It took eight years for John Hornick and Heidi Tarshis to find an answer for their daughter’s unexplainable health issues. As a baby, Mikayla suffered from moderate acid reflux and her growth rate was delayed for a child her age. “We had Mikayla tested for everything and specialists couldn’t identify what was wrong with our daughter—they ended up saying it was failure to thrive,” says Heidi. “We were left with no further answers.”

By kindergarten, Mikayla joined a gymnastics team and little by little her skills advanced. “She has a passion for the sport, but by second grade she started falling off of the balance beam; you could tell that her motor skills were being affected by something,” says Heidi. By that summer, Mikayla was having trouble riding her bike, experiencing behavioral issues, and had headaches coupled with vomiting.

Like many children, Mikayla looked forward to summer camp and said goodbye to her parents for what was supposed to be a fun week. Heidi ended up having to pick up Mikayla from camp early and saw that there was something wrong with her eye. “When I got to camp, my daughter’s eye was completely turned outwards,” says Heidi. Heidi knew right away that something serious was wrong with her daughter, and she rushed Mikayla to their local doctor. “As soon as we got to our doctor, he called the emergency room at The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) and we drove from our home in Furlong, Pennsylvania, directly to CHOP. That evening Mikayla was diagnosed with a brain tumor,” says Heidi.

The very next day, Mikayla was scheduled to undergo surgery and doctors were able to successfully remove the entire tumor; however, two weeks later, an MRI indicated that she had two more tumors on her spinal cord. From July to October, John and Heidi stayed by their daughter’s bedside as she received radiation. For a few short weeks in October, the Hornicks were able to pack their belongings and return home, knowing that it would not be long before they would return to the hospital. From November to February, Mikayla underwent chemotherapy and stem cell transplants to aid in her recovery.

“We lived in the hospital and utilized the Ronald McDonald Family Room in the Oncology Unit every single day for months,” says Heidi. The Family Room in the Oncology Unit provides families like the Hornicks with a quiet retreat from the hospital setting, featuring a family-style dining table, a TV, comfortable seating, kitchen facilities, and a guest bathroom. There is also a laundry room equipped with a washer and dryer, a folding station, detergent, and laundry baskets. “My husband and I met so many other parents who were going through what we were going through and we’re still friends with them to this day. The Ronald McDonald Family Room in the Oncology Unit was an invaluable resource and helped make our long days at the hospital a little more comfortable,” says Heidi.

Mikayla, now nine years old, completed her treatment in February 2015, and this summer she experienced the joys of Ronald McDonald Camp—the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House’s traditional overnight camp in the Pocono Mountains for children with cancer and their siblings. “When Mikayla underwent treatment, she lost her hair, and became very self-conscious. As a mother, it was painful to see that, but when she was at Camp, the salon that visits to do the children’s hair styled her hair into a pink mohawk and Mikayla loved it. To this day, she proudly wears her mohawk hairdo,” says Heidi. Camp helped Mikayla regain her confidence and spunk, and a week after she got home from Ronald McDonald Camp, she was cleared to resume karate, gymnastics, and other sports. “We returned to gymnastics, and she performed her balance beam routine without falling off. I cried tears of happiness,” says Heidi.

In addition to benefiting from the Family Rooms, the family also stayed at the Chestnut Street House while Mikayla was part of the CHOP Feeding program this past September to October; they also regularly commute back and forth to CHOP for an array of follow up appointments such as MRIs, to ensure that Mikayla’s health is on track. “We have a lot on our plates,” says Heidi. “Staying at the Chestnut Street House makes things a little easier on my family. From meals, to the activities for my daughter, to the sense of community—it’s a truly wonderful place.” The Hornicks, along with the other 44 families that stay at the House each night, can gain peace of mind knowing that they don’t have to worry about many of the everyday stressors—freeing mothers and fathers like Heidi and John to focus on what’s truly important: the well-being of their child.

Now that Mikayla can return to her athletic hobbies, Heidi and John reported that this past Halloween, their daughter got on her bike for the first time since her treatment and rode off down their street. “My husband and I watched with sheer amazement,” says Heidi. “This has been a very long journey, but we finally feel like we’re getting our little girl back—each day she continues to inspire us by all that she’s accomplished.”
As I reflect on the past year, one word comes to mind: grateful. I am grateful for our donors who support us year after year because they recognize what the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House provides to so many families. I am grateful for our selfless volunteers and Board members, who take time out of their busy schedules to give back to our organization. I am grateful for our staff, who always put our families first and keeps our programs running efficiently and effectively. Finally, I am grateful for the families that we serve, who remind us each day what is most important in life and who show unwavering strength and resilience during a tremendously difficult time.

