The Power of Friendship

If you didn’t know otherwise, you would think Joseph Patterson, 10, and Giovanni Cascio, 9, were brothers. Their personalities, interests, and mannerisms are so similar that it is endearing to everyone who meets them at the Front & Erie House. You might even see these two on a day when they have matching casts on their legs—confirming that their bond goes deeper than most friendships. Born with arthrogryposis, a neuromusculoskeletal disorder that affects various joints in the body, both boys are in wheelchairs and are currently undergoing painful surgeries and castings to improve their condition.

Joseph was adopted from Ukraine and now lives in Jasper, Texas with his parents and four siblings. In October 2014, he underwent his first corrective surgery on each joint in both legs and has to have two castings a week on his legs until they are stable enough for further treatment. “We came to the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House in October when Joseph had his first surgery and really enjoyed our initial stay,” says Joseph’s mother, Amanda. “We never have to worry about transportation to Shriners Hospital for Children, food, or where we will sleep each night—the Ronald McDonald House takes care of everything for us.”

Giovanni’s families that is what makes the House so special. “The Ronald McDonald House lifts the dread of diagnosis and gives us hope,” says Dean. “These boys feel good seeing people just like them and for us parents, there’s nothing like witnessing that.”

Nowadays, the boys can’t wait for their visits to Philadelphia and the Patterson and Cascio families stay in touch to coordinate appointments so they can visit with each other. “The other day, the boys had a casting and they were texting each other throughout the entire appointment,” says Amanda. “It’s a very painful process, but they lift each other’s spirits.” The time spent outside of the hospital setting is time well-spent; the boys have enjoyed a Halloween at the House, evenings doing art and music activities, watching movies, visiting with Stella and Lil’ Abner—the beloved therapy dogs, and playing video games and with army figurines. When asked what each boy thinks of the other they cheerfully responded, “I think Giovanni is funny and so nice,” says Joseph. “I think Joseph is friendly and helpful,” says Giovanni.

There is no doubt that the power of friendship has the ability to see people through their toughest days, and the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House is privileged to provide a place of comfort and hope where friendships can grow. As Dean Cascio says, “people need to know that this House provides so much more than just a place to stay; it provides support in every sense of the word for families like ours, and for children like ours. We are grateful for the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House and its supporters who make this service possible. I think I can speak on behalf of all of the families here when I say, thank you for making our lives a little easier as we go through this medical journey.”

To read more about the families the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House supports, visit www.philarmh.org/familystories

The Ronald McDonald House lifts the dread of diagnosis and gives us hope.”

During their first ultrasound, Giovanni’s parents knew something wasn’t right with their unborn son. “Doctors told us that Giovanni had amnioplasia, the most common form of arthrogryposis,” says Giovanni’s father, Dean. As their son’s medical needs evolved over the years, the Cascios decided to pursue care with Dr. Van Bosse, an orthopedic surgeon at Shriners who has dedicated his career to helping children with this complex condition. In October, Giovanni and his mother, Michelle, traveled from their home in Idaho to Philadelphia to stay at the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House.

Prior to coming to the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House, Joseph had never met another child with arthrogryposis. Giovanni had attended the Arthrogryposis Multiplex Congenita Support, Inc. Convention, where he met many other children just like him. Although both families are involved in support groups online which provide insight, tips, and encouragement, there is nothing like meeting another family in-person who is going through the exact same struggles. The Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House is a place where families can come together, where sorrows and victories, big and small, can be shared openly and for Joseph and Giovanni (left) and Giovanni (right).
Message From The President

Dear Friends,

As I walk through the House, the warm and incredible aroma of food being prepared by our generous Guest Chef group makes me feel so good. And, as you can imagine it makes our families feel good too—knowing that they can always depend on this House as a pillar of strength and comfort. It brings me great joy to know that we can provide families who are going through the most difficult time of their lives with the support they need so their focus can remain on their seriously ill child. The Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House will take care of everything else.

