When Erica and Rich Spencer brought home baby Mason in June of last year, everything seemed normal. Their new bundle of joy was their third child, a much-adored little brother to sisters Maddy (15) and Olivia (14). But after three weeks, the baby started showing signs of distress; he was pale and uncharacteristically fussy. “Something just didn’t seem right,” Erica remembers. Their pediatrician agreed and ran some blood work.

Then, they faced every parent’s nightmare: The doctor instructed the Spencers to take their son to the hospital in Philadelphia immediately. At just three and a half weeks old, Mason was in end-stage renal failure. Like so many who come to stay at the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House, the Spencers were faced not only with the news of their baby’s diagnosis, but also with what seemed like an impossible set of circumstances. How could they stay close to Mason, and stay together, while continuing with work, school, and the daily details of “normal” life in their Langhorne, Pennsylvania home?

“I stayed with Mason in the hospital, but Rich and the girls were traveling back and forth every day after work and school,” Erica says. “This became very concerning. Rich was so tired and emotionally drained, and driving over an hour each way. He would get stuck in rush hour coming to us, and then road construction every night heading home. I was already so scared for Mason, but then I became so afraid Rich would fall asleep at the wheel.” The Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House changed everything for them. While Erica still regularly stayed overnight in the hospital with Mason, the family could be close by at the House, use the shuttle service to go see them, have regular meals, and share laughter—and stress—with other families who could relate to their circumstances like none of their other friends or family really could. The House provided Erica with needed comforts: fresh, healthy food, hot showers, and time outside the hospital with her family.

“It was a really scary time and I felt so isolated—all alone in the bubble of the hospital. We all felt so separated as a family,” Erica recalls. “Just being able to be together, to have a dinner together outside the hospital and talk, was so important and necessary for us. The House helped us feel normal when everything was scary.”

Prior to Mason’s diagnosis, the Spencers were not strangers to the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House. Erica, who worked for McDonald’s from the time she was 16 until Mason was born, had volunteered at the House many times. Erica says, “I always felt so blessed and rewarded to help other families, always knowing I never truly knew how they felt,” she says of her time as a volunteer.

Now, she feels especially grateful for the combined experience of being a volunteer and a parent. She believes it gives her a stronger voice as an advocate for the House—and especially for the expansion project on Chestnut Street. “The first time we tried to get in here, the House was full. We were turned away. They just really need more space to serve everyone who needs them!”

Mason will receive dialysis from home until he has grown enough to receive a kidney transplant—hopefully this coming spring. He will be close to one and a half years old before he meets this height and weight requirements for the surgery, so the family will be spending more time in the House in the months to come. “The House is a second home for us,” Erica says. “We’re so grateful for it. I can’t imagine what we would do without it.”
MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

The first agenda item for each and every Board meeting is for a family to come in and tell their story. It is the perfect reminder of why we are here doing what we can to help support these families in need.

Each family story is different, but all include acts of courage, dedication, persistence and, most importantly, hope. Some stories end happily and others unfortunately do not. The last family we heard from had been staying at the House for almost 450 consecutive days while their conjoined twins, who had just been successfully separated, were in the hospital nearby. I am happy to share that the family was able to spend Thanksgiving at home, in Mooresville, NC and are elated to spend the holiday season at home with the twins.

In hearing this mother tell her story, I felt struck by the many ways in which we are blessed, and therefore how important it is that we give back to those in need, particularly when it involves a very sick child.

This summer, to help even more families, we broke ground on the largest construction project in our history and launched our most ambitious fundraising campaign to date – the Room in Our Hearts campaign. As of this month, the campaign has raised $33.5 million for our bigger, better home on Chestnut Street.

Another major milestone this year was our Show Your Stripes event on October 13. I was delighted to see hundreds of families, friends, neighbors and volunteers join us at the annual celebration. I am so grateful to everyone, especially our sponsors, who helped make that day—and every day this year—so special.

Now, with the holiday season now upon us, please reflect on how you have been blessed with so much and how you can help others in their time of need. The Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House needs your help and support so that many more families can find comfort and hope during a very difficult time. No matter how much you contribute or in which manner, on behalf of the families, thank you for your generosity and support of our mission.

Wishing you and your families a healthy and happy holiday season,

Peter J. Degnan
Board President

To watch our progress, please visit: www.philaRMH.org/WorkZoneCam
EXPANSION UPDATE

The expansion of our Chestnut Street House is well underway! The land adjacent to the main House has been cleared, underground utilities have been laid, and the foundation for the new Jill and Alan B. Miller Tower is in process. The coming months will see exterior walls begin to rise, interiors will be taking shape, and staff will begin preparations to welcome more families than ever before. When complete, this historic endeavor will enable us to go from serving approximately 800 families annually to an estimated 1,900 and to increase our available room nights from 16,000 to more than 40,000 per year.