This year, as we celebrated many achievements, we are more empowered than ever by the outpouring of support that we received from the community. Two of our fundraising programs had record-breaking years. In its 21st year, our Read for the House program raised more funds than we have in over a decade, and our 7th Annual Plane Pull raised an unprecedented amount. We also expanded our fundraising opportunities by launching the Adopt A Cabin program to benefit Ronald McDonald Camp, which celebrated its 30th anniversary this past summer.

The aforementioned events are just a few examples of the work it took to raise the funding to serve the 2,194 families that stayed with us this past year—families who were left with no choice but to uproot their lives and come to Philadelphia for their child to receive life-saving medical care. Even so, the demand for our services is still great. In fact, last year we had to turn away 3,241 families that needed the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House. This staggering number highlights our present limitations but, as Board President, I am hopeful that in the near future we will be able to accommodate more of the families who request a room.

As we embark on another holiday season filled with family and good cheer, may we keep in mind the families staying at our two Houses this season and the challenges they are facing. During this joyful time of the year, these families are away from home, doing all that they can to help their child through serious illness. Yet, despite their challenges, they show the utmost gratitude to have a comfortable place to sleep, a warm meal to eat, and transportation to and from their doctor’s appointments—thanks to people like you. I recently read feedback from a mother who stayed at our House, and she said, “The Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House is a hugely valuable asset to have while our child receives treatment so far from home. This stay was the most stressful to date. Without the House, I don’t know how we would have done it.” This is only one of many expressions of appreciation that we hear every day from the families we serve, and it’s only through the generosity of donors like you that we are able to be there to offer our services and provide them with relief.

Your support is immeasurable—it’s what drives our mission and sustains our programs. I ask you to keep the families of the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House in your hearts this holiday season. Let’s continue our important work of providing a community of comfort and hope to help families gain a greater sense of togetherness as they go through an uncertain time.

My warmest wishes this holiday season,

Peter J. Degnan

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

YOUR YEAR-END GIFT IS IMPORTANT

Your year-end gift is an important part of our annual fundraising efforts. When you support our work to serve families at the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House, you help keep families close during a stressful time by providing a community of comfort and hope this holiday season.

Your thoughtful contribution of cash, appreciated stocks, or even a distribution from your IRA can provide you with tax relief while helping to support families facing a health crisis.

For questions about ways to give or assistance with a legacy gift, please contact Lawrence Jacobson, Director of Leadership Giving, at 267.969.6201 or by email at lawrence@philarmh.org.

Make a secure online donation today at www.philarmh.org.
Families have said to staff time and time again, “We don’t know what we would’ve done without the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House.” Last year alone, we served over 2,000 families from 44 states, 18 countries, and 2 U.S. territories. That’s over 2,000 families who were confronted with not only their child’s serious illness, but an array of other worries like traveling to a faraway hospital in an unfamiliar city, leaving all support systems, struggling to pay for ever-increasing expenses, and wondering where they will eat and sleep each day.

The Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House takes away many of those worries—freeing parents to focus on their child’s medical care and recovery—but we cannot do it alone. By adopting a room at our two Houses, your gift of $2,500 or $5,000 will ensure that each family who stays in that room throughout the year has a comfortable place to call home—complete with home-cooked meals, transportation to and from the hospital, and an array of other complimentary services just minutes from the world’s best hospitals and at little to no cost.

Your support is essential to this program. Become an adopt a room partner today.

Contact Chris Callanan, Director of Special Events & Corporate Development, at (215) 387-8406 or via email at chris@philarmh.org.

Help us provide excellent support to families by becoming an adopt a room partner.

Exclusive Room Sponsor - $5,000 tax deductible gift
Donor will have exclusive sponsorship over one guest bedroom for the period of one year.

Partner Sponsor - $2,500 tax deductible gift
Two donors may be assigned to the same bedroom for the period of one year. Paired donors will not be in competing industries.

Adopt A Room Benefits
• Prominent signage outside your adopted guest room
• Name placement on high-visibility, professionally designed recognition wall
• Letters from families who have stayed in your room
• Knowing that your gift will make a significant impact on the lives of the many families who walk through our doors in 2016

We are grateful to the family of Alexa C. Artis, who has generously adopted a room at our Chestnut Street House in her honor since the inception of the Adopt A Room program. Alexa bravely lost her battle with cancer at the age of 17, but during her treatment at The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, her family stayed at the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House and greatly benefited from our services. Throughout the year and with the support of family, friends, community, and Budget Maintenance, Alexa’s family holds various events to raise funds for the Adopt A Room program. Most recently, Alexa’s cousin, Jessica Jones, directed the ACA 5K Race in memory of her cousin and all proceeds from this event went towards supporting families at the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House.

