

# MESSAGES of HOPE

2009 Volume 3

## Happy Birthday, Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House Celebrating 35 Years of Helping Families at The First House That Love Built

It was the fall of 1973, and Dr. Audrey Evans wanted a house. Not for herself, but for the parents of the children she treated as a pediatric oncologist at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. "What I had in mind was a unisex YMCA. A simple house where families could stay," she says. "I wanted parents to have a place to sleep in a comfortable environment." Parents who otherwise would spend night after night sleeping by their sick child's bedside.

So Dr. Evans and her social worker Gini Peltz embarked on a hunt for a house in the University City area of Philadelphia, putting in a bid in for a duplex on 40th and Spruce before knowing how they would pay for it. "I was always optimistic," she says.

At the same time, the Philadelphia Eagles were raising funds in support of player Fred Hill, whose daughter Kim was in treatment for Leukemia at St. Christopher's Hospital for Children. When the Eagles approached St. Christopher's about making a donation, Dr. Lawrence Naiman suggested there was an even greater need for the funds resting with Dr. Evans.



The opening of the first House in 1974.

"Who are the Eagles?" Dr. Evans asked when told they had a donation for her. When General Manager Jimmy Murray presented her with the proceeds one afternoon at the stadium, she thanked him and told him what she really needed – support for a house. "It's not every day that someone accepts a check and then tells you what she really needs," Dr. Evans says. Jimmy Murray approached McDonald's with the idea that they could offer the proceeds from their Shamrock Shake sales to benefit this new house for families; McDonald's agreed, and the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House was born on October 15, 1974.



Ronald McDonald, Jimmy Murray, and Dr. Audrey Evans.

Thirty-five years later, there are 287 houses all over the world serving the very families Dr. Evans sought to help. The Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House has expanded from the first seven bedroom house on Spruce Street to two houses serving 60 families each night, two Ronald McDonald Family Rooms at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, and a weeklong Ronald McDonald Camp.

An array of supportive services – from home-cooked dinners every night to the assistance of two trained social workers – has transformed the House into more than just a comfortable place where families sleep. "The staff, the atmosphere, the programs, the communal meals – they all make it a huge success," says Dr. Evans. "It makes a tremendous difference to the lives of people."



Suzie Norvilas and Dr. Evans at Ronald McDonald Camp.

Many families who stay at the House keep coming back long after treatment has ended. Suzie Norvilas, who first stayed at the House in 1985 while being treated for Neuroblastoma, considered PRMH her home for the 14 years she spent on and off receiving care. "Whenever I would go to our real house, I'd ask my mom, 'When are we going home?'" Suzie says. "I thought the Ronald McDonald House was my real home because I was there so often." Today, Suzie serves as the Family Room Coordinator for PRMH, and also as a counselor at Ronald McDonald Camp. "What I enjoy the most is that I am able to give back to two places that have been a huge part of my childhood, and of my life."



The Escuti family at the House in 1988.

Like Suzie, Dotti Escuti has been giving back to PRMH for over 20 years. After her five-year-old son Chris was diagnosed with Optic Glioma – a tumor in the optic chiasm behind the eye – the Escuti family traveled from the Dominican Republic to receive treatment at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. "We're very private people, and when I was first told about the House I was reluctant," Dotti says. "We were in the door for five minutes, and I felt 'This is the place. This I can handle.'"

When her family moved back to the U.S., Dotti committed to helping the place that helped her. "I knew I was going to volunteer," she says. "I didn't care if I had to clean toilets." The House gave her a different role, and she has been volunteering in the administrative office ever since. Her son Chris stays involved, too, as a counselor at camp. This year, his wife Amy begins her counselor training.

From an idea for a place for parents to sleep, to a multifaceted organization helping over 2,000 families from around the world each year, The Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House has grown into something even Dr. Evans did not expect. "I didn't even really have a concept of a home away from home as it has blossomed," she says. "But it isn't just bricks and mortar here – you can get that anywhere. The saying of a home away from home is actually true."

