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Ends November 20th.



The community steps forward for Ronald McDonald House Charities of Hawaii on World Children's Day!

Aloha from "The House That Love Built"!



Jerri Chong

World Children's Day is a very special event that takes place each November 20 all across the globe in McDonald's restaurants. The occasion is to draw attention to the importance of our children and to give people everywhere the chance to step forward to help further children's causes.

Here in Hawaii, special McDonald's menu items, when purchased today, will generate a cash donation to Hawaii's Ronald McDonald House Charities (RMHC-HI). You can also show your support by donating a dollar, signing your name on a paper cut-out hand and posting it at the restaurant.

Last year, Hawaii customers helped raise almost \$50,000! We used that donation during the past year to help us provide a home-away-from-home for more than 400 families with seriously ill children from the Neighbor Islands and Pacific that traveled to Oahu for specialized medical treatments. It also helped us continue to provide the Ronald McDonald House Family Room at Kapiolani Hospital, a respite and support center for families of inpatient children.



Never has your support for this fundraiser been as important as it is today. Looking ahead to next year, we expect to see more Neighbor Island families than ever needing our help. There are unsuspecting families on every island who have no idea that they will suddenly be torn from their own homes and safety nets, and required to travel to Honolulu seeking critical medical treatments for a son or daughter. They often desperately need help with a place to stay, transportation to and from the hospital, and other things we tend to take for granted such as doing laundry and preparing meals.

In addition to McDonald's support on World Children's Day, there are other heroes too, including, of course, everyone who makes it a point to go to a McDonald's restaurant today to participate. Many thanks to the Honolulu Advertiser for their assistance, and to all the local celebrities that are volunteering today to be ambassadors for RMHC-HI at selected restaurants. We are also grateful to the sponsors that made this special newspaper section possible: McDonald's Restaurants of Hawaii, Golden State Foods, and Meadow Gold Dairies, and Okahara Saimin Factory.

Every single gesture of support makes a big difference, whether you buy an Extra Value Meal at McDonald's today, clip out and send in the donation coupon below with a contribution, decide to volunteer your time, or choose selected items from our Wish List to donate. For more information, please visit our website at www.RonaldHouseHawaii.org.

Thank you so much for helping!

Jerri Chong
President

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Maui couple's patience is richly rewarded

Andrea Ciro and Kalei Riggs of Makawao, Maui are two of the few guests who have had the occasion to stay at both Honolulu Ronald McDonald Houses. Andrea delivered premature twins in March and was originally lodged at the Oahu Avenue House, where most neighbor island parents with preemies stay during their newborn's hospitalization. When Aidan, one of the twins, was eventually released from the hospital in June, they moved together into to the Judd Hillside House and were joined by the twins' dad, Kalei Riggs, who previously had only been

able to come to Oahu on weekends to be with Andrea. Together they waited for Alec, the second twin, to grow strong enough to go home. Finally in August, Alec was allowed to leave the hospital with the help of an oxygen feed. When both twins were eventually cleared to leave Oahu in September, the family bid farewell to their home-away-from-home. Below, Andrea's shares some vivid memories of her early experiences while staying at the Oahu Avenue House, and during the time she, Kalei and the boys spent as guests at the Judd Hillside House.

"The Crystal Houses of Manoa"

March, 2008
It's 10pm. The front door code buzzes me in and I enter into the beautiful, low-lit, front foyer that is filled with the sounds of the garden's waterfall through the screen door. I walk down the hall towards the kitchen where pots and dishes clang and the smell of frying fish fills the air. The shuttle has just returned from its evening drop-off and several house mates are making late dinners, common after a whole day spent at the hospitals visiting our children.

"How are the babies?" Chelsey asks. With one question, we begin to gather in the kitchen, one by one, sharing our daily updates on our children. I share my current status on both of my micro preemie twin boys, Alec and Aidan, whom were delivered at 26.5 weeks and Chelsey, a young single mom from the Big Island, gives me the details of her pre-



The entire Ciro-Riggs family shortly before going home.

emie son. Marilyn, 34 weeks pregnant and counting, joins us for a glass of milk and we find out how she's feeling and what news the doctor had for her today about returning home. Tiare and Bronson talk story of their faith in beating the odds the doctors gave them for their son. Wes, our weeknight manager, enters and places on the counter several bags of pasta, bread, and salad from a dinner made by volunteers at the Judd Hillside House. We say goodnight and I find myself upstairs in my room: alone, quiet, and anxious with anticipation of how my babies are doing throughout the night. Before I try to sleep, I pray for my sons to survive and to be given the chance to live healthy, normal lives. Though neither my family nor my friends are near, and I only see my partner on the weekends, I feel safe and I feel blessed.

June, 2008
It's Sunday evening at Judd Hillside and Kalei and I bring baby Aidan downstairs in our green laundry basket packed with pillows, blankets, pacifier and toys. The kitchen is alive as families and volunteers serve themselves dinner. Aidan is quick to become the topic of conversation and we proudly share his story with all the listening ears. Some are shocked that, although his original due date wouldn't be until June 21, he had actually been born nearly 3 months ago. Now we can finally enjoy one son in this wonderfully sup-

portive environment, as we patiently wait for our other son to grow strong.

September, 2008
Now here we are, months later, making final preparations for our transition back home with our two beautiful, alert, healthy, baby boys and I think about my long difficult journey. Like a powerful and clear crystal rock, my faith in one thing has not wavered nor has it left us vulnerable for even a moment: this magnificent, gracious house on Judd Hillside. It has given us shelter, food, friendship, comfort, love, tranquility, and the ability to be present, by our babies' sides, every fearful, joyous, miraculous, healing step of the way.