“Alexa loved giving back to the community and cared deeply about others. Even though she was battling cancer, she was always smiling—no matter what she was going through.”

—Jessica Jones, Alexa’s cousin.
## DONATIONS FROM THE HEART - 7/1/2015 TO 9/30/2015

**$25,000 and above**
- Ronald McDonald House Charities of the Philadelphia Region
- Mr. Scott R. Emerson
- McDonald’s Lehigh Valley All-Star Football Classic

**$10,000 to $24,999**
- Mr. and Mrs. Twining Campbell
- DIL
- 97.5 The Fanatic’s 6th Annual Mike Missanelli Golf Outing
- Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation
- Pfizer, Inc.

**$5,000 to $9,999**
- Mr. and Mrs. Peter J. Degnan
- Law Offices of McDonnell & Associates
- Philadelphia Insurance Companies of the Philadelphia Region
- United Way of Greater Philadelphia & Southern New Jersey

**$2,500 to $4,999**
- Bloominglead’s Capital One 360
- Capital Solutions, Inc.
- CJR Memorial Foundation
- Comcast Spectator
- Crowley Chemical Company
- The Doylestown Arts Festival
- Karen Frei Memorial Fundraiser
- The Fun Department
- Naomi Gushlaw Memorial
- Holman Automotive Group, Inc.
- Innovative Print and Media Group Kicks USA
- Johnson & Johnson
- Magna Legal Services
- McDonald’s of Haines Road
- Mr. John P. Moran
- The Nathan Speare Foundation
- Ms. Angela Ottaviani
- Phillies Charities, Inc.

## ADOPT A CABIN DONORS

- Arthur Rann Elementary School
- Dudnyk
- Endo International plc
- Enterprise Holdings
- Mr. and Mrs. Don S. Follett
- Invisible Prince Charitable Foundation
- Harley Davidson of Long Branch
- Pro Computer Service
- Ronald Cup
- In honor of Jill Rosenthal
- Stephen Rosenthal Memorial
- Caroline Shattuck
- Ms. Amanda Thomas
- WatchDog
- The William Penn Foundation
- Zarwin, Baum, DeVito, Kaplan, Schaer, Toddy P.C.

**$1,000 to $2,499**
- 97.5 The Fanatic’s Fantasy Fest
- Anonymous
- John Christian “Baby Jack” Lanyi Memorial
- Ms. Kathleen Lion
- Lanyi Memorial
- Mr. James Lawler
- Mr. and Mrs. Robert Lewis
- Ms. Bettyanne Geikler
- Michael Foti Memorial
- Ms. Jessie J. Holzapfel
- Mr. Philip Honerkamp
- Illinois Tool Works Foundation
- Jena Kohler Memorial
- First Presbyterian Church of Hollidaysburg
- FIS Foundation
- Jacques H. Fox Memorial
- FIS Foundation

**$500 to $999**
- Allstate Foundation
- Allstate Giving Campaign
- Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Amoroso
- Mr. Michael Baird
- The Boeing Company
- The Comcast Foundation
- Mr. and Mrs. Frank Conicella
- Mr. Richard Cutler
- David’s Bridal
- DHL Global Forwarding
- In honor of Tommy Dumanski, Jr.
- The Emerson Group
- Endo International plc
- Estate of Marianne Yoland
- First Presbyterian Church of Hollidaysburg
- FIS Foundation
- Jacques H. Fox Memorial
- Mr. and Mrs. Curt Haring
- Mr. Stephen Harrington
- Mr. David Hirsch
- William Hodgson Memorial
- Ms. Jeness Holzapfel
- Mr. Philip Honerkamp
- Illinois Tool Works Foundation
- Jena Kohler Memorial
- First Presbyterian Church of Hollidaysburg
- FIS Foundation

**$500 to $999**
- 102.9 WMGK’s Brew Blast
- Dr. Naomi Balamuth
- Edward J. Canning, Jr. Memorial
- Mr. and Mrs. Joseph N. DiBello Jr.
- Mr. Scott Elkins
- Mr. Eric Fink
- Michael Foti Memorial
- Ms. Bettyanne Geikler
- Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Goldenberg
- Mr. Kevin Goldstein
- Harris Family
- Mr. and Mrs. Lynn C. Hunneman
- IBM Employee Services Center
- Kohl’s Springfield
- John Christian “Baby Jack” Laney Memorial
- Mr. James Lawler
- Ms. Kathleen Lion
- Mr. and Mrs. Richard A. Looker
- McDonald’s of Bristol Pike
- Mr. Michael Miller

