Abed was standing at the doorway of his house when the first rocket hit. The 11-year-old, who was living in Northern Syria, ran outside to see what happened. Then the second rocket hit, severely injuring Abed. The fourth-grader was taken to a makeshift hospital where his left leg was amputated at the knee. “They did whatever they could do,” explains Abed’s 22-year-old brother Omar.

After two days, Abed returned home where his family began to care for him. However, Omar knew he wanted to do more for his little brother, who until that point had dreamt of becoming a professional soccer player. “I made him a promise that we were going to do something about this,” says Omar.

Omar started reaching out to organizations for help. Doctors at the makeshift hospital suggested he try contacting Global Medical Relief Fund (GMRF), a Staten Island-based non-profit that supports children missing limbs due to conflict and other disasters. The organization agreed to help, and Omar began making plans to leave Syria with Abed.

Early one morning, the two brothers took a car as close as they could to the Turkish border. Once there, Omar carried Abed and their belongings in his arms until they were safely inside Turkey. “We were lucky that day,” says Omar. In Turkey, the brothers began the long process to obtain permission to enter the United States for treatment; after nearly four months, they were approved. “If we didn’t have a strong will, we wouldn’t be here,” says Omar, who was finally able to keep his promise to Abed.

Abed did not know what to expect when he found out he was traveling to America. “He had no idea about the U.S.,” says Omar. “He asked, ‘What’s the United States?’ I told him, ‘It has very high buildings and lots of technology. You’re going to have a lot of fun.’”

At first, Abed and Omar stayed in housing provided by GMRF in New York while they travelled to Shriners Hospital in Philadelphia for care. Then, in February, they checked into the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House at Front & Erie. Since arriving, Abed has undergone three skin graft surgeries as well as intensive physical therapy.

Staying at the House has made a very difficult journey a little easier for Abed and Omar. “It’s a nice place. It has everything,” says Abed, who has learned to speak English since coming to the U.S. His favorite activity is playing soccer on Xbox with Omar in the video game room. The brothers have also had the chance to go to a Union soccer game, as well as a Phillies and 76ers game. Abed has also had the opportunity to make friends with many of the other children in the house, several of whom are also receiving orthopedic treatment at Shriners.

After five months, Abed and Omar’s mother Seham came to join them at the House. “This is a very nice place for my mom,” says Omar, who notes that the provided meals are especially valuable. “She doesn’t even have to cook here. She can cook, but she doesn’t have to. She has options.” Seham agrees that the House has been very helpful. “Everything is good,” she says. “Literally everything is very nice here—the people, the service. It is a calm, quiet place.”

At the end of October, Abed and his mother checked out of the House after an eight-month stay to travel to Turkey where Abed’s older sister lives. If the situation allows, they will return to their home in Syria where Abed’s father and seven other siblings are. Omar decided to stay in Philadelphia to finish his college degree—something he was unable to complete in Syria. The plan is for Abed, who enjoys living in both Syria and the United States, to return for follow-up care and potentially move with his brother. “I would like to live in both places but I can’t,” explains Abed.

After overcoming so many challenges in the past year, Omar and Abed are looking forward to the future. “Abed got the best medical treatment he could ever get and that was our goal,” says Omar. “Sometimes you go through tough stuff but ultimately when you achieve good things you feel happy and forget whatever you went through. It is just the past. We can just start from zero again.”

If you would like to help families like Abed’s this holiday season, visit www.philarmh.org to make a donation or learn more about how to get involved.
Message From the Executive Director

For so many, nothing is more comforting than the understanding ear of someone who knows exactly what you are going through during a difficult time. You don’t have to be afraid that you are sharing too much and you know that the person you are talking with can truly relate through similar experience. Time and time again this unique source of comfort is what families describe as the most valuable aspect of the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House. Creating a caring, supportive environment that brings people together is always at the very core of our focus, and is the very foundation of what our co-founder Dr. Audrey Evans first envisioned: a place where families could stay when traveling to Philadelphia for medical care that was so much more than just a place to sleep. For this reason, this summer, Ronald McDonald House Charities presented Dr. Evans with the “Heritage Award,” as thousands of Ronald McDonald House staff from around the world took a moment to honor her vision and commitment to families of seriously ill children.

It is our goal each and every day to continue to serve consistent with Dr. Evan’s vision. We are so grateful that our community of supporters have embraced this mission as well and have supported our efforts this year to expand our services through the opening of our Hospitality Kiosk at St. Christopher’s Hospital for Children, the creation of the Chestnut Street Healthy breakfast program, the implementation of our Creative Play art and music therapy program specially designed to include children receiving orthopedic care, and the renovation of two lounges into guest bedrooms at our Front & Erie House to serve more families.

Our work must continue. Although the calendar year is coming to an end, illness is not and our doors will continue to be open to thousands of families in the upcoming year. We are proud of what we have been able to achieve this year and strive to accomplish more to serve our families. We ask that you remain by our side and support us through this Season of Giving. Please consider returning the enclosed donation envelope or making a donation online at www.philarmh.org to help us continue to support our families.

