Ronald McDonald Camp Changed My Life

"On Christmas Night of 2011, about two months after she was admitted to hospice care, Mom died. Every girl believes her mother to be invincible. Cancer killed my hero. With my entire being, I believed that the only thing cancer did was take away the people I loved. Ronald McDonald Camp drastically shifted my views.

A month after my mother died, I was diagnosed with Osteosarcoma—a form of bone cancer.

The most pivotal experience in my lifetime was participation in the Ronald McDonald Camp. At camp, for the first time since my diagnosis, I felt like a regular kid. It was invigorating to go a week without having to explain why my head was bald or why I had a pronounced limp due to a limb salvage. I didn’t feel isolated because everyone there was the same as me.

I know kids from grade school and high school and we have things in common that keep us together, like music or silly jokes. But, the kids I know from camp and I have a much deeper understanding of each other. These similarities have granted me lifelong friends. Camp has taught me that people can overcome cancer. Cancer doesn’t always win. Camp introduced me to kids with cancer who are surviving. I look forward to becoming a CIT this summer in hopes of giving to campers what camp infinitely does for me.”

—Courtney Simmons, Age 18

Although Courtney only spent one summer at Ronald McDonald Camp, her plans of becoming a Counselor in Training (CIT) will enable her to attend Camp in a different capacity in the years ahead, and will allow her to give new and returning campers the support and strength they need to thrive.

Whether campers arrive for the first time at age seven and return year after year, or like Courtney, arrive at age seventeen with just one week to understand what Camp is all about, they are sure to experience the fun, friendship, and freedom from being different that Ronald McDonald Camp has to offer.

With your support, we can ensure that children like Courtney can enjoy just being kids, no matter what they face. To learn more, visit www.philarmh.org/Camp.
Fourth Annual “Change the Luck of a Child” Phone Bank

Ronald McDonald House Charities (RMHC) of the Philadelphia Region hosted its fourth annual Phone Bank on Wednesday, March 27, from 6am to 8pm on CBS3 and The CW Philly. We had an amazing response from the community raising over $1,000,000 to directly support the programs at the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House and the Ronald McDonald Houses of Delaware and Southern New Jersey. In addition, proceeds support local high school scholarships and other local community grants managed in the region by RMHC.

Thank you to all of the callers and supporters, and a very special thank you to all of our valued partners who sponsored this year’s Phone Bank. To view a full list of the 2013 sponsors, visit www.philarmh.org/PBSponsors.

Many thanks to the individuals and organizations who volunteered their time answering the phones and collecting pledges.

This August we will open our doors to nearly 200 children with cancer and their siblings who have been waiting every day for this very special week...”

Message From The President

Dear Friends,

It’s hard to believe that summer is here and it is time to once again get ready for a program that is especially near and dear to my heart: Ronald McDonald Camp.

As we have done for the past 27 years, this August we will open our doors to nearly 200 children with cancer and their siblings who have been waiting every day for this very special week of fun, camaraderie, and independence. As you read in the cover story, Ronald McDonald Camp means so very much to campers like Courtney who have struggled with an illness that no one—especially a child—should ever have to face. Our overnight camp in the Poconos allows these children to face their illness together and truly know that they are never alone; it also allows them to just let go and be free to have fun for one precious week of the year. That’s perhaps the best medicine we could give.

Every year, I personally witness the deep impact camp has on children who spend so much of their time struggling with tests and treatment and feeling different. And every year, I feel so grateful and humbled to be a part of such a magical and life-changing experience. I also feel lucky to be a part of our phenomenal team of volunteer camp counselors and medical staff who dedicate a week of their summer vacation to help bring smiles and laughter to children who truly deserve to have a break.

You too can become a part of the magic of Ronald McDonald Camp and I hope that you will. Your gift of $500 adopts a camper for a full week, but any amount will go a long way in helping to make camp an unforgettable experience for a child like Courtney. Just complete and return the enclosed envelope or go online to www.philarmh.org/Camp.

I hope you and your family have a safe and wonderful summer. We can’t thank you enough for your all of your support over the first half of 2013 and look forward to the year ahead.

