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Spring 2011

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## Save the Date! Black Tie Gala Saturday, October 22, 2011

Home is where the heart is. And whether you graduated yesterday or 40 years ago, it's hard to forget the excitement of a homecoming dance.

Mark your calendar for Saturday, October 22, at The Pfister Hotel in downtown Milwaukee. Cocktails and silent auction will begin at 5:30 p.m. followed by a delectable dinner, live auction and dancing to the Eddie Butts Band.

Please visit [www.rmhcmilwaukee.org](http://www.rmhcmilwaukee.org) to register and learn about event sponsorship opportunities.

A good time is assured, but we can't promise you'll be home by curfew!

## Black Tie Gala

Thank you to everyone who attended our 2010  
RMH Black Tie Gala - Oktoberfest!  
With your support, we raised nearly \$245,000.  
Special thanks to our generous sponsors:

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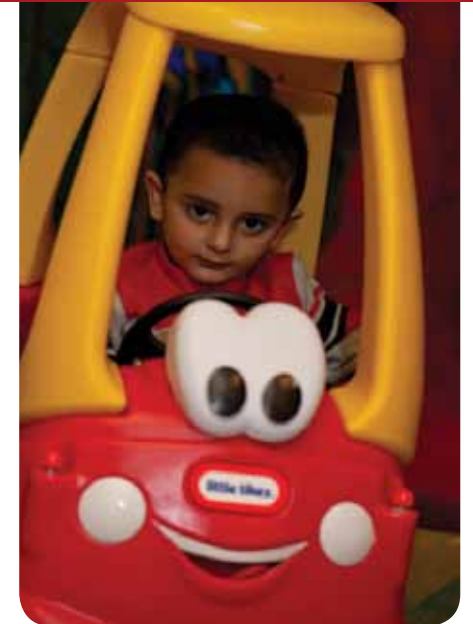


## Mission Statement:

Ronald McDonald House Charities of Eastern Wisconsin, Inc. is dedicated to **easing the burden of families whose lives have been disrupted** as a result of their child's illness or injury. We provide a **home-away-from-home** and **caring outreach initiatives**.



They were 6,000 miles from their home in Egypt, but the Abuzaid/Hagazy family felt welcome at the Ronald McDonald House. Two-year-old Mohamed played with every toy in the playroom. Mohamed's dad, Tarek says, "We didn't believe such a place existed."



## Finding Family Far from Home

Nancy Abuzaid and Terek Hagazy, residents of Cairo, Egypt, had never heard of Wisconsin and couldn't find it on a map. Yet they didn't hesitate when they were told to take their baby to Children's Hospital of Wisconsin for medical treatment. They traveled more than 6,000 miles to a country where they knew no one. They had no idea what to expect in Milwaukee or how long they'd have to stay.

But they trusted that doctors who could cure their son were waiting for them. And a place called the Ronald McDonald House would welcome their family.

"We didn't believe that such a place existed until we arrived at the Ronald McDonald House," says Terek. "We expected it to be a room in a small hotel, but we quickly learned that the Ronald McDonald House is so much more."

Their son Mohamed was born in 2008 with a rare congenital abnormality. Surgeons in Egypt didn't have the specialized expertise to help Mohamed. Nancy, a physician, and Terek, a physical therapist, learned that Children's

Hospital has one of the world's most advanced programs for Mohamed's condition.

Mohamed was just four months old the first time he had surgery at Children's. His two older brothers stayed home with their grandmother, while his parents stayed at the Ronald McDonald House just across the street from the hospital. Nancy and Terek immediately felt comfortable at the House. When Mohamed returned for follow-up surgery last winter, his parents felt like they were coming home. "It's like being with family," Nancy says.

After recovering from surgery, Mohamed was able to join his parents at the Ronald McDonald House. Now a lively two-year-old, Mohamed quickly met a new friend. The two toddlers spent happy hours romping in the playrooms and making art projects together. Nancy and Terek especially appreciated the kitchens, where they could prepare meals in keeping with their Muslim dietary restrictions. The computer room enabled them to stay in touch with family

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## Board of Directors

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RMH Chairman of the Board, Bob Monday with President, Lynda Kohler.

