A Maternal Journey Leads to New Friendships

Most families come to the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald after their child is diagnosed with a life-threatening illness or born with a serious medical condition. However, for three moms currently at the House—Danielle George, Alicia Battin, and Clare Cook—their stories are a little different.

When routine ultrasounds showed that their babies had spina bifida, a disabling birth defect where the spine does not close properly around the spinal cord, they decided to travel to Philadelphia to receive prenatal surgery at The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia. This groundbreaking fetal surgery to repair the spine is performed while the baby is still in the womb, significantly improving outcomes for children with the condition.

After their surgeries, the mothers were required to stay on bed rest for three to four weeks and in close proximity to the hospital for the duration of their pregnancies. This led them to come to the Chestnut Street House; coincidentally, all three happened to arrive within a month of one another—an unusual occurrence considering only a very small number of families stay at the House each year for fetal surgery.

In coping with a nearly three month stay away from home in an unfamiliar city, the moms have found the House to be invaluable. “You don’t realize how important the House is until you are in this situation,” says Danielle, from Ohio, who is pregnant with her first child.

While all three moms have family members—including their husbands and mothers—who alternate staying with them as their support person, having each other to talk to is particularly meaningful. “It is good to build relationships with people who are going through the same thing,” says Alicia, who lives in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and has a 17-month-old son. Clare—who has two young sons at home in Wisconsin—agrees. “Everything that the House provides is incredible but that is an emotional piece of support that you can’t necessarily get unless you have those other moms right there,” she says.

The House has helped in other ways as well. “Financially, it is one less stress we have to worry about because obviously our lives are turned upside down with stress,” says Alicia. Being so close to the hospital also helps ease their worries. “We are so close to the hospital and if something happens we can get there in no time. I am so glad for that,” says Danielle.

Danielle, Alicia, and Clare also appreciate the dedication and support of the staff and volunteers. “We have just been really touched by the people here and how they seem to care about what they are doing,” says Clare. “That is the one time I almost always start crying, when I go to say thank you to the Guest Chef groups that make the food. I get this overwhelming feeling that these are people who are giving up time they don’t have to give up and are cheerful and ask how you are doing. When you are going through something like this, all of those little things make a huge difference.”

When they are born, their babies will spend some time in the neonatal intensive care unit before they are released from the hospital. While the moms are looking forward to going home, they know that they will always stay in touch with their friends they made during their stay at the House. And, they know that they will never forget their time here. “I think until you’ve stayed here you really can’t appreciate how much it does for people,” Clare says. “It’s an incredible gift and to know that so much of it is volunteer-run makes it all the more incredible.”

If you would like to help provide comfort and support to our families, please visit www.philarmh.org to learn how to get involved.
Volunteers Needed For The NEW Hospitality Kiosk At St. Christopher’s Hospital

We are currently seeking volunteers to staff our new hospitality Kiosk at St. Christopher’s Hospital. Volunteer responsibilities include greeting families who enter the waiting room, inviting them to help themselves to a cup of coffee, a snack, and to any of the donated sundries that will be available at the kiosk, and helping to facilitate programming to support the families. This rewarding volunteer opportunity will allow you to represent the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House in the waiting room of the Critical Care Units of St. Christopher’s Hospital, and provide comfort and hope to families in a hospital setting.

You can also help by donating items to stock our kiosk shelves! We are currently in need of pantry items such as single serving snacks, cereals, fruit, and other breakfast items. We are also seeking donations of game books like sudoku, crossword puzzles, and word searches. For a full list of items, visit: www.philarmh.org/Kiosk.

If you are interested in this volunteer opportunity, please contact Lori-Anne Miller at Lori-anne@philarmh.org or by calling 215.291.0927.
On January 7, 2013 we proudly celebrated five years since the Front & Erie House opened its doors and began serving families in need with a festive party. We welcomed families who stayed at the House since its opening to join the festivities and celebrate with us. There was face painting, balloon animals, a magic show, a photo booth, and of course, cake and ice cream! Thank you to all of our supporters, volunteers, and staff for making five years of Front & Erie possible.