To celebrate 35 years of providing a home away from home to families, we invite you to join us at our 35th Birthday Party on Friday, November 6, 2009, at the Please Touch Museum, Memorial Hall, Fairmount Park. For more information, turn to page eight or visit [www.philarmh.org](http://www.philarmh.org). Tickets are also available by completing and returning the enclosed envelope.



Chris Escuti at Ronald McDonald Camp in 2009.

## Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House Launches New Website



Starting this fall, visitors to [philarmh.org](http://philarmh.org) will be in for something new

when we unveil our redesigned Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House website. Custommedialabs, an interactive marketing communications agency specializing in strategic emerging media solutions, partnered with PRMH to redesign our website on a pro-bono basis, delivering both front-end and back-end renovations to create a more user-friendly, visually appealing, and cutting-edge web presence.

“As an agency that focuses on healthcare marketing and advertising, we were thrilled to accept the opportunity to work with the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House,” says Manos Sifakis, president and CEO of custommedialabs. “Donating our interactive agency’s resources to such an influential nonprofit organization continues to be a very rewarding experience.”

The newly designed site encourages visitors to become more engaged by making it easier to sign up to volunteer, register for events, browse photo galleries, or just learn more about what PRMH does. The new site also makes online giving easier. “We were so excited for the opportunity to work with custommedialabs in designing our new site to create an efficient online resource for the community,” says Susan Campbell, Executive Director of PRMH. “We truly appreciate custommedialabs’ attention to detail and dedication to designing a website that meets all of our needs.”

Behind the scenes, NPower PA and Reed Technology provided the technological support and funding needed to ensure a successful site upgrade. “We’re delighted to extend our partnership with the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House,” says NPower PA’s Executive Director Patrick Callihan. NPower PA provides comprehensive, high-quality, and affordable technology assistance to nonprofit groups. “Through the generosity of the grant from Reed Technology and Information Services, Inc., this project added a layer of business continuity for the organization and will enable the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House to further their mission.”

David Ballai, Vice President of Operations for Reed Technology, agrees. “As a technology data services company with a strong commitment to the non-profit community, Reed Technology is honored to continue our support of the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House and NPower through the extension of this grant,” he says. “We are excited about the project’s potential to advance the use of technology at PRMH and are genuinely delighted to be a part of the solution.”

While PRMH had considered a website overhaul to advance our online presence for some time, the project took off when Michael Tornvall of Innovative Print and Media Group (designer of our quarterly newsletter) suggested that custommedialabs, Innovative’s “go-to” agency for producing high-quality online and interactive work, might be interested in assisting PRMH with the effort. Several months of planning and design later, we are thrilled to launch our new site, thanks to the expertise and generosity of our project team. “As always,” says Campbell, “we continue to grow and evolve with the invaluable support of our community partners.”

To check out all of the features of our new site, visit [www.philarmh.org](http://www.philarmh.org). To learn more about custommedialabs, visit [www.custommedialabs.com](http://www.custommedialabs.com).

## Ronald McDonald Camp 2009 Update

Dear Camp Friends,

It’s my pleasure to say that RMC 2009 was a big success and our campers and counselors have returned home with a week full of fond memories and new experiences. This year was especially significant because we accommodated almost 200 campers...a 13% increase over last year! Our counselor response was plentiful and we added 45 new volunteer staff members. Look for more great photos in the next newsletter. Below are some interesting tidbits about RMC 2009:

- 191 campers joined us in the Poconos this year!
- 42 of the 191 were new campers.
- 91 were girls and 100 were boys.
- 134 volunteer staff members helped our campers have a safe, fun, and very memorable week.
- Our theme was Tropical Paradise and our t-shirts were tie dye orange. Thank you to Brie’s Buddies for sponsoring the shirts.

All my best and happy camping!

Carolann Costa  
Ronald McDonald Camp Director





## Public Tours of *Philadelphia* magazine's Design Home 2009® to Benefit PRMH



Tour *Philadelphia* magazine's Design Home 2009®, this year located in Haverford Reserve in Haverford, PA. Doors open for tours on September 10, 2009, and tickets are on sale now. All ticket proceeds benefit the families we serve at the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House.