Regards,

Marlene Weinberg,
President of the Board
Making Mornings Easier At The Chestnut Street House

Grabbing a healthy bite to eat in the morning has recently gotten a little easier for families at our Chestnut Street House. Thanks to our Healthy Breakfast Program—made possible from a generous start-up grant from ACE Charitable Foundation—families can enjoy portable, nutritious continental breakfast items to help sustain them during long days at the hospital. The program—which kicked off in December of 2012—has been a big help to moms like Julie Kobi, of New York City.

Julie and her two-year-old daughter Suzie have been staying at the House for more than a month while her son David—who was born 13 weeks premature—receives care at The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia. She especially appreciates that the breakfast items can be easily brought to the hospital. “Any food here has been a great help for us but the breakfast program in particular is really nice because you can take things to go. Usually in the morning the doctors are on rounds so it is really important to be able to get to the hospital as fast as you can,” explains Julie. “It seems like the program really thought about everything so that you can literally take what you need and just go.”

Julie also appreciates the program’s emphasis on healthy food choices. “The snacks are healthy and that is really good because it is really easy to get caught up in grabbing things that are fast and not always healthy. Now, having a two-year-old, you want to make sure you make healthy choices, especially because we are going to be here for a while,” she says. “It is a great program.”

Want to help support families like the Kobis? We are currently recruiting Breakfast Buddy groups of up to four people to provide continental breakfast as part of the program. Groups come to the Chestnut Street House between 7pm and 8:30pm Sundays through Thursdays and are responsible for purchasing, preparing, and setting up breakfast items including yogurts, fresh fruit and fruit salad, single serve oatmeal and cereal cups, and whole grain baked goods. Breakfast Buddy Maria Paparo, who volunteered twice as part of ACE employee groups, found participating in the program to be very rewarding.

“To say this was a humbling experience would be a gross understatement,” says Maria. “To observe the families and children touches your heart in such a beautiful way. I could not imagine a better place to be, doing what we were doing for them.”

For more information or to sign up to volunteer, visit www.philarmh.org/breakfastbuddies or contact Lori-Anne Miller at lori-anne@philarmh.org.

Making Mornings Easier At The Chestnut Street House

Coming Fall Of 2013
Served with Love—Recipes from the Guest Chefs of the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House

We are pleased to announce the production of a Guest Chef inspired cookbook in support of the families we serve. This unique cookbook will consist of 150 delicious recipes developed by the volunteer Guest Chefs of the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House. Led by a dedicated volunteer committee, the production of the cookbook is scheduled to be complete in October 2013—just in time for holiday gifting!

Companies that are interested in pre-ordering bulk quantities of cookbooks for client or employee holiday gifts can contact Jeanette Woehr at jeanette@philarmh.org to place an order today.

If you would like to support the production of the cookbook and ensure that 100% of the cookbook proceeds benefit the families of the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House, consider becoming a cookbook sponsor or patron. Patron support starts at $100 and includes one free cookbook. For more information on sponsorship opportunities please visit: www.philarmh.org/cookbook.
15 years ago, Sue Wenger knew that she wanted to do something to support the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House. Sue’s father was friends with Jimmy Murray—co-founder of the House—so she was aware of the organization’s work to help families of seriously ill children. “It had always held a special place in my heart,” she says.

After a brief brainstorming phone call, Sue committed to funding the annual carnival at Ronald McDonald Camp. As a result, for the past decade and a half, Sue’s continued support has made it possible for all of the campers have a fun-filled culminating event at the end of their camp week. “The kids love it and they look forward to it,” she says. “It just makes me so happy to be able to do that.”

Over the years, Sue—who spends time at camp each August—has seen firsthand how important camp is for all of the campers. “It is an amazing, amazing place for kids,” she says. “You see their faces and they are smiling and not worrying. Unless you have witnessed it, you just can’t imagine. And once you’ve seen it—what a difference it makes in the kids’ lives—you can’t turn your back on it.”

Sue’s love of camp prompted her to get even further involved with the House, and five years ago she was asked to join the Board of Directors. Today, she plays a vital role in many events and fundraising campaigns as a board member, including having served as a past Philadelphia magazine Design Home Co-Chair.