Providing an all-inclusive sanctuary for families who are going through a medical crisis makes a world of difference in the long-term well-being of both children and parents. In fact, a study conducted by Ronald McDonald House Charities® (RMHC®) confirms the benefits of a holistic approach to care for a sick child and their family. We can all imagine, having a critically ill child is extremely stressful for a family and studies show that Ronald McDonald Houses help their guests strengthen coping abilities by keeping families together. That’s not all. In a survey of 250 families, researchers found that children and their parents who stayed at a Ronald McDonald House had a better perceived quality of life than expected for children with chronic diseases.

I know I can speak on behalf of our Board, staff, and volunteers when I say it is a true honor to serve the families at the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House. I have heard this phrase many times, “I never thought this would happen to me,” and while we cannot alter the circumstance of a child’s health, we can do whatever it takes to keep a family comfortable and to provide assistance when it matters most. Please know that your support plays a critical role in our ongoing success. As you will see in this issue, we highlight our 40th Anniversary Celebration which garnered much-needed funding for our programming and we thank you for supporting this monumental event.

We simply cannot do what we do without the kindness of our donors. Please take a moment to look at pages eight and nine for impact results for the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House. It is my sincerest hope that these measurements deepen your belief in our mission and provide you with renewed inspiration to continue supporting us in 2015 and beyond.

With Gratitude,

Marcene Weinberg, President of the Board

Did you know?

Studies confirm the benefits of a holistic approach to care for a sick child and their family.

5 Way You Can Help PRMH in 2015

1. Volunteer: Our volunteers are the heart of the House and we provide a variety of fulfilling volunteer opportunities. To learn more, please contact Linda Perry, Director of Volunteers, at lindap@philarmh.org

2. Donate: It costs upwards of $100 per family per night to provide the comforts of PRMH, but we only ask families for a $15 donation each day. Unfortunately, two-thirds of the families we serve are so financially devastated that they are unable to make that payment. To make a secure donation online today, visit www.philarmh.org/donate

3. Host a Fundraiser: Your event can benefit PRMH and the thousands of families that we serve each year. For more information, please contact Chris Callanan, Director of Events and Corporate Development, at chris@philarmh.org

4. Collect Tabs: Since its inception in 1997, the Soda Tab program has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars to help the families we serve. Tabs can be dropped off any day of the week between 9:00 am and 8:00 pm to the Chestnut Street House on 3925 Chestnut Street in Philadelphia. For more information, please contact Jenny Casey, Special Events Coordinator, at jenny@philarmh.org

5. Become a Corporate Partner: Show community goodwill and corporate responsibility by making a positive impact on the lives of seriously ill children and their families. There are numerous ways for your business to support our work. For more information, please contact Chris Callanan, Director of Events and Corporate Development, at chris@philarmh.org

Celebrating 10 Years of Service: An Executive Director’s Point of View

This year marks Susan Campbell’s 20th anniversary at the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House. We are grateful for her dedication, enthusiasm, and foresight as she celebrates this milestone.

How did you get started with the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House?

I moved to Philadelphia in late 2000 and had always been committed to volunteering in my community, so when I heard about an opportunity to help at the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House I was excited to get started. In July 2001, I interviewed to volunteer at the Chestnut Street House and thereafter started volunteering my time on Sunday evenings from six to nine at the front desk and as a van driver. I found that my time spent at the House was the most rewarding three hours of my entire week. At the time, I knew that my career was not the right fit for me and volunteering at PRMH helped me realize that I had a deep connection to working within an organization where I can directly impact and help people. The mission of our organization is so impactful to me. In September 2004, I joined the staff at PRMH and during the first three years I held many positions with varying roles and responsibilities. In November 2007, I became the Executive Director.

How has the House changed over the past 10 years?

When I was a volunteer, the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House only had the Chestnut Street House and Ronald McDonald Camp. Over the course of the last 10 years, we expanded the Chestnut Street House, built the Front & Erie House, opened two Ronald McDonald Family Rooms at The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, and added a Hospitality Kiosk at St. Christopher’s Hospital for Children. The occupancy rate and demand for services at our Chestnut Street House has exponentially increased over this time, but what hasn’t changed in the ten years is the passion and commitment of our Board and staff and the dedication of our volunteers.

What is your dream for the future of the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House?

