IT'S CHRISTMAS 2013 AT THE RONALD McDonald House in Jacksonville, Florida.

Holiday decorations abound throughout the House and there's music in the air, bringing merriment and hope to all the families staying with us. Bill and Wendy McDonald and their son Austin are staying at the House. However, that Christmas for Bill and Wendy and their two sons would prove to be one they would never forget.

Austin had recently been diagnosed with Ewing’s Sarcoma, a rare bone cancer, and needed to undergo six weeks of proton treatment at the UF Health Proton Therapy Institute, coupled with medical care at Wolfson Children’s Hospital here in Jacksonville. Not only would the trip from their home in Georgia to Jacksonville for Austin’s treatment be arduous for the McDonalds, but it would be a challenge to deal with their own fears while maintaining a sense of normalcy for their sons during this season of joy.

So instead of staying at a local hotel, Wendy researched many options and decided to stay with us at the Ronald McDonald House. Wendy knew that this was a time her family desperately needed the support of others and she was convinced that they could find this at the Ronald McDonald House in Jacksonville.

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A MESSAGE FROM OUR LEADERSHIP

BOARD PRESIDENT

Dear RMHCJ family and friends,

The calendar tells us that the holidays are here and it certainly looks that way at Ronald McDonald House as well. The House was extremely full through the summer and fall with grateful families and generous volunteers all working to make our House even better. Many thanks to the volunteers and community groups that helped us decorate again this year.

As 2014 comes to a close, we are buzzing with excitement about all of the great things next year will bring to our House! In the New Year, we will embark on a major expansion of our House to add 24 new rooms! Yes, I said 24! The need is there and we stand ready to meet that need so that we can provide much needed support and services to even more families. The Board of Directors could not be more excited about our growth! We understand that with this excitement comes challenges and growing pains often associated with construction! We will not shy away from the challenges or the “pains” however, because we are reminded of the ultimate goal – the children and their families. We are always acutely aware of the need for the many services provided by Ronald McDonald House Charities of Jacksonville. We have worked for over 26 years to offer a “home away from home” for as many families as possible and now, with the addition of 24 rooms, the possibilities are even greater. We would not be able to do what we do at RMHCJ if it were not for the continuous and generous support of OUR community. We are truly humbled and reminded that Jacksonville is a great place to call home and a great place for our “home away from home.” The community has truly embraced RMHCJ for the past 26 years and that is why I say this is OUR House. We can’t wait for the hard hats and we are proud to be working in tandem with a community who believes in and supports our mission. We look forward to sharing our “growth” updates with all of you and we look forward to seeing many of you around the ever-changing, ever-growing House! Here’s to OUR future!

Warm Regards and Happy Holidays,

MICHAEL D. KENDALL

THE HOUSE THAT LOVE BUILT

For the past 26 years, families have needed a place of peace and refuge when they have sought the best medical care for their children in Jacksonville. The Ronald McDonald House of Jacksonville has been that place providing comfort and care, lodging, meals and transportation to the nearby hospitals. Our House has been a very special community. A community of support, compassion, hope, respect and love. We are always so grateful to our families for entrusting us with their care inside this community and grateful to our volunteers and supporters for helping us provide that care.

For the past five years, The Ronald McDonald House of Jacksonville’s Staff and Board of Directors have been exploring the need for expansion. It began with discussions with our healthcare partners indicating their plans for growth in pediatric healthcare. Families were checking into the Ronald McDonald House in record numbers and our occupancy rate often exceeding 95%. We knew that we, too, had to take action and create a plan for expansion to accommodate the many families who would be coming to Jacksonville and needing a place to stay. But could we do it? Could we grow from a 30-room to a 54-room facility? The answer from the Board of Directors and Staff was a resounding “Yes we can!” and today we stand on the brink of that expansion.

The feasibility studies have been completed, the architects have designed us a beautiful 24-room expansion to our existing building, and the engineers and contractors have given us the blueprint for our future. We are so excited as we review and schedule our plans. We are now reaching out to our individual donors, corporate partners and global partners who have always supported our mission. We are reaching out to our sponsors, volunteers and thousands of friends of the House to share in our excitement. Please join us as we put on our hard hats, roll out the blueprints, and add to “The House that Love Built”.

Best wishes for a wonderful holiday season,

DIANE BOYLE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Hill Peyton of GATE Petroleum made a special visit to our House to present a check for $40,156 to Executive Director Diane Boyle.

From April 1st through 21st, customers at GATE Convenience Stores had the opportunity to purchase a paper icon house for $1. During the campaign, Ronald McDonald House staff and volunteers visited stores to thank GATE associates for their support and to see how many icons had been sold. It was so exciting to see paper houses covering the front counter and store windows. Thanks to everyone in our community that supported this campaign!