Sue has found being a part of the board to be very rewarding. “Being a board member has enabled me to develop relationships with others who share my passion for this incredible organization and our desire to assure its continued success,” she says. “When you see the appreciation of the parents and what a difference this has made in their lives and their children’s lives—their sick children and their well children—it makes you want to do more. Their lives would not be the same if the Ronald McDonald House weren’t here.”

Based on her experience, Sue encourages anyone considering volunteering for or supporting the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House to take the leap and get involved. “Do it. Whatever time you have to contribute is valuable,” she says. “Believe me when I say giving is truly a gift to oneself, particularly when it involves the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House.”

**Toy Trains In Motion—Celebrating a 25 Year Partnership**

If you have visited either one of the two Houses, you have probably stopped by to admire the toy train displays in the kitchen. This year we are celebrating a long-standing partnership with Toy Trains in Motion, the group of volunteers who donated and maintain these wonderful train displays. In fact, the train at the Chestnut Street House has been bringing joy to our families for 25 years, and in 2008, when the Front & Erie House opened, another beautiful train display brings smiles to the faces of everyone who passes by.

Paul Fenn, the leader of the Toy Trains in Motion volunteer group, describes the train displays as a form of entertainment for the families. The interactive displays have multiple controls allowing families to interact with the scene including turning on lights, operating different tracks, and probably the most favored control—blowing the train whistle. Each of the four seasons, volunteers come in to change the scenery in the display, creating a new world behind the glass for our families to enjoy. “I can recall a moment almost every day when I am passing through the kitchen and see one of the children staying at our House pressing a button to make the train move around the track or blow the train whistle. And every time, it brings a smile to their face,” says Susan Campbell, Executive Director of the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House.

The trains in both Houses are running 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days of the year. Our long standing partnership with Toy Trains in Motion is one that we value tremendously. We would like to thank Paul Fenn and the other Toy Trains in Motion volunteers for 25 years of dedication to our families! We are looking forward to 25 more.

**Run For The House With TEAM PRMH**

For the third year in a row, the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House has been selected as one of the 2013 Philadelphia Marathon charity partner and is putting together a team to run for the House! As part of TEAM PRMH, in exchange for training and support, you can help raise money to support families and children in a time of need.

If you’re interested becoming a part of TEAM PRMH for the 2013 Philadelphia Marathon (8k, half, or full) please visit: [www.philarmh.org/TEAMPRMH](http://www.philarmh.org/TEAMPRMH) today or email Jen Shipman at jenshipman@philarmh.org.
Thank You to our 2013 Adopt A Room Donors

The generosity of our Adopt A Room donors allows us to create a community of comfort and hope for our families.

- The 1830 Family Foundation
- Anonymous
- Aramark Conference Centers
- In Loving Memory of Alexa C. Artis
- The Board of Directors of the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House
- CJR Memorial Foundation
- CSL Behring
- Joel and Matthew Damron
- Di Bruno Bros.
- DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Philadelphia Center City
- ERT, Inc.
- The Ferro Family Hope Brings Strength
- Gemini Bakery Equipment
- Dena and Morey Goldberg
- The Goldenberg Group & People Helping People Foundation
- The Goldstein, Liss and Pecarsky Families
- Guidi Homes, Inc.
- I.B.E.W. Local Union 98
- In Celebration of the Marriages of Claire & Zack Palmer and Emily & Aaron Kittell
- Keystone Foods
- La-Z-Boy of Philadelphia
- Marsh
- Medical ID MarketPlace by Hope Paige
- MK Mechanical Services, Inc.
- The Montufar Family
- NSM Insurance Group
- Denny Parisan and the County Corvette Toy Drive
- Philadelphia Insurance Companies
- Philadelphia magazine
- Pilot Freight Services
- The Joseph Plamitallo Memorial Foundation
- In Memory of Marvin Presser
- Reed Smith, LLP
- Ronald McDonald House Charities of the Philadelphia Region
- Shari & Mark Rosenberg
- Paul Sabelli Family
- Salli & Stephen
- Anne C. Scardino—Belle Maison Design, LLC
- Schultz & Williams
- Shelly Electric Co., Inc.
- Torcon, Inc
- Turner Investments, Inc.
- UAS
- Van Aken Family Foundation
- Weinberg Management
- Wylie’s Day Foundation
- Yards Brewing Company

If you are interested in learning more about the Adopt A Room program, and would like more information on how you can sponsor a room in 2014, contact Jen Shipman at JenShipman@philarmh.org.