With Sincere Gratitude,

Susan Campbell

Executive Director

Welcome

We would like to extend a warm welcome to Lawrence Jacobson, our new Director of Leadership Giving. Lawrence comes to us with a seven year background in non-profit development. Most recently, he was employed at the Salvation Army as the Donor Relations Director. Lawrence will be focused on major and planned gifts for the organization.

Lawrence Jacobson
Director of Leadership Giving

Save the Date

October 17, 2014
Simeone Automotive Museum
Featuring a performance by the Midtown Men
(four of the original cast members of Jersey Boys)
In August, we were thrilled to unveil a brand new program for families at our Front & Erie House. The Creative Play Arts Therapy initiative is an art and music therapy program implemented through an exciting partnership with the non-profit Kardon Institute for Arts Therapy. Twice a week, the program engages families in group creative arts workshops to help children and their families enhance their overall well-being during treatment. The program is facilitated by trained arts therapists and is designed to be inclusive of the many children we serve who are receiving treatment for orthopedic conditions or injuries—currently our top service area at Front & Erie.

The first month of the program was made possible through a generous donation from Philadelphia Adult League Softball and we are currently looking for donors to sponsor future weeks or months! Want to help? Contact Kelly O’Connor at kelly@philarmh.org for more information or to make a donation.

Board Member Spotlight: Jon Hitchcock

Board Member Jon Hitchcock knew he wanted to run a marathon. “I was tired of saying I can’t do that,” Jon says. “On a personal level, I made a commitment that I was going to do it.” When Executive Director Susan Campbell asked at a board meeting if anyone was interested in running to support the House in the Philadelphia Marathon, Jon immediately said yes—signing on to run the grueling 26.2 miles for the very first time. “I raised my hand and said, ‘I’m all in.’ It was a no brainer.”

Committing to a marathon was not the first time Jon has gone above and beyond for the House. As President and General Manager of CBS 3/CW in Philadelphia, he was instrumental in the creation of the annual Ronald McDonald House Charities “Change the Luck of a Child” Phone Bank that benefits the Philadelphia House as well as the Delaware and Southern New Jersey Houses. The concept of an on-air phone bank originated through talks with Mike Anton and John Durante, McDonald’s owner operators and longtime leaders within Ronald McDonald House Charities of the Philadelphia Region.

“We wanted to take a part of the day, dedicate that to the Ronald McDonald House and why it’s so important, and illustrate some of the stories through families and children and show what makes it so special to them,” says Jon. “We are able to raise tangible dollars but it is also the opportunity for us to tell the story and raise awareness of how instrumental the Ronald McDonald Houses are in this region.” Now in its fourth year, the Phone Bank raised over a million dollars this past March.

Since joining the Board in 2010, Jon has continually helped to promote the mission of the House to a broader audience. “From a media standpoint, the greatest reward is figuring out how to use the power of television to amplify the brand and showcase the great story of the House and the families and share that with the communities that we serve,” he says. “That to me is the biggest attraction of being involved: looking at a great organization and how well run it is and trying to raise the game, raise the brand and the profile, and share the stories that are so heartfelt.”

Jon first became involved with the Ronald McDonald House community through his work with another television station in Connecticut. When he moved to this market five years ago, he decided to continue his affiliation. “With families going through such stressful circumstances with their child, it is a wonderful feeling that you can help remove a tremendous amount of that stress,” he says. “Families have the accommodations, the recreation, and the services that the House offers and that allows them to focus on the most important aspect which is caring for their child.”

After weeks of intense training, on November 17 Jon crossed the finish line of the Philadelphia Marathon. Not only did he complete the race; he also came in as our number one fundraiser on Team PRMH raising $8,000. During the last part of the race, the thoughts of the families he was helping to support along with the encouragement of those on the sidelines kept him going. “I was at the marathon dinner with my wife and kids the night before the race and there was a mother speaking about the necessity of the House for families that are going through difficult times,” says Jon. “That was the stuff that was going through my head in the last mile.”

Jon encourages anyone considering supporting the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House to get involved. “Anything that involves children and families in crisis that you can be a solution towards, you can’t say no.”
Thank You to all of our 2013 Adopt A Camper Donors

Adopt-A-Pig
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Mr. and Mrs. Brad Aronson
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Mrs. Catherine P. Bass
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Due to space limitations, we are unable to list donations of less than $500. Heartfelt thanks to all donors for so generously supporting our camp program!

To see more photos from Ronald McDonald Camp 2013, please visit www.philarmh.org/RMCphotos.
A Note From A Camper

Dear Donor,

Thank you so much for allowing me to go to camp! It is honestly the highlight of my summer. If you’ve ever been to camp, you understand the amount of love and care that flows through the air all week! If you haven’t, imagine being surrounded by hundreds of people who you may or may not know that will be friends with you from a simple “hello”. It’s an amazing experience and it really is the ‘bright side’ of having cancer. Thanks again!