**Tickets on sale now**

Public tours run:

- September 10 through October 11
- Thursdays from 12pm to 8pm
- Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays, and Mondays from 11am to 4pm

The Design Home is closed on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Tickets are \$20 per person.

There's an interesting twist to this year's Design Home. It features two side-by-side carriage homes, the Pembrey and the Treymore, each depicting a different lifestyle – one more “town” and the other more “country.” The Design Homes offer a classic yet sophisticated sense of design inspired by the architecture of Philadelphia's Main Line region and feature amenities such as an outdoor spa and fire pit, a Jeffersonian style library, gourmet kitchens with state-of-the-art appliances, a sauna, luxurious bathrooms, a wine room, deck, and patio.

For ticket sales, special event information, and directions to the site, visit [www.philarmh.org/designhome2009](http://www.philarmh.org/designhome2009).



**Philadelphia magazine's  
DESIGN  
HOME 2009®**

## Cooking Up A Taste of Home at PRMH

For the past 11 years, families, volunteers, and staff alike have looked forward to Monday lunch at the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House. From homemade macaroni and cheese to warm



blueberry cobbler, dedicated volunteer Delores Tartt has been serving up delicious food designed to bring a bit of home to families staying at the House.

Delores started as a front desk volunteer in 1998, but quickly realized she could bring her culinary talents to the House's kitchen. “It feels great to do something where you are really appreciated. Everybody raves about my mac and cheese, and my veggies.” Her salmon cakes, tuna salad, and array of homemade desserts are also family favorites.

After serving as a nurse for 27 years, Delores wanted to continue helping others. When her husband of 49 years – her childhood sweetheart – passed away, she knew it was time to do something. “It was just too unbearable,” she says. “I was bored and lonely.” Living just a few blocks from PRMH made volunteering here an easy choice.

“To me, the House is a very satisfying place to be a part of because you play such a role in helping so many people in desperate need,” she says. “The families are so grateful.” And Delores, a great-grandmother who turned 80 on the Fourth of July, has no plans of slowing down her lunchtime tradition. “I say I used to be a firecracker but I am just a sparkler now,” she says with a laugh. Those who spend each Monday with Delores might just disagree.

If you are interested in helping our families as a volunteer at the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House, visit our website at [www.philarmh.org](http://www.philarmh.org).

## Restaurant Partners

Make a day out of the Design Home! The following restaurants are offering special deals and discounts to visitors of *Philadelphia* magazine's Design Home 2009®. Visit [www.philarmh.org](http://www.philarmh.org) for more details.



A la Maison  
53 W. Lancaster Ave., Ardmore, PA 19003 • 484.412.8009 • [www.alamaisonbistro.com](http://www.alamaisonbistro.com)



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We are grateful to the following restaurants for generously donating lunches for the Design Home volunteers.

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Garrett Hill Pizza  
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610.525.8813  
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McDonald's  
111 W. Lancaster Ave.  
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610.649.7255  
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## Hit 'Em For The House 2009 A Great Success

Hit 'Em For The House, our annual fundraiser held this year on June 1, 2009, would not be possible without the support of our loyal sponsors, generous donors, and tireless volunteers. We thank you for allowing The Friends to carry out our mission of providing funding and services to families with critically ill children during their stay at the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House and the Ronald McDonald Family Room on the Cardiac Floor at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

Judy Brown and Annemarie Cutler, *Co-Presidents, Friends Council*





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# We're So Thankful For...



Golfers hit the green at Keenan Auto Body's 11th Annual Charity Golf Outing that raised \$23,000 for PRMH. Thanks to Brie's Buddies, Beiler-Campbell Realtors, Richie Nelson Celebration of Life Golf Committee, Wesselt Capitol Group, and PricewaterhouseCoopers for also hosting tournaments to benefit our programs.



The Juliano family presents the proceeds of their t-shirt fundraiser to PRMH board member Chris Roak. The Julianos raised \$2,315 for the Oncology Family Room, which they used while their daughter Christine was in treatment at CHOP.



Over 3,000 Phillies fans came out to support the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House at our fourth annual Share A Night at the Phillies to benefit the House. This year, we were fortunate to be the beneficiary of two games – on April 22 and May 9 – to support our families. Former House guest and dedicated Phillies fan Justin Longstreet, age 11, (right, shown with his brother James, age 6, and father John) threw out the first pitch at the April game.