## ADDITIONAL DONATIONS

- $25,000 and above
- $10,000 to $24,999
- $5,000 to $9,999
- $2,500 to $4,999
- $1,000 to $2,499
- $500 to $999
- $250 to $499
- $100 to $249
- $50 to $99
- $25 to $49
- $10 to $24
- $5 to $9
- $1 to $4

### Additional Donors

- The Montefaro Family
- Philadelphia Police Department
- The Pine Hill Group
- Ms. Helen Plante
- Rawden Joint Ventures, Inc.
- Mr. and Mrs. Jeffrey Roes
- Mr. and Mrs. Mark Rosenberg
- Mr. Todd Rosengarten
- Seer Interactive
- Ms. Joan Shepp
- Sons of Ben
- Stevens & Lee
- Thomson Reuters
- Time After Time
- The Turner Family
- Susan J. White Memorial
- Yards Brewing Company

**$500 to $999**
- 102.9 WMGK’s Brew Blast
- Mr. Richard J. Adelizzi
- Alisha C. Levin Memorial Fund of the Philadelphia Foundation
- Arc Thrift Stores
- Babscock Hollow Campground
- Dr. Naomi Balamuth
- Edward J. Canning, Jr. Memorial
- Christopher’s Footprints, Inc.
- Mr. Kenneth Crawford
- Ms. Mary Tomlinson
- United Natural Foods, Inc.
- United Way of Delaware
- Yola Foundation
- Wells Fargo
- West New York Leones Cubanos
- De Hudson
- Yelp’s Show Your Stripes Event
Dear Ronald McDonald Camp Supporter,

I would just like to thank you for letting my friends and me have this amazing experience. The thought of Camp brings back wonderful memories from past years—memories that will last a lifetime. The kids I meet (patients and siblings), always tell me the same thing: “RMC is home.” I love it because we are just one huge amazingly crazy family, and I thank you for that. Without you, I would’ve never made this many memories in one week.

As I said before, RMC is family no matter how different we may look. I’ve met people I wouldn’t have ever talked to without Camp. At Camp I was talking to my cabin mate, Rialee, and we talked about how at Camp the topic of cancer isn’t some crazy subject that shouldn’t be talked about—in fact, it’s pretty natural. So we chatted on and on about how we were diagnosed and how treatment was and no one stopped us. All I want to say is that you would be open with your family…so I was open with Rialee.

Sincerely,

Amey DiSisto (11 years old)
For as long as I can remember, I have always had a passion for helping others—especially children and the underserved. As a lawyer and Office Managing Partner at Reed Smith LLP I am fortunate to be able to contribute my skillset to help a variety of organizations and causes that are near and dear to my heart.

From 2007 to 2011, I proudly served as the Board President of the Support Center for Child Advocates—a Philadelphia-based organization dedicated to providing legal representation to neglected and abused children—where I gained first-hand experience with fundraising and learned how to manage a nonprofit during the economic recession. And, much like the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House, the Support Center for Child Advocates is an organization that is dedicated to the welfare of children. My “zeal” as many would say for helping youngsters extends beyond the Philadelphia community, and I am currently on the National Board of Big Brothers Big Sisters of America. Thirty years ago as a law student at Temple University, I became a Big Brother and thoroughly enjoyed providing mentorship to three young citizens—teaching them how to become strong, contributing members of the community. In my role now, I am glad to be able to help other mentors and mentees have the same rewarding experience.

My work with these organizations is what paved my path to the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House. In 2012, Anthony Stover, a longtime Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House volunteer and now employee, whom I met when we both served on the Board of the Support Center for Child Advocates, approached me about joining the House’s Board of Directors. I was familiar with the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House because throughout the years I had enjoyed volunteering when my children’s soccer teams formed Guest Chef Groups. I also understood the intrinsic value of the House and the role that it played in the lives of so many families with sick children—but I had never thought about serving on the Board. Nevertheless, I decided to take Anthony’s recommendation and I joined.

Reflecting on it three years later, joining the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House Board of Directors has been one of the most fulfilling decisions of my life. Until recently, I was the only Board member who was a lawyer, and I have enjoyed being able to get my law firm involved in the House by offering pro-bono legal advice as well through initiatives such as Adopt A Room—something we have enjoyed supporting since the inception of the program. I am also a member of the Board’s Development and Nominating Committees, where—along with other Board members—I have enjoyed recruiting new members and building stronger business relationships with our partner hospitals.

