



# Family News

FALL EDITION 2010

## Reid and Ryan: A Reassuring Friendship

Thirteen-year-old Reid Milner and his dad, John, sat together in the family room of Ronald McDonald House. As Reid worked through the crushing news, he began to express his fears. Reid's questions to his dad ran the gamut: "Am I going to die? Will kids make fun of me? What if I never get my trach out again? Can I be home-schooled?"

Reid was scared. He had already spent several years traveling between his home in California and Cincinnati Children's to have his airway reconstructed. At age six, with his tracheostomy removed and his airway clear, surgeries and medical procedures were behind him. Reid and the Milner family's life had returned to normal. Reid was enjoying swimming and sports – a perfectly healthy teenager.



*Ryan and Reid share their journey and a friendship for life.*

The two boys began to talk. Ryan, who also lives in California, only a few hours away from Reid, had experienced the same thing. "I had my trach out, too," Ryan explained, "and then had to have another one." On this trip, however, Ryan was in Cincinnati to have his second trach removed. Ryan was very happy about his own progress, and he was also happy to listen to Reid and help lessen his fears about the upcoming surgery.

Reid began to direct his many questions to Ryan. As Ryan answered, you could see the fears and tension in Reid's face begin to dissolve.

Reid's surgery was successful. Amazingly, his trach was removed within a matter of weeks. Both Reid and Ryan are now back in California. Both have begun a new school year. Like most teens – and so many RMHC families – these boys and their families will remain in touch. They'll e-mail and chat through instant messaging to keep up with one another and compare stories. They'll exchange holiday greetings. They'll forever – in some way – be a part of one another's lives.

More than one family has said that Ronald McDonald House is the only place where "strangers become family." Through the generous donors who support Ronald McDonald House, the Milner and Gutierrez families are one more example of strangers who leave as family.

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### Our Mission:

Cincinnati's Ronald McDonald House provides an affordable "home away from home" to families and their children seeking medical treatment at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center or other area hospitals.

### Our Vision:

To offer all the comforts of home to every family with a hospitalized child.

*Without Ronald McDonald House, we wouldn't have been able to meet so many people going through the same thing. Other families really get what you're going through.*

*- Sherri Milner, Reid's mom.*

But this past summer, things began to change. And, what Reid thought was a trip to Cincinnati Children's for routine testing resulted in his being scheduled for airway surgery – the very next day. Reid's mom, Sherri, along with his brother and sister, immediately headed to Cincinnati – to Ronald McDonald House – so the family could be together for Reid.

With his arm around Reid, John Milner lovingly – one question at a time – reassured his son. He reminded Reid, "Your surgeon is the very best. Kids come from all over the world for this very same procedure." Then, from across the room, 16-year-old Ryan Gutierrez spoke. "Your dad's right. I'm one of those kids."

**THIS is why Ronald McDonald House is here. THIS is what you make happen – every day – at our House. Because of you, critically ill children can say, "I am not alone."**



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Current Room Sponsors

Permanent room naming starts at \$25,000 and can be pledged over a 3 – 5 year period. To learn more about permanently naming a room in our House, please contact Development Director Jill Miller at (513) 636-9679 or JMiller@RMHouse.org .

- Muhammad & Kathryn Al-Lamadani
- Dave and Victoria Angner
- Sydney and Bob Anning
- Pam and Gordon Bonfield
- Ashley Ward, Inc. in memory of Peter Douglas Bowes
- The Seth Bailey Memorial Flight
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- The Guttman Family in honor of the 50th Wedding Anniversary of Murray & Florence Guttman
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- Jerry and Nancy Hollenkamp in loving memory of Aubrey Rose Hollenkamp
- William Hueneke Foundation, Huntington National Bank, Trustee
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- Ohio National Financial Services
- Piano Play-a-Thon
- Vince and Anne Rinaldi
- The Employees of Rough Brothers
- Josephine Schell Russell Charitable Trust, PNC Bank, Trustee
- The Family of Taylor Michelle Russell
- Bob and Dell Ann Sathe
- Mike and Janet Sepela
- Smith & Schaefer, Inc.
- The Jack J. Smith Jr. Charitable Trust, PNC Bank and Karen B. Wachs, Co-Trustees
- The Spaulding Foundation
- Bob and Lynn Stenger
- Zachary Stephan and the Robbie Slack Memorial Tennis Tournament
- The Gary Thompson Family
- Bridget Ann Vespe
- Hal Welge Building Contractor, Inc.
- The Welge Family in memory of Helen P. Welge and Harold F. Welge, Sr.
- Felicia, Neal, Caleb and Camille Williams