Among the many families the expansion will benefit, are the Musers from Lancaster, PA, whose son Riley is pictured digging into the project at our Show Your Stripes birthday event. Riley’s little brother, Ryan, was diagnosed with right-sided congenital diaphragmatic hernia (Right CDH)—a rare birth defect that occurs in 1 in 5,000 births—at 26 weeks gestation. Since his birth in July, Ryan has been treated as an inpatient at the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia and his family has been staying at the House. Ryan’s mother, Devon, shared, “The House keeps us closer to Ryan while he is in the hospital. If we didn’t have the House, we’d only see him a few times a week. It is a huge help and makes things more comfortable and easier for our family.”

This critical project is made possible only with the generous support of private individuals and organizations through the Room in Our Hearts campaign. For more details on the expansion or to support Room in Our Hearts, please visit www.philaRMH.org/MakeRoom.

ONCE COMPLETE, THE NEW AND IMPROVED CHESTNUT STREET HOUSE WILL INCLUDE:

• A new 93,000 sq. ft. tower that will house 88 bedrooms
• A new Welcome Center and Reception Area to greet families to the PRMH community
• A newly constructed Cooking and Dining Center Library and Quiet Lounges on each floor
• 80 new family bedrooms, and 8 protected-patient bedroom suites
• 12 fully wheelchair-accessible guest bedrooms
• Indoor and outdoor play areas for children of all ages
• A beautiful rooftop garden, featuring a walking path and quiet reflection area

To watch our progress, visit www.philaRMH.org/WorkZoneCam
SHOW YOUR STRIPES

Thank you to all who supported the Show Your Stripes campaign, which was a huge hit again this year! We received over 530 photos from our community members showing off their striped gear, thereby raising valuable awareness for the House and its mission. This year, we were thrilled that various buildings around Philadelphia joined the campaign by lighting up the city in red and white! PRMH extends a special thank you to our friends at Brandywine Realty Trust who lit up all of their buildings throughout the city in red and even lit the FMC Tower and Cira Centre in red and white stripes. The PECO building also scrolled a striped message to encourage others to get involved!

With over 200 attendees, our birthday celebration at the Chestnut Street House was a blast and a tremendous success! Our friends at Campo’s, Dietz and Watson, Schmear IT, Insomnia Cookies, Little Baby’s Ice Cream, Federal Donuts, Herr’s Chips, Philly Pretzel Factory, and Michael’s Bakery provided delicious bites and treats for the guests, while DJ Perry provided the tunes. Everyone had the opportunity to be part of the House’s history by signing one of our construction beams and take fun photos with our new Show Your Stripes mascot, Sidekick.

We are so grateful for our 2017 Show Your Stripes partners who sold our items in their stores including: Di Bruno Bros., Copabanana, Yards, Schmear It, and Federal Donuts, as well as Jazz Pharmaceuticals, ERT, the Philadelphia Police Department, Penn Medicine, McDonald’s, and Fox Rothschild LLP, who all sold our items internally. Thank you to our other 2017 striped sponsors who continue to go above and beyond to support the House including: Allstate, AvalonBay Communities, BHHS Fox & Roach/Trident and Fox & Roach Charities, American Heritage Federal Credit Union, Evolve IP, Independence Blue Cross, Coldwell Banker Preferred, the Philadelphia Prisons, Virtua, Uninvest and The TASA Group.

Visit www.philaRMH.org/SYS17Photos to view photos from our birthday celebration and the 2017 Show Your Stripes photos that we received!

THIS HOLIDAY SEASON, GIVE A GIFT THAT’S CLOSE TO YOUR HEART.

Purchase a striped bundle, which includes a striped hat, scarf, and a pair of socks, for $20 for your friends, families, or as a corporate gift. Proceeds will benefit the families of seriously ill children staying at the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House. Visit www.philaRMH.org/ShowYourStripes to purchase your bundle.

Purchase a striped monkey or bundle for a family staying at the House! Your gift can help make the holiday season a little brighter for guest families who may be spending their holidays far from home. Visit www.philaRMH.org/FamilyGift to learn more.
The second annual Champions of Hope Awards dinner held on October 11, 2017, was an evening filled with inspiring messages and a lot of love. This year, we were proud to honor Dr. Gregory Halligan of St. Christopher’s Hospital for Children as well as Photographer and PRMH Board Member Salli Mickelberg, two individuals who exemplify the vision and compassion of our co-founder—Dr. Audrey E. Evans and Jimmy Murray—through their life-long dedication to the well-being of children and families.

We also recognized the unsung heroes who allow us to provide a community of comfort and hope to families of seriously ill children every day of the year—our volunteers. As the heart of our House, these individuals selflessly devote their time to ensuring that every family who walks through our doors feels welcomed and that they have everything they need to focus on the health of their children. Thank you to our sponsors for nominating these outstanding groups and individuals. Visit www.philaRMH.org/COHPhotos17 to view, download and share photos from the evening.