## HOPE Lines by Lynda Kohler and Bob Monday

*Lori Huebner and Homero Avila hardly remember the first few weeks at Children's Hospital of Wisconsin. The Chicago couple dozed in a chair at their son's bedside and ate food from the cafeteria and vending machines. Then the shattering diagnosis: brain cancer. Eighteen-month-old Izzy needed immediate surgery, followed by nine months of chemotherapy and radiation. Day after day, the couple hoped for a room at the Ronald McDonald House. Finally, four weeks later, a room became available. "This is the first time that we could really lay our heads down, relax, and just breathe," Lori told us.*

*Sadly, we hear stories like theirs every day. For Izzy's family and for the 755 other families we had to turn away in 2010, RMHC of Eastern Wisconsin, Inc. is fully committed to an expansion plan that will enable us to help more families.*

*In the first phase, we will more than double our current size. If those rooms were available tonight, every one of them would be full. Research shows that within ten years, we'll have to more than double the size of the House again. The growth and national reputation of Children's Hospital has also increased the need to accommodate more families. We'd also like to serve families of pediatric patients at other area hospitals.*

*We're working diligently with Milwaukee County to purchase additional land adjacent to the House. We're also working to increase visibility of our mission. The outpouring of community support is so encouraging!*

*We're thrilled to announce that RMHC of Eastern Wisconsin will be one of the beneficiaries of the inaugural Summerfest Rock 'n Sole Half Marathon and 10K Run. Watch our web site for more news.*

*From Izzy's family, from the more than 32,000 other families who have called the Ronald McDonald House home, from the bottom of our hearts, we thank you for your enduring support. ♥*

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and friends back home.

The family's insurance only covers medical treatment in Egypt. They spent about \$125,000 out of pocket for the two surgeries and transportation. "A hotel would have cost money that we don't have," explains Terek. "And at the Ronald McDonald House, we've met other families in a similar situation. They understand what we're going through."

The Abuzaid / Hagazy family returned home in December with good news: Mohamed will not need further surgery and will have a healthy, normal life.

Back in Cairo, Nancy and Terek are determined to help open a Ronald McDonald House. "My hope is for a Ronald McDonald House everywhere in the world," Nancy says. "Words cannot express how wonderful this place is." ♥

## Love ♥ Note

Ginny O. • 120 Days • Oconto Falls, WI

"We could never put a price tag on having a place to stay while our little guy was in the hospital. The Ronald McDonald House is very important to our family. Thank you for being there for us in our greatest time of need!"

## The Word is Out:

### Area Salons are a Cut Above

Partnerships with three Milwaukee-area salons help raise awareness of RMHC of Eastern Wisconsin – and help sick kids and their parents feel a bit pampered.

For almost 20 years, Carenza has been offering free services to House guests. Carenza also raises awareness and donations through various promotions. "This is a way we can make a difference," says Laurence Saybold, who owns Carenza with his wife Jan. "It helps families save money, while providing them a chance to renew their mind, spirit and personal image."

VICI Capelli Beauty School helped raise funds to open the Ronald McDonald House in 1984. The school now donates student services to House guests. Owner Penny Rushing has

two goals: to help parents and sick kids feel better. And to teach her students the value of sharing and caring for others. "My students are so moved by these families," Penny says. "It's been a phenomenal transformation for them."

The 35 Great Clips salons in the Milwaukee market co-op serve as official pop-tab collection sites. Last year alone, pop tabs raised more than \$26,000 for the charity. Great Clips also held a cut-a-thon fundraiser at the Wisconsin State Fair last summer. "This is a great way to raise awareness and funds for the Ronald McDonald House," says Berrin Snyder, co-op president and owner of five area salons. "We're proud to be part of it." ♥



RMH mom Traci received some well-deserved pampering at the VICI Capelli salon while her baby daughter was hospitalized. Kodi, stylist, has donated services to more than 20 families at the House.



# Making A Difference

## Togetherness Aids Healing

Having her mother by her side made all the difference in Kim Buchholz's recovery. The 15-year-old from Wilton, Wisconsin, was treated for an eating disorder at Roger's Memorial Hospital in Milwaukee, one of the country's foremost such programs. "It was hard," Kim acknowledges. "Having my mom to talk to, supporting me through it all, helped so much."

After three weeks of intensive inpatient treatment, Kim was ready for partial hospitalization, a program of therapy and education that meets six hours each day. But without somewhere to stay near the hospital, Kim would have no choice but to discontinue treatment. Even an inexpensive motel wasn't an option for a month-long stay. "The Ronald McDonald House was a load off our minds," says Kim's mom, Darcy. "From the moment we first walked through the door, it felt like home. It's such a warm, loving place."