Although every attempt is made to accurately report all of our donors, errors can occur. We apologize for any misspelling or omission. Please contact Shirley Wuske at (513) 636-9304 with corrections.



Family’s Loving Memory of Their Little Girl Cares For Other RMHC Families

At just four years old, Taylor Michelle Russell lost her battle with HLH (a rare disorder of the immune system). Like any mother, Taylor’s mom, Melanie, was devastated. But Melanie and her sister, Taylor’s Aunt Michelle, were also determined to help other children and families. And, just one day after Taylor’s passing, with tears streaming down their faces, Melanie and Michelle sat down with members of our staff and shared their family’s desire to permanently name Ronald McDonald House Room 55 – the room they called “home” – in loving memory of Taylor Michelle.

Although Taylor Michelle Russell’s time on this earth was short, her impact is eternal. Having received the news of Taylor’s illness and her need for a bone marrow transplant, her family conducted a successful bone marrow drive through which hundreds of people were tested and registered with the National Donor Marrow Program – another example of how Taylor’s family remained determined to help not just Taylor, but others as well.

With two donor matches found, Taylor, Mom Melanie and Grandma Luella arrived in Cincinnati for what they hoped would be Taylor’s journey to wellness. Their “home” throughout this time was our Ronald McDonald House. During their time at our House, Melanie says, “We received love and support – and made friends for life.”

Following Taylor’s successful bone marrow transplant, she was discharged and allowed – with very few restrictions – to resume a normal life. But on Thanksgiving Day 2009, Taylor suffered congestive heart failure. Her family knew their time with Taylor would now be limited. Remaining in a pediatric intensive care unit, Taylor celebrated Christmas surrounded by family and rang in the new year with her mom and Grandma Luella by her side. Two weeks later, Taylor’s fight came to an end, but Room 55 – and Taylor’s memory – live on. The plaque outside the door to Taylor’s room reads:

*This room generously donated in loving memory of Taylor Michelle Russell - “Tay-Tay.” May this room be a blessing to you as it was to us – The Family of Taylor Michelle Russell.*

Permanent room naming begin at \$25,000 and can be paid in installments. For more information, contact Jill Miller at (513) 636-9679 or JMiller@RMHouse.org .

Will You Sponsor a Family for One Night?

Do you know that for \$25, you can help provide care and comfort for a Ronald McDonald House family for one night? Your \$25 donation will provide so much for a family at a time when they need it most:

- A clean, comfortable room and private bath
- Home-cooked meals
- Group activities and entertainment to relieve the day’s stress
- Caring volunteers
- Other families in similar circumstances with whom our guests can share hopes and fears.

To offer help, hope and a “home away from home” to a family, please return the enclosed envelope with your donation of \$25; or, visit [www.RMHCincinnati.org](http://www.RMHCincinnati.org) to donate on-line.

Golf Classic Nets \$100K

Presented by Rough Brothers, Inc., our 2010 Golf Classic drew a sell-out crowd of 236 golfers to Kenwood Country Club and raised net proceeds of more than \$100,000. A very special thank you to this year’s co-chairs, Paul Haffner and Steve Eklund, and to our generous corporate sponsors who gave more than \$5,000: McDonald’s, Richard Goettle Co., KDM P.O.P. Solutions Group, Great American Insurance Company, Ideopia and Toshiba America Medical Systems.