My dream is for PRMH to have the physical capacity to accommodate all of our room requests. My dream is to never have to say “no” to a family needing a room because there are no rooms available. Right now, at our Chestnut Street location, we are not able to provide rooms to 40% of the families requesting stays.

Equally important, regardless of how much we grow as an organization, I always want for our staff and volunteers to provide excellent customer service to our families. I never want us to lose the original vision and culture of our Co-Founders, Dr. Audrey Evans and Jimmy Murray, which is to provide comfort, care, and support to families who are going through a medical crisis.

Guest Chef Spotlight: Eurest

Our most heartfelt thanks go to Eurest. Since 1996, the globally recognized company has provided dining services to local, regional, and national corporations within the Business & Industry markets, including employee dining centers, on-site catering, vending, executive dining rooms, and other managed services. This company was recently awarded the Compass in the Community Bronze Award for their dedication to the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House. Collectively, Eurest employees volunteered throughout 2014 in a variety of capacities, such as our Guest Chef Program, to support the House and Family Room in the Cardiac Center at The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia. In addition to their esteemed award, Eurest also received a donation for $2,000 which they generously gifted to the House. Thank you, Eurest, for your service and belief in our mission of supporting families of seriously ill children by creating a community of comfort and hope—you truly make a difference.
Board Spotlight: Bill Parke

I think it’s safe to say that the mission of the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House, to support families of seriously ill children by creating a community of comfort and hope, resonates with people everywhere. Each of us was introduced to this mission in our own way. For some, it was through the marketing of Shamrock Shakes. For others, it was through family or friends. For me, it was a personal journey. It was the spring of 1985 and the City of Philadelphia was going through a period of political turmoil, grabbing both national and international attention. However, my wife and I were oblivious to everything going on around us as we were consumed with our personal turmoil. Our daughter had been diagnosed with neuroblastoma and we could not leave her bedside as she began life-saving treatment. For two long years, we were in and out of the hospital—some stays longer than others. We had a tremendous support system in place with family and friends nearby, an employer that was dedicated and caring. Even with that support, the stress we endured is hard to describe and understand unless you’ve had a child that is or was seriously ill. There was no Ronald McDonald House or Family Room available to offer reprieve from the hospital. I can remember flipping a coin with other parents each night to see who would get the one rocking chair shared between 10 or more hospital rooms. Our concern for our daughter’s progress, how it was going to impact her siblings, work, and more, was on our minds all the time. Without a doubt I know that the support system we had allowed us to navigate those tough times and emerge with our family intact. It could take a moment to again say thank you to our parents and siblings, to Jack Mottet, (my sportspage), and to the 5th Floor North staff of St. Christopher’s Hospital for Children, to whom I remain grateful to this day.

In the ensuing years, my wife and I were marginally involved in fundraising for the hospital and its oncology clinic, but raising our family took precedence and sidetracked our efforts to make a difference to the degree that we had hoped. Some 20 years later, I received a call from one of my daughter’s nurses who said a family friend named Kate’s Crusaders was getting together to raise awareness for children with cancer and asked for my help. Better late than never, I jumped in and eventually we helped to bring a new Ronald McDonald House adjacent to St. Christopher’s Hospital for Children. As a Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House supporter, you are familiar with the services and programs provided through the House. It creates a family-like environment for families where there exists previously, particularly for those traveling long distances. The importance of this to families navigating the uncertain world of having a seriously ill child cannot be underestimated. I remember one of the more comforting experiences at the beginning of my daughter’s treatment was an afternoon spent with another family whose daughter was in treatment at the same time. There wasn’t much said, but the communication through facial expression, body language, and tone reminded us we were not alone. The House and Family Room settings allow for many of these interactions to take place by providing soft support that is hard to define, but beneficial and much-needed.

I was subsequently asked to join the Board of Directors of the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House in 2007, and have now taken on the responsibility of promoting its continued success fostered by so many hardworking people before me. To do so, we need your help. To all of our donors, thank you for providing the resources that allow us to provide the best care we can. And to all of the families dealing with seriously ill children. For those of you who were a guest of the House in the last 40 years, it’s never too late to make a difference. Please consider helping the House—no contribution is too small. I know that you will find it challenging, rewarding, and humbling. I know I have.
We're So Thankful For...  