The Budrow Family Story
When the Budrow family came to celebrate Front & Erie’s fifth anniversary this January, it was the most recent of many visits to the place they consider their second home. Since checking in for the first time in August of 2008, Ingrid and Jonathan have stayed at the House more than ten times while their daughter Zariah receives treatment at St. Christopher’s Hospital for Children.

Zariah was born with breathing and heart problems, as well as a cleft palate, and spent two weeks in her local neonatal intensive care unit in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania before her doctors transferred her to St. Christopher’s. There her parents learned that she had Pierre Robin syndrome and would require surgery for a tracheotomy and a feeding tube as well as ongoing therapies. The hospital social worker recommended the Budrows try the Ronald McDonald House. Their first stay ended up being over two and half months.

“I can’t imagine what it would have been like if the Ronald McDonald House wouldn’t have been there to help us out,” explains Ingrid. The Budrows especially appreciated being so close to their daughter at all times as well as all of the amenities the House provided. “It was helpful to always have food to eat and a room where we could sleep, to be able to get some rest and have a nice shower to be refreshed,” says Jonathan. However, he stresses that the nightly Guest Chef dinner groups did much more than just provide a meal each evening. “You helped us get our minds off of our children being really sick,” he says. “You gave us some ease and made it easier for us not to worry.”

The Budrows also found the support of the families staying at the House to be invaluable. “The other families staying there who were going through their own issues with their children, we were all there for each other,” says Jonathan. “We developed very close bonds that helped us a lot for what we were going through with our kids. That was tremendous blessing for which we will always be grateful.” Tara, the House Social Worker, was also a much-needed source of support for the Budrows. “Tara was very—I don’t even know what the word is. Beyond helpful,” says Ingrid.

Today, Zariah is doing very well. “She is your typical four year old,” says Ingrid. In 2011, she was diagnosed with Kabuki Syndrome, a rare congenital disorder, and while her parents explain that she will always have challenges, with therapy she will continue to improve. “She is such a little fighter,” says Ingrid. Jonathan agrees. “We feel fortunate that she has come so far,” he says. The House will always hold a special place in the Budrows’ hearts. “They are family to us,” says Jonathan. “It is literally like our second home, the Ronald McDonald House and the hospital and the staff and all the people who chipped in towards helping us with our daughter.”
Message From The Executive Director

Dear Friends,

As we reflect on the past year, one fact stands out: the incredible diversity of all of the families who have come through our doors. And while each family’s experience that led them to our House was unique, what brought them all together was their need for holistic support that would enable them to be there for their seriously ill child. The statistics below highlight this diversity of experience, as well as our impact. Whether families stayed for a few days or a few months, or came from New Jersey or Nigeria, we were there for them. These statistics also make clear that the need for our services still continues to grow significantly, as we experienced a record high occupancy rate, record high average length of stay, and a record number of families we could unfortunately not accommodate because we were full.

For a more detailed picture of 2012, I invite you to take a look at our 2012 Annual Report that will be released at the beginning of April. Just go to www.philarmh.org/annualreport to see stories, photos, and statistics demonstrating our work over the past year.

Thank you to everyone who continues to make what we do possible. As these numbers show, your commitment really does make a difference for so many families when they need it most. We couldn’t do it without you.

Warm Regards,

Susan Campbell
Executive Director

THE YEAR IN REVIEW 2012

FAMILY STAYS

2,396 FAMILY STAYS

278 LONGEST NUMBER OF CONSECUTIVE NIGHTS FOR ONE FAMILY

2,973 FAMILIES WE COULD NOT ACCOMMODATE BECAUSE WE WERE FULL

8.8 NIGHTS IN THE AVERAGE FAMILY STAY

DOMESTIC FAMILIES SERVED

We served families from 44 states with the majority traveling from PA, NJ, and NY.