Andrea Ciro while staying at the Oahu Avenue Ronald McDonald House.



Pictured above are Honolulu's two Ronald McDonald Houses and some of the people who have called them their "home-away-from-home."

Hilo teen, family a comfort to others



Jordan and mom Diana share a light moment at the Ronald McDonald House between Jordan's treatments.

Jordan Toler is a young man just raring to move on with his life. The 15-year-old Ke Ana La'Ahana school student dreams of someday becoming a mixed martial arts fighter, a motocross racer and an architect. But the past 32 months have been tough ones for Jordan and his family since he was diagnosed in February 2006 with acute myelogenous leukemia (AML).

Until May of this year, Jordan was receiving ongoing treatments at Kapiolani Medical Center for Women & Children, and found himself bidding his time at the Ronald McDonald House for extended periods of time. Now that he has finished treatments and returned home, he only needs to come to Oahu for periodic check-ups and follow-up testing, and usually doesn't need to stay overnight. During his many stays at the House, he was always accompanied either by his mom Diana or grandmother Leona, who took turns flying between the Big Island and Honolulu to be with him. His dad Samuel, eldest of Leona's six children, usually stayed at home, working his two jobs and looking after Jordan's two sisters.

It certainly hasn't been easy. Because of the traveling back and forth to Honolulu, first Diana had to take a demotion at her job and then she was laid off.

After Jordan's initial six-months of treatments, he was able to return to his Big Island home, but then suffered a relapse in August 2007. In January of this year, Jordan's youngest sister Kayana bravely volunteered to donate her bone marrow to help Jordan. Following the bone marrow transplant and a month of isolation, Jordan was allowed to

check out of the hospital and return again to his second home, the Ronald McDonald House on Judd Hillside, where he awaited clearance from doctors to go back to Hilo.

When thrust into the world of life-threatening illness, children and families receive an uninvited but rapid and vivid educational experience that forces kids to grow up faster than they should have to, and requires them to deal with issues that a child shouldn't have to deal with. Many families have described the experience as a roller coaster ride - only scarier. It seems as though it might overwhelm the youngsters, but instead, they rise to the occasion and show remarkable resilience and maturity.

During these testing times, Jordan has been transformed from the shy 12-year-old we first met back in 2006 into what can only be described as a "big brother" to other seriously ill kids who are just beginning their journeys. "When I was just starting out, there were some other teens staying at the House that I enjoyed spending time with," he said. "We supported each other. I know it helped, so now I try to support the kids I meet."

Diana says that her problems were made easier to cope with by another mother of a child with cancer named Charlene Mersburgh that she met at the Ronald McDonald House.

"Charlene and her family are also from the Big Island and although she had her own challenges, she took us under her wing and shared things she had been through, so as to make it easier for us," Diana recalled.

Before long, Jordan's mom and grandma, with their own style of calmness and caring, became the ones that were valuable resources for the other parents staying at the house, providing them with a sense of calmness, and sharing the many lessons learned during Jordan's long battle.

Jordan, Diana and Leona began extending exactly the same type of encouragement and guidance that they received from the more experienced parents staying at the House when they first arrived. This ongoing "passing of the knowledge" from one family to others is one of the extraordinary things about the Ronald McDonald House. It is repeated again and again.

"We couldn't have made it if we had only hotels to stay in over here," said Leona. "Ronald McDonald House is a special place, like a gift for the children. It is filled with a lot of love. Regardless of what parents have been through at the hospital, at the end of the day when they return "home" there is laughter, and friendships are made that will last a lifetime, clear across the ocean."

The latest on Jordan

A website for Jordan and his family was set up by CarePages.com. On the site, Leona posts sometimes humorous updates for family and friends about Jordan's progress. Below is Leona's October 26, 2008 entry:

Hi Everyone,
Well Jordan had his checkup yesterday and everything went really well. Blood counts are very good. He is doing very well and the doctor told him that his next checkup will be in January, 2009. This is a very good and the doctor also told him that he was a model bone marrow translate patient! Of course he was very proud of himself, but mom and

I know how difficult he could be with taking meds, and not being able to do things that he wanted. However, to see him healthy was worth all the stress he gave us! He is still losing weight on purpose, and the doctor said that it's okay. I don't know who is trying to impress! I think grandma should visit his school more often and see what's going on... he'll be angry, ha!

In any case, thank you all so much for your prayers and well wishes, for I truly believe in the power of prayer and I thank God often for taking care of my grandson through his life threatening illness, but you all need to be thanked also! May God Bless All Of You!

For those of you that we met who also have or had sick children we have continued to pray for you and hope that one day we will all meet again! Blessings and Love to all of you as we continue our journey of recovery!

In January, Jordan will do his bone marrow aspiration surgery to see if any Leukemia cells are present and several other tests. It will be an all day thing and we will be staying over night. I will keep you updated throughout the holidays on how he is doing and may you all have a very safe and blessed holiday season!

Love Grandma, Jordan & Diana

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Moo-halo for all you do!
Best Wishes to the Ronald McDonald House and McDonald's of Hawaii on World Children's Day!

GOOD LUCK

To RMHC® and McDonald's of Hawaii on World Children's Day!

Golden State Foods encourages you to support RMHC and McDonald's on this very special day.

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