Both Darcy and Kim treasure the time they spent together at the House. They drew support and encouragement from other parents and teens staying there. Mother and daughter practiced new behaviors that would help Kim maintain her recovery once back home. The House's newly launched wellness program made a world of difference, Darcy says. As part of the program, yoga classes relaxed them and gave them a calmer outlook with which to start the day.

"Staying at the Ronald McDonald House brought us closer," says Darcy. "We had time together to talk and work through things."

Kim believes that without the Ronald McDonald House, she would have had to leave treatment before she was ready and probably would have relapsed. "The Ronald McDonald House honestly saved us," Kim affirms. ♥



Kim Buchholz and her mom Darcy drew support from the House's new wellness program. "It made a world of difference," says Darcy.



As always, the annual holiday boutique and luncheon was a popular event, raising more than \$85,000 to help ill and injured kids and their families.



Kids and families sang and danced up a storm when the Love Monkeys, a favorite local band, performed an interactive concert at the House. "We can't wait for them to come back!" says one budding new rock star.



Frequent House guest Nic Volker makes the opening kick at Wave of Hope, the Milwaukee Wave professional indoor soccer team's New Years Eve benefit for RMHC of Eastern Wisconsin.



A big welcome to our new Director of House Operations, Jessica Greb. Jessica joined our team in early March from Kohl's Corporate. Jessica says, "I am very honored to join the amazing staff at RMH. I am looking forward to finding new ways to make the RMH feel more like home for the families who stay with us. Every family has a different set of needs. With the help of my team, I would like for us to be able to identify and accommodate as many as those needs as possible in order to ensure that their stay with us feels like home."



The first Social Open House drew a crowd of more than 150 potential supporters in December, all eager to witness the House first-hand and learn how they could help.

Join us on May 5, 2011 in the RMH lower parking lot for our annual Tab Toss Day event. Stop by anytime to drop off your tabs or from 3-5:30pm to see Ronald McDonald. Don't forget your cameras!!!

**Help Us Collect Pop Tabs!**

Tell your friends and family, too!

Visit: [www.rmhcmlwaukee.org](http://www.rmhcmlwaukee.org) for container labels!

## Feeding Families, Nourishing Souls

Chef Aaron Jadofsky has been nourishing the bodies and souls of families at the Ronald McDonald House since it opened in 1984. He and student members of the International Food Services Executives Association prepared the first Christmas meal served at the House. The rest is history.

"At that first Christmas dinner, Sister Mary Mel O'Dowd, the House executive director, said, 'Chef, I expect to see you here for all my holidays.' I said, 'Sister, it's a done deal,'" Chef Aaron recalls.

Chef and his volunteers have been serving Christmas, Thanksgiving and Easter dinners at the House ever since. Chef also visits as St. Nicholas.

"I'm in it for the warmth, the smiles and the hugs," says Chef Aaron. He carries a hand-made card in his briefcase, presented to him by a six year old after Christmas dinner this year. Hand-painted with starships and animals, the card reads, "Thank you, Chef. I love you."

The owner of a catering business, Chef Aaron Enterprises, Chef is never too busy to help the Ronald McDonald House. "The House is part of my heart," he says. "Every staff member I've had the privilege to work with over the years have been beautiful people. I am grateful to be able to support the House and provide holiday meals." ♥

Chef Aaron and his volunteers relax after preparing a Christmas feast for House Guests.

## A Virtuoso in the Kitchen and in the Community

Chef Knut Apitz is legendary in culinary circles nationwide, but here at the Ronald McDonald House he is downright revered. The former owner and executive chef of Grenadier's, a landmark Milwaukee restaurant, Chef Apitz has orchestrated the annual Chef's Dinner to benefit RMHC of Eastern Wisconsin since 1986.

Shortly after the Ronald McDonald House opened, Chef Apitz's good friend and customer James Pihos proposed an annual event to benefit the charity. A McDonald's owner/operator, Pihos helped found our House and has been a staunch supporter ever since. Pihos and Apitz cooked up an exceptional idea: an annual Chef's Dinner showcasing some of Wisconsin's finest chefs – and supporting RMHC of Eastern Wisconsin.

Presented by The American Culinary Federation, Inc. Chefs of Milwaukee and orchestrated by Chef Apitz, the Chef's Dinner celebrated its 25th anniversary in February. The event has raised more than \$370,000 for our charity.