DID YOU KNOW THAT AS DAYS get shorter and nights become cooler, all my fur friends settle down for long winter naps? That’s not the case at Ronald McDonald House of Jacksonville. I may sneek in a nap here or there, but there’s always so much happening at our House.

Did you hear? I turned THREE years old! We had a big birthday paw-ty with many friends. Orange Park High School volunteers helped by making dog puppet crafts, story-telling, and making lunch on my special day. Dads, moms, kids, staff, and my fur friends Anita and Scoopy stopped by to have hot dogs with all the fixings, cake, peanut butter biscuits and peanut butter ice cream – my favorite dessert of all time! It was a paw-some day!

The other big day was celebrating the first anniversary of my arrival at this comfortable “home away from home.” I am one lucky dog to have met so many fun, happy, cool, wonderful, thoughtful, silly kiddos during this past year at Ronald McDonald House of Jacksonville. All the hugs, cuddles, handshakes, playtime, brushing, and baths from everyone make me feel extra special. The only thing I could use more of is peanut butter ice cream! (Woof! Just kidding…)

There is lots to look forward to as we get ready to make space for more families to stay. Can’t wait to put on my construction hat and help move some dirt with these big paws!

WOOF, WOOF! 🐶
(Love, Reed)
CONTINUED FROM COVER

At the House, we know how difficult it must be for families to be away from their homes during the holidays because of their child’s illness. So we do all that we can to make the holidays a joyful experience. Bill, Wendy and their sons, along with the other families, took part in a myriad of activities including festive holiday performances, the long-awaited Santa’s visit and the ever popular BINGO nights.

Like so many other families, Wendy and Bill had to make another tough decision about who would go home with their oldest son while he attended school, and who would stay with Austin while he continued his treatments in Jacksonville. However, once the McDonald family experienced how the staff and volunteers at our House acted – as a surrogate family with arms wide open and just ‘being there’ to share in the laughter and the tears – they were reassured that they could make it through this time apart.

While Wendy returned home with their oldest son, we helped to provide all the comforts of home to Bill and Austin. Bill, in turn, brought the comforts of his home to ours. There were many mornings we would see Bill cooking up a luscious breakfast in the kitchen – not only for Austin and the other families, but for the staff as well! Bill said, “this created a sense of normalcy during a time when so many things were out of our control.”

AUSTIN’S STORY

After a grueling year of proton treatments and surgery, Austin is cancer free! Bill told us that “staying at the Ronald McDonald House was the very best decision we made during Austin’s treatment.” Thanks, Bill, for the kind words – and thank you for the pancakes! 😊

ANSLEY PROCTOR is a 13-year-old cancer survivor from Woodbine, Georgia, who collected and delivered more than 300 gallons of pop tabs to Ronald McDonald House in September. That’s a lot of tabs!

Ansley battled cancer five years ago and traveled with her family to Jacksonville to be treated at Wolfson Children’s Hospital and Nemours. While Ansley was being treated,

she learned about the pop tab donation program at Ronald McDonald House through a school classmate who was also battling cancer while staying at our House with his family. Ansley knew that collecting pop tabs was an easy way that she could help children like her and her classmate. She took the mission and ran with it. She donated more than 250 gallons of pop tabs in 2009.

Since her last donation, Ansley has been at it again. She placed donation containers at the tax collectors’ office and other local businesses. The Woodbine Lion’s Club, where her father, Camden County Sheriff Jim Proctor is a member, collected tabs in support of her mission at all of their meetings. Over five years of collecting tabs added up to 304 gallons!

The money Ronald McDonald House receives from donated pop tabs goes directly to support lodging, transportation and other support services for the families that stay at the House while their child receives medical care in Jacksonville. Ansley has already started collecting again and hopes to visit our House each September with pop tabs in tow.

Way to go, Ansley! 😊
DID YOU KNOW that the very first Ronald McDonald House opened 40 years ago on October 15, 1974? In honor of their 40th anniversary, Ronald McDonald House locations around the country and world celebrated by sharing pictures and stories of their families, volunteers, donors and local supporters showing their stripes, just like Ronald McDonald! The campaign was on social media and everyone used the hashtag #forRMHC. You can share your picture in stripes anytime on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram! 💖

#forRMHC

Your purchase from Amazon.com can help Ronald McDonald House Charities of Jacksonville! Earn 0.5% 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 they thought customers would love it.”

http://smile.amazon.com/ch/59-2625008
ON SEPTEMBER 18, THE RED SHOE Crew hosted the 6th Annual Fries With That Wine at the Terrace Suite at EverBank Field. The 2014 event broke records with more than 400 in attendance! The event featured many McDonald’s favorites, wines provided by Riverside Liquors & Village Wine Shop, and beer donated by Bold City Brewery. Jacksonville Jaguar Zane Beadles made a special guest appearance. It was a spectacular night of food, wine and networking!