Join Us For A Night Out At The Ballpark To Cheer On The Phillies!

We have three games left this season to support the House:

August 6 vs. Chicago Cubs
August 19 vs. Colorado Rockies
September 3 vs. Washington Nationals

Tickets are just $30 each and include a coupon for a hot dog and soda at the ballpark, and a McDonald’s sandwich. Seats are in the Terrace level.

Makes a great night out for you and your friends, or a much-appreciated gift for employees or clients—plus proceeds from the ticket sales benefit our families!

For more information and to purchase your tickets to attend, please visit www.philarmh.org/phillies.
1 Read for Ronald
All throughout the month of February, students from 40 local elementary and middle schools read to support our families through the 76ers Read for Ronald program. This year, participating students raised over $93,000 by collecting pledges for the minutes they read. Penn Wynne Elementary School was the top fundraising school, collecting over $10,600 in donations. Thank you to all of the students who read this year to support PRMH!

2 Farm Bureau’s Food Checkout Day
We would like to thank the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau for supporting us again through their annual Food Check-Out Day. Each year, local farmers in our area gather food and monetary contributions to make sure our families have fresh, nutritious food throughout the year. This year, members of the PA Farm Bureau presented a check for over $16,000 to the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House. Pictured here is Co-founder, Jimmy Murray, speaking at Freddie Hill Farms to a group of generous donors.

3 Ferrari Event
In association with the Ferrari Club of America, Algar Ferrari of Philadelphia hosted an event on Wednesday, April 17 to benefit the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House. At the event, a very special Ferrari detailed for the Ferrari Club of America’s 50th Birthday was showcased, complete with a Ronald McDonald House logo. Pictured here is Susan Campbell, Executive Director of the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House, with the touring Ferrari.

4 Philadelphia magazine’s Philly Cooks
In February, Philadelphia foodies gathered for a taste of Philly’s finest culinary establishments. As the beneficiary of the event, the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House was presented with a very generous $15,000 donation from Philadelphia magazine.

5 3rd Annual Souderton Area High School Zumba Fundraiser
The students from the Souderton Area High School hosted their 3rd Annual Zumba Fundraiser for Philadelphia Ronald McDonald Camp’s Adopt-a-Camper Program this February. The students were able to raise and generously donate over $5,000 from this event, which will adopt 10 campers!

6 Band of Brewers competition
We would like to recognize Yards Brewing Company and their talented employees for their efforts in the Band of Brewers competition in February. Yards chose the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House as their charity to compete for, and won the ‘battle of the bands’ style competition, raising $3,220 for the families we serve.

7 Cardiac 5th Birthday
On March 20, the Ronald McDonald Family Room in the Cardiac Center of The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia celebrated its fifth year of operation with a superhero themed party for the families on the sixth floor. We would like to thank the Water Works Restaurant for providing the delicious food for the party and Icing Smiles for donating the festive cake. The Cardiac Family Room provides comprehensive and compassionate hospitality and support to cardiac patient’s families while they are providing care and support to their child in the hospital.
Guest Chef Spotlight

Pictured here is a volunteer Guest Chef group from Zurich North America. Our friends at Zurich have been preparing meals for our families at the Chestnut Street House for the past few years, and are one of many groups who help ensure our families have a home-cooked meal waiting for them when they return from the hospital every night.

If you and your group would like to become Guest Chefs and help make sure meals are provided every night for the families who stay at our Houses, please visit www.philarmh.org/guestchef to learn more and to sign up, as well as to view a complete list of previous Guest Chef Groups.
“I believed that the only thing cancer did was take away the people I loved. Ronald McDonald Camp drastically shifted my views.”

—Courtney Simmons

(continue reading on front cover)