2017 CHAMPIONS OF HOPE

Philadelphia-Area Allstate Agency Owners and Financial Specialists
Honored by Allstate Insurance Company

Monday Volunteers at Front and Erie
Honored by an Anonymous Friend

The Cancer Center at Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia
Honored by Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia

Peg and Fran Mulherin
Honored by the Montufar Family

Stephanie and John Strotbeck
Honored by Shari and Mark Rosenberg

Bob Traa
Honored by Ronald McDonald House Charities of the Philadelphia Region

Jan Steinsieck
Honored by Shriners Hospital for Children – Philadelphia

Dr. Gregory Halligan
Honored by St. Christopher’s Hospital for Children

Stradley Volunteers
Honored by Stradley Ronon Stevens & Young, LLP

Ronald McDonald Camp Counselors
Honored by Marlene Weinberg

Jan Pecarsky and Chuck and Jo Montufar
Honored by Fred and Barbara White

2017 Champions of Hope emcee, Jessica Dean, of CBS 3

Attendees of the second annual Champions of Hope event show their stripes

Chuck Montufar, Salli Mickelberg, Marlene Weinberg, and Dr. Gregory Halligan
This Holiday Season

Give A Gift That’s Close To Your Heart

Honor your loved ones with a permanent place in our House!

As part of the Room in Our Hearts campaign, the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House is offering a limited opportunity to engrave bricks with personal tributes to friends and loved ones.

These special mementos, which will be placed in the outdoor common areas of the new ground level patio and dining area, offer a timeless way to recognize someone special, commemorate your time with PRMH, or acknowledge a place of business this holiday season.

Bricks are selling out fast—secure yours today!

8” x 8” Engraved Brick
Engraved for you with your gift of $1,000!

These bricks can accommodate up to 6 lines of text—15 total characters per line including spaces and punctuation.

4” x 8” Engraved Brick
Engraved for you with your gift of $500!

These bricks can accommodate up to 3 lines of text—15 total characters per line including spaces and punctuation.

Visit philaRMH.org/Bricks to secure your brick today!
WE’RE SO THANKFUL

SPRINGFIELD FORD LINCOLN EVENT

Thank you to Springfield Ford Lincoln for their tremendous support of the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House (PRMH). With their Driven to Give event on July 16th, they generously raised $8,000 for the families staying at our Houses.

DELAWARE VALLEY GREEN BUILDING COUNCIL

PRMH was honored and proud to receive the Organization Award from the Delaware Valley Green Building Council as part of their 2017 Groundbreaker Awards ceremony, honoring green building leadership, innovation, and impact. Pictured here is DVGBC’s Executive Director, Alex Dews, with PRMH Director of Facilities, Barry Owen, and Executive Director, Susan Campbell.

ABONIZIO GOLF OUTING AND BEEF AND BEER EVENTS

Thank you to our Board Member, Donna Pilla-Abbonizio, and her family for hosting a golf outing and beef and beer event to raise funds for the House. There were more than 300 attendees at the beef and beer event and 80 golfers at the golf outing. Together, the events raised $28,000, exceeding their original goal by $13,000. We appreciate all of the attendees’ outstanding support of the House.

7TH ANNUAL CARNEY VETRANO BENEFIT

The Vetrano Family and Friends have hosted the Annual Carney Vetrano Benefit for seven years to support Ronald McDonald Camp (RMC) and the children with cancer and their siblings who attend. At their most recent benefit, held on July 28th, they raised $20,000 for RMC. We are thankful for all that you do to support the House.

YOUNG LAWYERS SECTION OF THE DELAWARE COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION

Thank you to the Young Lawyers Section of the Delaware County Bar Association for hosting the seventh Annual 5K Run for the House event that raised $10,000 for PRMH. We are grateful for your ongoing support through this great event each year.

THUZIO EXECUTIVE EVENT

Thank you to Thuzio for making PRMH the beneficiary of the August 9th Thuzio Executive event held at The Study, featuring Brian Dawkins of the Philadelphia Eagles.
Caroline Coleman began volunteering at the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House in January of 1991 and she is famous for baking delicious chocolate chip cookies during her shift. During her first year as a volunteer, she began cooking Christmas Eve dinner for the families at the House. Now, almost 26 years later, it has become a family tradition—Caroline’s husband, children, and even grandchildren join her at the House each year to serve families a delicious pork roast dinner with plenty of vegetables and tasty desserts to help make their holiday a little bit brighter, even though they are spending it away from home.