Thanks to our sponsors, the Red Shoe Crew, and the Fries With That Wine committee for all of their support. 💝
The view was spectacular from our new venue!

Julie Jacob and Megan Dodd, 2014 Fries With That Wine Co-Chairs.

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The Balloon Construction Company
ON OCTOBER 27, RONALD MCDONALD House Charities of Jacksonville hosted their inaugural Golf Classic at the legendary THE PLAYERS Stadium Course at TPC Sawgrass. More than 100 golfers played and were treated to a fantastic day. Before teeing off, players were treated to custom Maui Jim sunglasses, Club Glove towel, and a walk through the Tunnel of Champions on their way to the practice range. After 18 holes, players returned to the Clubhouse, where they heard from the DuPont family, who came from England and stayed at the House while their daughter received treatment. Golfers enjoyed food and refreshments, a silent and live auction, and an awards ceremony.

Thank you to our sponsors and the Golf Classic committee for all of your support.
Ronald McDonald and Ryan Gambrell from the Dalton Agency.

It was a beautiful and exciting day on THE PLAYERS Stadium Course at TPC Sawgrass.

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TPC Sawgrass
REFERRED TO AS A “CAR CLUB” for car clubs, the First Coast Car Council is the only organization of its kind in our area. The First Coast Car Council is a non-profit group of more than 30 local car clubs along with individual members and corporate supporters that help them achieve their primary goal of advancing the auto enthusiast's hobby. In addition to their great work in the car enthusiast community the group also makes a big difference through their philanthropy efforts.

They recently hosted their 28th annual car show event and for the past 11 years that event has supported Ronald McDonald House Charities of Jacksonville. During that time, they have raised more than $310,000 to provide a “home away from home” for families who travel to Jacksonville for their child’s medical treatment.

This year’s incredible event was hosted at the Trout Creek Marina and Fish Camp on September 13th. With over 6000 people in attendance and over 400 vehicles on display, the First Coast Car Council raised more than $18,000 for Ronald McDonald House Charities of Jacksonville. The event also featured food trucks, a vintage aircraft flyover, tow truck drags, and the slow drag competition. The Tow Drags Winners were from Jacksonville Automotive Muscle a.k.a. JAM. The car show highlighted Corvettes, Mustangs, antiques and supercars. There was something for everyone and it was all for a great cause! ❤️
At Ronald McDonald House, we couldn’t do what we do every day without the generous support of our donors. On October 21, donors were treated to lunch at The Cummer Museum of Art and Gardens in Riverside. Guests enjoyed a delicious lunch and were personally thanked by a family staying in the House. Joe Zelenka, former Jacksonville Jaguars player, was recognized for his contribution to the House. Joe was the face and inspiration for the Joe Z Bowling Classic for 9 years. Each guest took home a special piece of art made by children in the House.

In honor of Alsco’s 125th anniversary, local branches were invited to nominate a charity to apply for a $25,000 grant. The Alsco Jacksonville location nominated RMHC Jacksonville, and on November 4, Alsco Jacksonville leadership visited Ronald McDonald House to present executive director Diane Boyle with a check for $25,000. Alsco’s Jacksonville location has provided RMHC Jacksonville with towels, sheets, and floor mat service, and has donated tablecloths for special events for more than 10 years. Alsco recently donated new logo mats for the front entry, and also donated and maintains service for the first aid kits throughout the House. The grant will support RMHC Jacksonville’s annual operating budget.
WISH LIST

Ronald McDonald House Charities® of Jacksonville needs many of the same items you use in your own home (and lots more of them) to successfully operate its Ronald McDonald House® and Ronald McDonald Family Room® programs. The items needed most are:

FOOD
- Individually packaged cereal, chips, cookies, fruit, soups and meals
- Breakfast bars & toaster pastries
- Coffee creamer
- White vinegar
- Individually packaged soups & meals

OFFICE SUPPLIES
- 8.5 x 11” copy paper
- 1/3 cut manila file folders
- Hanging file folders
- Legal size writing pads
- Post-It notes
- Scotch tape
- Standard size staples

GIFT CARDS
- Gas
- Walmart & Sam’s Club
- Home Depot & Lowe’s
- Target
- CVS & Walgreens
- Publix & Winn-Dixie

HOUSEHOLD
- Flashlights
- Bleach & detergent
- Lysol disinfecting spray
- Swiffer Dusters
- Swiffer Sweeper dry cloths
- Magic Erasers

KITCHEN
- Paper towels
- Paper cups, bowls, plates
- Large plastic containers and lids
- Plastic forks, knives, spoons
- 1 & 2 gallon Ziploc bags
- Oven gloves / pot holders
- NEW non-stick pans

For more information on special events, please contact Sarah Young at 904.807.4669

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CALL 904.807.HOME (4663)

Please call 904.807.HOME(4663) to schedule the delivery of your donation. Don’t forget to save your pop tabs too!