37%
20%
8%
5%
4%
2%
1%
0%

TOP THREE HOSPITALS SERVED

The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia 52%
Shriners Hospital 20%
St. Christopher’s Hospital 20%

TOP THREE SERVICE DEPARTMENTS

Orthopedics 24%
Oncology 24%
Neonatology 13%
INTERNATIONAL FAMILIES SERVED

We served families from 18 countries including:

- Bolivia
- Brazil
- Canada
- China
- Costa Rica
- Egypt
- England
- Ghana
- India
- Ireland
- Liberia
- Libya
- Nigeria
- Peru
- Puerto Rico
- Singapore
- Ukraine
- Uruguay

Bolivia
Brazil
Canada
China
Costa Rica
Egypt
England
Ghana
India
Ireland
Liberia
Libya
Nigeria
Peru
Puerto Rico
Singapore
Ukraine
Uruguay

Ronald McDonald Camp

- **196** Total Campers
- **130** Patient Campers
- **66** Sibling Campers

Ronald McDonald Family Rooms

- Family Rooms at CHOP: **2**
- Patient Rooms Served Each Day: **98**

**Our Volunteers**

- **332** House and Family Room Volunteers
- **105** Volunteer Camp Counselors and Medical Staff
- **567** Family Activities
- **110** Community Service Groups
- **1,139** Guest Chef Meals
- **3,536** Shuttle Van Trips

**Our Impact**

- **100%** Campers’ parents who agree that Ronald McDonald Camp has a positive impact on their child’s well-being
- **98%** Families who agree that their ability to stay close by improved their child’s experience in the hospital
- **97%** Families who agree that staying at the House made it easier to access treatment
- **95%** Families who agree that the Family Rooms were a valuable resource during a difficult time

Download the full Annual Report in April 2013 by visiting [www.philarmh.org/annualreport](http://www.philarmh.org/annualreport)
Thank You To All Of The Donors Who Supported Our Share A Night Campaign, Our 2013 Adopt A Room Program, And General Fund Campaigns In Q4 2012.

$5,000 to $9,999
ACE Charitable Foundation
Estate of Frances M. Cox

$10,000 to $24,999
Denny Parisian and the County Corvette Toy Drive
Mr. and Mrs. Francis Gallagher
Mr. and Mrs. Nicholas Karamatsoukas
Ronald McDonald House Charities
Ronald McDonald House Charities of the Philadelphia Region
St. Christopher’s Foundation for Children
United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey

$5,000 to $9,999
Aramark Conference Centers
B-Strong Foundation
Ms. Stacy Chatley
Lynn Deming Memorial
The Eden Charitable Foundation
Ellie Koerner Leukemia Foundation
Estate of Frances Bonikowski
Hope Paige Designs
I.B.E.W. Local Union 98
Keystone Foods Corporation
Louis N. Cassetta Foundation
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Marvin Presser Memorial
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Today Media Charitable Foundation
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$1,000 to $4,999
The 1830 Family Foundation
Allied Corporate Services
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Anonymous
AT&T United Way Employee Giving Campaign
Aaron Baer Memorial
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Bakers Club of Philadelphia
Bike Nights 2012—Mike Fontaine and Lehigh Valley McDonald’s Restaurants
Zachary Feldman Memorial
The Ferro Family—Hope Brings Strength
Bobby Ferro Tribute
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BFF Friendship Foundation
Employees Community Fund of The Boeing Company
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Mr. Jeff Feldman
Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Frebowitz
Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Gilbert
The Goldenberg Group & People Helping People Foundation
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Joseph Green and Robert J. Shaeffer—Mustache Fundraiser
Guidi Homes, Inc.
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The Hershey Company
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Marsh
Dr. Lauren McCann
Merrick Employee Giving Campaign
Millbridge Farms Inc.
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Miller Designworks, Inc.
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MK Mechanical
Morgan Stanley Smith Barney, LLC
National Time Systems
Neubauer Family Foundation
NSM Insurance Group
Mr. and Mrs. Richard E. O’Hara
Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Ostroff
Mr. William Parkes
Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Pecarsky
Mr. and Mrs. Stuart S. Peltz
Philadelphia Adult League Softball
Phoenixville Area School District
Pilot Air Freight
Caleb Regenski Memorial Foundation
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Laura and Richard Steel
Family Foundation
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$500 - $999
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Mr. and Mrs. Roger Arsh
Mr. and Mrs. Daniel J. Austin
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Mr. and Mrs. John Jones
Ms. Cynthia M. Keaveney
Dr. and Mrs. Jeremy Kees
Ms. Clare M. Kelly
Krasner Charitable Foundation
Ariana Lloyd Tribute
Mr. and Mrs. Mark Lloyd