## Donations from the Heart 4/1/09 – 6/30/09

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Due to space limitations, we are unable to list donations of less than \$500.



## Teams Pull a Plane to Benefit PRMH

Ten teams hit the tarmac on May 9 to compete in our first Southwest Airlines Plane Pull at Atlantic Aviation, in conjunction with Southwest's 5th Anniversary in Philadelphia. The Temple University football team came in first place, pulling the Boeing 737 jet 50 feet in just 16 seconds. The event brought in over \$20,000 for the House, with the PRMH Weekend McManagers' team raising more than \$4,000. Lew Boyton of that team was the top individual fundraiser with a grand total of \$2,030.

Thank you to all of the participating teams including:

- |                                 |                                      |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| The Bald and The Beautiful      | Philadelphia Building Trades Council |
| DZ/PKA                          | REACH                                |
| DZ/SAE                          | Sig Eps On A Plane                   |
| The Mighty Meeting Makers       | Springfield Healthplex               |
| PRMH Weekend McManagers         | Temple University Football Team      |
| PRMH Board of Directors & Staff |                                      |

Thank you to our in-kind donors including Firefly Photography, Taylor Rental Media/All Event Party Rental.Com, McDonald's, Hymie's Deli, Iovine Brothers Produce, the Philadelphia Flyers Ice Girls, Gilbane, S&D Coffee, Wyndmoor Hose Company #1, and our PRMH baking crews. Special thanks to Southwest Airlines and Atlantic Aviation for their support of this event, and to Cozen O'Connor for serving as our t-shirt sponsor.

Think your team has what it takes to pull a plane? Contact Kelly Hays at [kelly@philarmh.org](mailto:kelly@philarmh.org) to learn more about next year's Plane Pull.



The PRMH Weekend McManagers pose in front of the plane.



Ronald McDonald joins the Temple University Football team in warming up the crowd.

## Guest Chefs 4/1/09 – 6/30/09

- Abner's
- Accenture
- AJ Community Service
- Arcola National Junior Honor Society
- AstraZeneca
- Katie Backe
- Nancy Barton
- Bellas
- Beta Phi Omega Sorority, Inc.
- Beth Am Synagogue
- Big Hearts to Little Hearts
- Boreham, Dewey, Ivey Block, & Milgram Families
- Christine Boyle
- buildOn
- Bunch of Buddies
- Center School
- Charity in Action
- Chef Rich
- Cherokee High School
- Chestnut Street Administration Staff
- Children's Healthcare Associates
- Chris & Friends
- Christ Community Church
- Christ's Lutheran Church
- Circle of Love Outreach Ministry
- Class & Landes Families
- Comcast NFC
- Committee to Benefit the Children
- Community Service Board at Haverford School
- Community Service Corps from St. Basil Academy
- Conshohocken United Methodist Church
- Cornerstone Church
- Cornwells Elementary School
- CRA, Inc.
- The Cross Cultural Association
- Delta Mu
- Dimension Data
- Divorce Care
- EDS



- Esther Kaplan
- E.W. Kean
- Fast Track
- Lisa Feticck & Friends
- The Fischer Family & Friends
- Gina Flatley
- Friends of the Kraus Family
- FutureScripts
- GAMP
- Gerri and Friends
- Gerry's Gang
- Gerson Family
- Girls Night Out
- Girl Scout Troop #5374
- Girl Scout Troop #9008
- Glafiran & Friends
- GlaxoSmithKline
- GlaxoSmithKline EATA
- GlaxoSmithKline Oncology
- Goldenberg Group
- GPPCMA
- Gregory Hampson & Ivins Families
- Amy Hansel Family & Friends
- Hatboro-Horsham 9th Grade Advisory Board
- Helen's Kitchen
- Heric Family and Friends
- Family of Tom Hetrick
- HISP
- Howald Family
- H&R Block
- Hymie's Deli
- Independence Blue Cross
- Janis & Family
- Jacoby Family
- Lee Jordan
- Kathy's Family & Friends
- Katie & Friends
- Ellie Koerner Leukemia Foundation
- Chuck, Bobbi, & Emma Forker
- Kristen & Friends
- Debbie Funcheon
- La Famiglia De Fratelli
- Laurie & Friends
- Lilly USA



