruit and Entrees*
- *Breakfast Bars and Toaster Pastries*
- *Coffee Creamer*
- *Sugar Packets*
- *Individually Packaged Soups & Meals*

HOUSEHOLD ITEMS

- *Bleach*
- *High Efficiency Laundry Detergent*

GIFT CARDS

- *Gas Cards*
- *Wal-Mart Gift Cards*
- *Target Gift Cards*
- *Grocery Store Gift Cards*
- *Area Attraction Tickets*

KITCHEN ITEMS

- *Paper Cups, Bowls and Plates*
- *Large Plastic Containers and Lids*
- *Plastic Forks, Knives and Spoons*
- *Paper Towels*