Over the last 26 years, Caroline has seen the impact that the House has had on thousands of families and still keeps in touch with some of those families today. She shares, “It’s been amazing to see the House evolve over the years. The family needs are always taken into consideration and the House is always evolving to try and meet those needs.”

Unfortunately, Caroline has also experienced first-hand having to turn families away due to a lack of space in our current House. She is excited about the current expansion project, since the House will be able to open its doors to many more families in the years to come. Caroline and her husband, Jim, have personally committed to supporting the Room in Our Hearts campaign for expansion by underwriting the outdoor grilling station for the new outdoor patio. Caroline shares, “We love grilling all year-round, and the House is very important to my family, so this was the perfect fit for us to contribute to the expansion!”

PRMH is grateful for all that Caroline and the Coleman family do to support the families of seriously ill children. To learn more about the expansion and ways to support the Room in Our Hearts Campaign, visit www.philaRMH.org/MakeRoom.
Tell us about yourself.
I recently married my husband, Mike, and I have one son who just recently got engaged—we are very excited! I've worked for McDonald's for over 30 years and I've been an owner/operator for nine years. I own five restaurants in Bucks County. I am a firm believer in giving back to the community and am happy to be here to do more to support the House!

How did your relationship with the House begin?
I've always fundraised for the House in my restaurants and really try to engage my community in the mission. Ten years ago, when the Front & Erie House was opening, I was committed to getting involved and supporting the House. I worked for McDonald's Corporation at the time and was part of the Women's Committee. I decided that we were going to underwrite a space in the House and we had to raise $30,000. We decided to host softball tournaments to raise the funds and after three tournaments we named the hallway leading into the laundry room after the Women's Committee.

What inspired you to become a board member?
I've been on the Ronald McDonald House Charities Board for two years and about six months ago, Marlene asked me to join the PRMH Board. I was so excited because I've always wanted to be on the board so that I could do more to help and get more involved with the House. It's been a great experience so far!

What prompted you and your husband to underwrite a room in the new tower?
My good friend, Erica Spencer's baby, Mason, became ill and was sent to the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. At first, they were unable to stay at the House because it was full and they were commuting back and forth from the hospital every day—making a stressful situation even harder. Mike and I knew that we wanted to sponsor a part of the new House, but when Erica was turned away, it became immediately obvious that we were going to sponsor a bedroom and who we were going to name the room after. Erica and I met through working at McDonald's together years ago and became friends. She is so incredible and has dedicated her whole life to Mason. She is his lifeline and is just so amazing. We told Erica about the room at our wedding in August. It was very emotional and we are happy to be able to do this.

What is your favorite part of being involved in the House?
I love getting my community, employees, and customers involved in supporting the House in any way that they can, even my ice hockey team! It's amazing to talk to people about the House and to see how many people have been affected by it—either they've stayed themselves or they know someone who stayed here. It's touching to know that it has touched so many lives and I'm happy to raise awareness about the House and continue to get more involved.

9TH ANNUAL PLANE PULL, PRESENTED BY ALLSTATE INSURANCE COMPANY

On Sunday, September 10, 2017, more than 670 participants from 29 teams came out to the 9th Annual Plane Pull, presented by Allstate Insurance Company, to see which team could pull an airplane in the fastest time. Each team raised a minimum of $2,500 to participate in the event, but many exceeded their goal to help support the families of seriously ill children. The event was a huge success raising $174,270. Congratulations to Pull My Finger for the Kids, who were the 2017 champions, and to Philadelphia Insurance Companies who were the best dressed group. We’d like to recognize our outstanding presenting sponsor, Allstate Insurance Company, for their tremendous support and for helping make this event a success.

We are also grateful for Chickie’s and Pete’s, who were our highest fundraising team, along with Marketplace PHL, for coordinating the food donations, and All Event Party Rental, Anthony’s Party Rentals, UPS, Atlantic Aviation and Lotman Management, Herr’s Chips, DJ Perry, our emcee Jeff Hammond, A Fresh Focus Photography, Coca-Cola, the Philadelphia Phillies’ Phanatic, the Philadelphia Eagles’ Swoop, the Philadelphia 76ers’ Flight Squad and Dancers, and the Philadelphia Flyers’ Ice Girls for helping make this such a great event. View photos from the Plane Pull at www.philaRMH.org/2017PlanePullPhotos
This list represents all of our donors who help us create a community of comfort and hope at $500 or above.
DONATIONS FROM THE HEART - 06/01/2017 TO 10/15/2017 CONTINUED

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Thank you to all who helped create a week of fun, friendship, and freedom from being different for kids with cancer and their siblings this summer at Ronald McDonald Camp.

Vote for Ronald McDonald Camp in the Northwestern Mutual Camp Contest starting on December 20th and help campers experience a new program exploring the wonders of the universe in 2018. Visit [www.philarmh.org/vote](http://www.philarmh.org/vote) to learn more.