- Lockheed Martin, Moorestown, NJ
- Lockheed Martin, Newtown, PA
- Lockheed Martin, King of Prussia
- The Maher Family
- Main Line Reform Temple
- The Marguilles Family
- McDonald's
- Kelly Miller
- The Miller Family
- The Mom's Club Philadelphia
- Ann Murphy
- National Council of Jewish Women
- Negril Caribbean Grill
- New Holland Church of the Nazarene
- Notre Dame Club
- Oak Lane Presbyterian Church
- Oncology Clinic
- Orefield Middle School Builders Club
- Organization of Latinos at Exelon
- Penn Newman Center Graduate Students
- Philadelphia Cares
- Philadelphia Flying Phoenix Dragon Boat Team
- The Philadelphia Soccer Club - PSC Sparks
- Philadelphia Zoo Docents
- Pilates Studio at Club La Maison
- Plate Restaurant
- Powelton Pizza
- Renee & Friends
- Ronald McDonald Camp Counselors
- The Rodriguez Family
- Renaissance Academy
- Ridge Avenue United Methodist Youth Junior
- Roy's Restaurant
- Terri Salvino
- San Damiano Fellowship
- Ann Marie Santora
- SAP
- Sharon & Friends
- Sharon & Yvonne
- Joan Shepp
- Siemens
- Sigma Sigma Rho
- The Sisterhood from Congregation Adath Jeshurun
- Skanska USA Building



- Special Care Burn Unit Nurses
- Carol Stamp & Family
- St. Christopher's NICU
- St. Christopher's Oncology Nurses
- St. John's Methodist Women's Group
- St. Luke's Church
- St. Margaret's Church
- St. Paul's School
- Linda Sobon & Friends
- Southampton Kiwanis
- Southwest Airlines
- Cindi Sullivan
- Jenn Sullivan
- Sweet Lucy's Smokehouse
- Sysco
- Sue Tecco
- Troop 147
- Turner Investment Partners
- University of Pennsylvania APO
- University of Pennsylvania Circle K
- University of Pennsylvania Fisher Hassenfeld House Council
- University of Pennsylvania Hillel
- University of Pennsylvania Post-Bac Program
- US Healthcare Outcomes
- Venne Cousins
- Wakia & Donna
- The Watchmen
- Susan Wegner & Friends
- West Catholic High School
- West Council Pioneers
- The Wharton School
- Willas Gang 1 & 2
- The Young Family
- Young Adults Network-Overbrook Park Church of Christ



Thank you to all who contributed meals to our Chestnut Street House, Front and Erie House, and our Family Rooms.



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**Upcoming Events - Proceeds Benefit PRMH**

Visit [www.philarmh.org](http://www.philarmh.org) for details.

**Philadelphia magazine's Design Home 2009®**

September 10 – October 11  
Tickets available at [www.philarmh.org](http://www.philarmh.org).

**Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House  
35th Birthday Party**

November 6  
Please Touch Museum  
See more information below.

**Share A Night House Lighting Celebrations**

December 2 at Front & Erie  
December 9 at Chestnut Street



**HAPPY 35<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY**  
**PHILADELPHIA RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE**  
**PLEASE TOUCH MUSEUM**  
**MEMORIAL HALL, FAIRMOUNT PARK**  
**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 2009, 7:00 P.M.**

**You are cordially invited to join us in celebrating 35 years of helping families.**

Enjoy an evening of feast, merriment, and birthday cake as well as a presentation of the **Dr. Audrey E. Evans Award of Excellence** to Dr. Jean Bennett, Dr. Albert Maguire, and Dr. Katherine High for their ground breaking research to reverse congenital blindness in children.

Tickets are \$150 per person. Proceeds benefit the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House. For tickets or more information, visit [www.philarmh.org](http://www.philarmh.org) or complete and return the enclosed envelope.



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