- RMC 2013 Camper

Introducing Two New Partners

The Container Store

The Original Storage and Organization Store®

We are very excited to announce our new partnership with the nation’s originator and leading retailer of storage and organization products: The Container Store®!

The Container Store has generously selected the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House as its charity partner for the Grand Opening of its new store in King Of Prussia. As the charity partner, PRMH will receive 10% of total Grand Opening Weekend Sales. Grand Opening weekend is scheduled for Saturday, March 8 and Sunday, March 9, 2014. We hope you will mark your calendars and join us in welcoming The Container Store to the community.

Pet360:

Pet Parenting. Simplified.

Pet360:

Save $10 And Pet360 Will Donate $10 To The Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House

Now through December 31, place an order of $60 or more on www.Pet360.com and get $10 off your bill, receive free shipping, and Pet360 will make a $10 donation to the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House! Just use code the promotional code PRMH10 at checkout. Pet360 makes pet parenting easier by providing expert advice, an active community of pet parents, and the convenience of home shopping all in one place. We would like to thank Pet360 for their partnership!
We’re So Thankful For...

1. **Bob & Ron’s World Wide Stereo Donation**
   We would like to thank Bob & Ron’s World Wide Stereo, in partnership with Kaliedescape, Inc. for donating state of the art home theater equipment to our Front & Erie House. Thanks to our generous partners, this new equipment will allow our families to access every DVD in the Ronald McDonald House DVD library without having to sign out hard copies at the desk, any time of the day or night.

2. **Ronald Cup**
   In September, the McDonald’s Women’s Leadership Network of the Philadelphia Region hosted their third annual Ronald Cup. The Ronald Cup was a day filled with sports challenges and team competitions. This great event brought in approximately $9,000 for the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House. Special thanks to the WLN of Philadelphia for organizing the event!

3. **Dareoke**
   We would like to thank all of the participants and the generous donors that supported this year’s Dareoke event at Di Bruno Bros. Together we were able to raise over $4,700. Thank you to Di Bruno Bros., Rob Calvert of 102.9 WMGK, and Yards Brewing Company for making this year’s Dareoke such a success!

4. **Run for the House 5K**
   Many thanks to the Delaware County Bar Association for coordinating the third annual 5K Run for the House at Ridley Creek State Park in September. The Delaware County Bar Association brought in over $5,000 for the families staying at the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House.

5. **Conkerr Cancer Event at the Oncology Family Room**
   In September, ConKerr Cancer hosted their annual pajama party at the Ronald McDonald Family Room on the Oncology Floor of The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia. We would like to thank ConKerr Cancer for volunteering their time to help oncology patients, siblings, and parents sew beautiful pillowcases and for the delicious meal provided.

6. **EcoMedia Event**
   On Tuesday, October 15—the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House’s 39th birthday—a special ribbon cutting event celebrated the addition of new energy efficient windows at the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House at Chestnut Street. The renovations were made possible thanks to the support from the Philadelphia Tri-State Toyota Dealers Association’s advertising through (EcoMediaCBS) CBS EcoMedia’s EcoAd program.

7. **Cookbook Launch Party**
   We are so pleased to announce the release of our cookbook, *Served with Love—Recipes from the Guest Chefs of the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House*. This new cookbook consists of over 100 delicious recipes that are sure to please you as much as they do our families when prepared by our Guest Chef volunteers. Donna Kelly and Donna Storm, who contributed recipes to the book, are pictured here at the Cookbook launch party. To purchase your copy, visit www.philarmh.org/cookbook.
Donations From The Heart (7/1/2013 - 9/30/2013)

$25,000 and above
The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia
Philaympics
Ronald McDonald House Charities Innovation Award
Ronald McDonald House Charities of the Philadelphia Region

$10,000 to $24,999
2013 US Open
Lehigh Valley All-Stars Football Game
Louis and Bessie Stein Foundation

$5,000 to $9,999
American Endowment Foundation
Ms. Lorraine F. Brut
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$1,000 to $4,999
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PeopleShare

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

Breakfast Buddy Volunteer Spotlight: GlaxoSmithKline

We would like to thank GlaxoSmithKline for donating their time in our kitchen to help with our Healthy Breakfast Program.

Would you like to be a Breakfast Buddy? We are always looking for groups to volunteer. Volunteer Breakfast Buddies are responsible for purchasing and/or preparing all of the items that will be available at the next morning’s breakfast. Items are made available to families the next morning so that they can grab items on their way to the hospital. To learn more about this fun group opportunity please visit www.philarmh.org/BreakfastBuddies.

“The breakfast was a nice addition. It cut at least 30 minutes of preparation time before having to be at my daughter’s appointment today. Thank you so much for a healthy meal and the needed rest.”

—PRMH Family
Abed was standing at the doorway of his house when the first rocket hit. The 11-year-old, who was living in Northern Syria, ran outside to see what happened. Then the second rocket hit, severely injuring Abed. The fourth-grader was taken to a makeshift hospital where his left leg was amputated at the knee. “They did whatever they could do,” explains Abed’s 22-year-old brother Omar.

Continue reading on the front cover…