1. Brenner Family-Legs for Lenny Fundraiser  
   Thank you to the Brenner Family for raising $5,000 through their Legs for Lenny Fundraiser on November 29. Supporters gathered for this walking event to raise proceeds to support our Adopt A Room program. Thank you to Lenny Brenner for your ongoing commitment to not only volunteering at the Chestnut Street House, but for hosting this great event.

2. The NFL Alumni and Philadelphia Chapter Coaches  
   This group presented a check for $20,000 to the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House and adopted a room at the Front & Erie House through our Adopt A Room program.

3. Annual House Lighting Celebration and Donor Reception  
   In honor of the generosity and support we receive from our friends in the community, both of our Houses were decorated with thousands of holiday lights, each donor’s thoughtful gift. We thank all of the individuals, organizations, and businesses who helped to give the gift of home to families in need over the holiday season.

4. Holiday Wish List Drives  
   For the 2014 Holiday Season, we had an array of Wish List Drives that were hosted in support of families at the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House. We would like to thank our toy donors, families, and individuals who hosted a Wish List Drive during the holiday season.

5. County Courier 10th Annual Holiday Toy Drive  
   For a decade, Denny Parisan of County Corvette has hosted an annual holiday toy drive to ensure that all families staying at the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House have a special holiday—just like they would back home. We were overwhelmed by the generosity of County Corvette and its Toy Drive supporters. Over 600 families were helped to give the gift of home to families in need over the holiday season in a U-Haul. This group has also made large cash donations to help continue fulfilling our mission.

6. Philadelphia Marathon  
   Thank you to Team PRM at the Philadelphia Marathon! For the fourth year in a row, the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House was an official charity and our team raised over $11,000.

7. Endo Gives  
   We would like to thank Endo International plc, a global specialty healthcare company that improves lives while creating value, for naming the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House as an official charity. Our team raised over $29,000 through their annual Endo Gives Employee Fund.

Throughout the 2014 holiday season, Endo employees showed their support in two memorable ways: in-kind donations and monetary gifts, which employees could make through the company’s Matching Gift Program. In total, Endo employees pledged over 50,000 dollars in company-matched donations, and delivered hundreds of items from wish lists. We thank Endo for their incredible generosity.

Our deepest thanks to all who have helped to fulfill our mission in these ways. We could not do our work without the support of our community. We are grateful for their generosity and commitment to improving the lives of so many families.
THE YEAR IN REVIEW 2014

OUR HOUSES

365 LONGEST NUMBER OF CONSECUTIVE NIGHTS FOR ONE FAMILY

2,194 FAMILY STAYS

93% AVERAGE OCCUPANCY RATE

3,241 FAMILIES WE COULD NOT ACCOMMODATE BECAUSE WE WERE FULL

9.87 NIGHTS IN THE AVERAGE FAMILY STAY

FAMILIES SERVED BY REGION

We served families from 45 states with the majority traveling from PA, NJ, and NY.

- 35%
- 22%
- 9%
- 5%
- 3%
- 2%
- 1%
- 0%

TOP THREE HOSPITALS SERVED

- The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia 48%
- Shriners Hospital 23%
- St. Christopher’s Hospital 22%

TOP THREE SERVICE DEPARTMENTS

- Orthopedics 28%
- Oncology 23%
- Cardiology 12%

FAMILIES SERVED

100% Families who agree the Kiosk made it easier to access healthy food and beverages while in the hospital

99% Parents who agree that Ronald McDonald Camp has helped their child build confidence and become more independent

98% Families who agree that staying at the Houses helped reduce their stress levels

97% Families who agree that staying at the House made it easier to access treatment

95% Families who agree that the Family Rooms helped them maintain their well-being while their child was in the hospital

98% Families who agree that staying at the Houses helped reduce their stress levels

97% Families who agree that staying at the House made it easier to access treatment

95% Families who agree that the Family Rooms helped them maintain their well-being while their child was in the hospital

99% Parents who agree that Ronald McDonald Camp has helped their child build confidence and become more independent

98% Families who agree that the Kiosk made it easier to access healthy food and beverages while in the hospital