Due to space limitations, we are unable to list donations of less than $500. All donations are sincerely appreciated.
We're So Thankful For...

1 Celebrating the Service of the Friends
In November 2012, we were honored to recognize the Friends of the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House for their longstanding support with a special thank you luncheon. The Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House greatly appreciates the Friends’ many years of devoted service and dedication to the families we serve since 1990.

2 National Dog Show Involvement
In November 2012, we were thrilled to host the press conference for the National Dog Show at our Chestnut Street House. At the event, The Kennel Club of Philadelphia introduced the 2012 National Dog Show Therapy Dog Ambassador Team, including Steve Kramer’s Lil’ Abner & Stella, and Michele Pich’s Vivian. The following week, we welcomed the National Dog Show Performance Team to our Chestnut Street House. The team of four incredible “Go Dogs,” led by trainer Lourdes Edlin, specializes in agility and flying disc tricks and wowed the families staying with us with their amazing feats!

3 Holiday Wish List Drives
During the 2012 Holiday Season, more than 50 Wish List Drives were hosted in support of the families of the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House. From delicious food for our kitchen pantry, and amenities for our guest rooms, to beloved toys and presents for children, our holiday Wish List donors provided much-needed support to ensure our families had a joyful holiday season. While 70% of our in-kind donations come in during the holidays, these gifts help families throughout the year. We would like to extend many thanks to all of the companies, groups, families, and individuals who chose to host a Wish List Drive for our families during the 2012 Holiday Season. Pictured here is Denny Parisan of County Corvette, with the toys collected at their annual drive.

4 Mustache Fundraiser
Thank you to Joseph Greene and his brother-in-law Robert J. Shafer who successfully raised $2,750 for the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House with their mustache fundraiser!

5 Guest Chefs
In 2012, 1,139 home-cooked meals were served to our families by volunteer Guest Chef Groups. Our families often don’t have the extra time, resources, or energy to prepare or purchase a meal. Coming home after an exhausting day at the hospital to a fully prepared meal makes a huge difference in a family’s day. Thank you to all of the groups who contributed meals to our Chestnut Street House, Front and Erie House, and our Family Rooms. Pictured here is a volunteer Guest Chef group from Williams Sonoma, King of Prussia, after cooking a delicious meal for our families. To view a complete list of our Guest Chef groups, visit www.philarmh.org/guestchef.

6 2012 Share A Night Celebration
In honor of the generosity and support we receive from our friends in the community, both of our Houses were decorated with thousands of twinkling lights, each representing a donor’s gift. Thank you to all of the individuals, organizations, and businesses who helped to give the gift of home to families in need over the holiday season.
If you would prefer to receive our quarterly newsletter electronically, please email enews@philarmh.org and let us know!

In addition to the Phillies Game on May 14, join us over the summer for three other games benefitting the House on August 6, August 19, and September 3. Visit www.philarmh.org/phillies for more information and to purchase your tickets today!

UPCOMING EVENTS

March 27—Fourth Annual CBS3 & CW Philly “Change the Luck of a Child” Phone Bank
May 5—Fifth Annual Plane Pull®
May 14—Phillies Game to Support the House
May 16—Fashion Show at Bloomingdale’s
June 3—Hit ‘Em For the House Golf Outing
June 5—Hit ‘Em For the House Tennis Outing

For more information on our upcoming events, and to purchase your tickets to attend, please visit www.philarmh.org/events