"We are so grateful for the quarter-century commitment Chef Apitz has made to the mission of Ronald McDonald House Charities," says Lynda Kohler, president of RMHC of Eastern Wisconsin.

Now retired, Chef Apitz has long mentored students and young chefs. Their training includes giving back to the community that supports their business. "What goes around comes around," he says. "When you put together good people, good spirits and a good cause, something good always comes out of it." ♥

*Chef Knut Apitz has been the talent behind the Annual Chef's Dinner for 25 years.*



**Thank you, Marilyn Brender for your years of service!**

## Quilts of Love Legacy Society

We invite you to consider becoming a member of our newly created legacy society called Quilts of Love. Quilts of Love was created to honor the commitment of those individuals who have named Ronald McDonald House Charities of Eastern Wisconsin, Inc. as a beneficiary of their will or estate plan or have planned a life income gift. The generosity from our members will ensure we will be able to provide a home-away-from-home for families with hospitalized children for as long as they need and for years to come. For more information, please contact Terri Isabell at 414/475-1073 or [tisabell@rmhcmilwaukee.org](mailto:tisabell@rmhcmilwaukee.org) or visit our website at [www.rmhcmilwaukee.org](http://www.rmhcmilwaukee.org). ♥

## Help others with Tax-Free Gifts from your IRA

If you're looking for the most tax-effective gift to make to Ronald McDonald House Charities of Eastern Wisconsin, Congress recently extended a law that allows individuals who have reached the age at which required minimum distributions must be made (age 70½ and above) to make tax-free gifts now using funds transferred directly from their IRAs to qualified charitable organizations like ours. You can transfer any amount up to \$100,000 through the end of 2011. Please contact your estate or financial advisor for more details.



*Dave Lelinski and his wife Cheryle celebrate with Ronald McDonald at the 25th Annual Black Tie Gala.*

## Fox Valley McDonald's Owner/Operator Gives a Hand

McDonald's owner/operator Dave Lelinski translated his own passion for Ronald McDonald House Charities into a lot of helping hands in the Fox Valley area. Dave inspired the crew at this three Oshkosh stores to promote the McDonald's Give a Hand fundraiser. Held every November, the worldwide event benefits local RMHC Chapters.

Dave's stores enthusiastically took up the Give a Hand challenge. One of his stores sold the most \$1 paper "hands" in the co-op. The other two were right behind. Together they raised \$4,100 for RMHC of Eastern Wisconsin.

About 35 percent of the families who stay at the Ronald McDonald House in Milwaukee come from the Fox Valley area," Dave explains. "I think the community here is surprised to learn that. We try to raise awareness of the charity and how it helps families here."

Dave and his wife learned through personal experience what the Ronald McDonald House means to families. When their infant son was hospitalized at Children's Hospital, they stayed across the street at the House. "We were focused on taking care of our son. Everyone at the House was focused on taking care of us," Dave recalls. "It was truly a phenomenal experience." ♥

## Summerfest Rock 'n Sole Run to Benefit RMHC

Please join us for the inaugural Summerfest Rock 'n Sole Half Marathon and 10K Run on Sunday, July 10, 2011 - the closing day of Summerfest. Both runs will start and finish at Summerfest and include a stretch over the Daniel Hoan Memorial Bridge.

Net proceeds from the Summerfest Rock 'n Sole Half Marathon and 10K Run will benefit Ronald McDonald House Charities of Eastern Wisconsin, Inc. and Milwaukee World Festival, Inc.

"The Summerfest Half Marathon and 10K Run will undoubtedly be an excellent opportunity to showcase Milwaukee but it will also be an incredible way to bring attention to the Ronald McDonald House and its mission of providing comfort for families that are typically facing the worst crisis of their lives," said Lynda Kohler, President. "We couldn't be more thrilled to be a part of this world-class event."

Don Smiley, President and Chief Executive Officer of Milwaukee World Festival, Inc. is committed to supporting this annual partnership with Ronald McDonald House Charities of Eastern Wisconsin, Inc.

Register in advance at [www.Active.com](http://www.Active.com) through March 31, 2011 before fees increase on April 1, 2011.

If you are interested in volunteering or want to learn more about this exciting event, please visit [www.Rmhcmilwaukee.org](http://www.Rmhcmilwaukee.org) or [www.Rocknsolerun.com](http://www.Rocknsolerun.com). ♥