We served families from 18 countries and two U.S. territories including:

- Anguilla
- Bermuda
- Canada
- Curacao
- Columbia
- Costa Rica
- Dominican Republic
- Greece
- Haiti
- Honduras
- Mexico
- Netherlands
- Paraguay
- Peru
- Puerto Rico
- Russia
- United States
- Uruguay
- U.S. Virgin Islands
- Venezuela

INTERNATIONAL FAMILIES SERVED

- Total Campers 205
- Patient Campers 139
- Sibling Campers 66
- New Campers 59

ONE WEEK OF RONALD MCDONALD CAMP

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

- Shuttle Van Trips 3,533
- Times the kiosk was accessed by individuals 3,035

- Volunteer Camp Counselors and Medical Staff 117
- Family Activities 503
- Guest Chef Meals 1,217

OUR IMPACT

- Patient Rooms Served Each Day 73
- Patient Rooms Served Each Day 73

DOWNLOAD THE FULL ANNUAL REPORT IN APRIL 2015 BY VISITING WWW.PHILARMH.ORG/ANNUALREPORT
Donations From The Heart (10/01/2014 - 12/30/2014)

The Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House Vehicle Donation Program

Families are stronger when they are together, and their presence helps a sick child heal faster and cope better. Donate a vehicle you’re not using, and the One Car One Difference® program will auction your donated vehicle for cash for the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House.

To donate your vehicle today, please visit: www.onecarhelpsrmc.com

The Family Emergency Fund

The Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House would like to extend our congratulations to Michael’s Way, the Foundation for Children with Cancer, for being the recipient of a $25,000 donation from The NASCAR Foundation—funds will be used to further the organization’s efforts. Over the years, Michael’s Way has donated thousands of dollars to oncology families staying at the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House to help ease the burden of caring for a sick child and having to worry about expenses back home. Each year, the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House serves over 2,000 families. That’s more than 2,000 families with seriously ill children who are uprooted from their lives and faced with a long medical journey filled with uncertainty. The Family Emergency Fund helps ensure that families staying with us have the means to maintain their households no matter how long they have to reside in Philadelphia for their child’s treatment. This allows parents to focus on what is truly important—the wellbeing of their child.

“Family Emergency Fund helped us out during the most difficult time ever. Because we received assistance with our rent payment, we were able to move into our new apartment before our son, Robert, was discharged from The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia. We’re grateful for all the help we received from the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House.”

— Virginia Cloud, Guest Mother

There are many ways to make a meaningful impact on a family staying at the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House, and we ask that you keep the Family Emergency Fund in mind as you plan your charitable giving this year. Gifts received in the past have paid for expenses such as: mortgages so families don’t lose their homes, heat and electricity for families back home, and car repairs for families traveling back and forth to Philadelphia for life-saving medical treatment.

To support the Family Emergency Fund, please contact Lawrence Jacobsen, Director of Leadership Giving, at 267.969.6201 or via email at lawrence@philarmh.org. As Chris McElwee of Michael’s Way said, “Do you know anyone who hasn’t been touched by illness?” Please consider giving to the Family Emergency Fund today.

Make a Lasting Impact on Families Who Need Your Help

Your legacy gift will help ensure that the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House is there for families like Doug’s this year and for years to come. As you carefully plan for your future and the future of your family, you also have the ability to positively impact the lives of seriously ill children and their families by including the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House in your will or estate plan.

Thoughtful planning with a financial advisor can protect and preserve your life’s work and allow you to make a significant difference in the lives of thousands of families who stay at the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House each year while their child receives life-saving care at the country’s leading hospitals.

Your gift has the power to make a lasting impact. To discuss this important decision, please contact Lawrence Jacobsen, Director of Leadership Giving, at 267.969.6201 or via email at lawrence@philarmh.org.
Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House
3925 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104
215.387.8406 www.philarmh.org

Address Service Requested

If you would prefer to receive our quarterly newsletter electronically, please email enews@philarmh.org and let us know!

“There is no doubt that the power of friendship has the ability to see people through their toughest days and the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House is privileged to provide a place of comfort and hope where friendships can grow.”

Continue reading on the front cover…

Joseph (left) and Giovanni (right)