Being involved on the Board has offered me deeper insight into the resources needed to help our families, and having a seat at that table throughout the month simultaneously humbles me and makes me feel honored. One event in particular that resonates with me year after year is the Annual Adopt A Room Donor Reception. I hear the stories of child patients and their mothers and fathers who have greatly benefitted from our services, and their emotions of sheer gratitude are overwhelming. Families who are burdened financially and emotionally by their child’s serious illness so freely express their thankfulness for having a warm, home-like place to stay; and this is what fuels me to work harder year after year. Additionally, seeing how much we have provided to these families reminds me that there are a number of other families in need of our services that we have yet to reach. I am inspired by the determination and courage of the patients and their families, and that gives me perspective on what the true challenges in life are.

As the House explores its options to expand programming in order to accommodate more families, we cannot forget that we currently face a tremendous issue—there is not enough room to help everyone who needs us. That statement highlights my overall goal as a Board member: to ensure that in the future we will be able to help every family who needs our services. I am confident that with our Board, generous donors and volunteers, and staff, we can accomplish and exceed our goal.

I have always had a strong desire to serve others in order to help people lead more comfortable, fulfilling, and happy lives. By being a Board member with the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House, I am confident that I am doing just that and I would encourage anyone who shares this sentiment to not wait any longer to start making a difference. We all have something to offer and together we can accomplish so much.

**Art Installment at the Front & Erie House**

If you’ve been to the Front & Erie House lately, you have probably noticed the beautiful new artwork in our welcome area. Our dedicated volunteers (and artists) Janice Biron, Debbie Gottlieb, Rhoni Groff, Barbara Kurtz, and Salli Mickelson worked over the summer to complete this project. The “Welcome to the House That Love Built” letters were inspired by Zentangle, an art form similar to doodling, that Ronald McDonald Camp staff member, Maria Jacobs, introduced to campers.

**Monthly Ticket Donations**

We thank Little Smiles and Please Touch Museum for their generous donation of tickets to benefit families at the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House. Many of the families that we serve do not have the funds to explore Philadelphia on days when their child is not receiving medical care. If you would like to donate tickets to local attractions, please contact Chris Callanan at chris@phiarhm.org. Your thoughtful contribution will give families much-needed cheer and make a wonderful gift this holiday season.
We are grateful for the support of all our golf and tennis enthusiasts who joined us for the 15th Annual Hit ‘Em for the House Golf & Tennis Outing.

Due to inclement weather, these events were postponed, but we thank our supporters for their flexibility in accommodating the date change. Thanks to our event sponsors, donors and supporters, we raised over $161,000 to support families at the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House, making this event a true success.

We would like to thank the following:

Our Generous Presenting Sponsor:
The Ron Krancer Family

Our Exclusive Golf Sponsors:
Crowley Chemical Company, Inc. and Permalith Plastics, LLC.

Supporters from the 24th Annual Heroes Tournament (Sean M. Morris Benefit & Barry Bush Memorial) held at the Green Pond Country Club in Bethlehem, PA on May 23, 2015, presented a check in support of the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House at the Hit ‘Em for the House Golf Outing.

We thank Jacko Enterprises (KICKS USA) for preparing a delicious meal for our families at the Front & Erie House. Thanks to this wonderful group of individuals, families staying at the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House had one less worry, and we are grateful for Jacko Enterprises’ dedication to serving the Philadelphia community and beyond. If you would like to participate in our Guest Chef program, please contact Lori-Anne Miller at lori-anne@philarmh.org.

The Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House Plane Pull® gives teams of 20 people a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to pull an airplane while raising vital funds for families staying at the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House. This competition gives organizations from across the Philadelphia area the chance to see if they can, in fact, pull our airplane in the fastest time.

The Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House will host this event in partnership with Philly Jet Service and Atlantic Aviation. All of the proceeds raised (a minimum of $2,500 per team) will support the families staying at the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House.

Date: Saturday, May 14, 2016
Location: Atlantic Aviation, next to the Philadelphia International Airport
Goal: Each team will compete to pull an airplane in the fastest time
Attendance: Over 500 pullers and spectators
To participate, please contact Chris Callanan at chris@philarmh.org.
Mikayla and her mother Heidi at the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House.

“Staying at the Chestnut Street House makes things a little easier on my family. From meals, to the activities for my daughter, to the sense of community – it’s a truly wonderful place.”

— Heidi