Mark your calendar for next year’s Golf Classic - June 13, 2011



## Thank You

from our Executive Director

### Your Impact ...

Each day, I have the privilege of walking into Ronald McDonald House and seeing the impact of an incredibly caring community. **Your** generosity has an amazing impact on our House and our families.

Our House is full – every day – with 78 families. With an average of three people per room, that's nearly 234 children and family members **you** provide care for each day. Our House is so fortunate to receive 12% of our annual operating budget from our local McDonald's owner/operators and customers. The remainder of our operating revenue comes from **you**, our individual and corporate donors, foundations and civic organizations. We receive no local, state or federal grant funds and we are not a United Way agency.

When it comes to volunteer services, our community's involvement is overwhelming. In 2009 alone, more than 350 guest services volunteers donated a total of 25,000 hours of their time. More than 1,000 meal and snack groups and 507 activities groups provided 50,000 volunteer hours. Of course, all of the love and support that came with these volunteers is priceless.

But what matters most is the direct impact **your** support has on our guest families. Our surveys indicate that when our families arrive at Ronald McDonald House, their stress level is at 5 on a scale of 1 to 5. These same surveys also indicate that when our families leave our House, their stress level is down to 1 or 2. And this is precisely why **your** impact makes **you** part of the healing process – because a less-stressed, well-rested parent is always able to provide better care for a sick child. Thank **you** for making it all possible.

Jennifer Goodin  
Executive Director

## Volunteer Spotlight

### Volunteer's Birthday Surprise – A Room Adoption at Ronald McDonald House

Vonnie Butera has been an RMHC volunteer for 14 years, “starting with our first House,” she says. When you ask Vonnie what keeps her coming back, her answer is simple: “I see all that families are going through. I just have to do something to ease their discomfort.”

So, when it was time to celebrate her 60th birthday, Vonnie's husband Ed knew just what to do. In the middle of Vonnie's birthday dinner at a Pittsburgh restaurant, Ed pulled out his laptop and showed Vonnie her gift – a Ronald McDonald House room adoption. “I knew this would mean more to you than anything,” Ed told Vonnie. Ed was right.

And Vonnie doesn't miss a beat when you ask her favorite part of volunteering: “To see those kids go home – healthy and happy.”

*To find out more about adopting a room to celebrate a special occasion in your family or honor a friend or colleague, contact Development Director Jill Miller at [JMiller@RMHouse.org](mailto:JMiller@RMHouse.org) or (513) 636-9679.*



*Kelly Meigs says, “Thank you!”*

### Best Buy Meal Group Helps Make Our House a “Home”

The employees of Best Buy know how much a home-cooked meal means to a family who is far from home, spending long days at the hospital. To help relieve the stress and strain, Best Buy staff members routinely prepare meals for the guest families at Ronald McDonald House. Each time they volunteer, they also nominate our House for a Best Buy “Tag Team Award” of \$1,000. These awards helped our Best Buy volunteer meal group become an annual room sponsor. From all who share your meals and all who call your adopted room their “home,” thank you!

*If you and your friends would like to help prepare a meal for our guest families, please contact Lisa Davis at (513) 636-2760 or [LDavis@RMHouse.org](mailto:LDavis@RMHouse.org).*

### Lola's Big Wish – A Dance with Ochocinco

Four-year-old Lola Meyn of New Orleans first came to Cincinnati's Ronald McDonald House back in 2009 so Lola could receive medical treatment. While Lola and her mom, Erin Hardin, were here, they had the opportunity to visit the Cincinnati Bengals at their training camp in Georgetown, Kentucky. This little Saints fan fell in love with our Bengals – one in particular. After watching last year's season of “Dancing with the Stars,” little Lola focused on one big wish. “When I go back to Cincinnati's Ronald McDonald House,” she said, “I want to dance with Chad Ochocinco.” That's all Bengals #85 needed to hear. This past July, Lola and her mom returned to Bengals Training Camp with something more than just football on their minds. Lola got her big wish – and the Bengals got a new little cheerleader.



*Chad Ochocinco with Erin Hardin and Lola Meyn*



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## Planned Giving Helps Ensure the Future

Help us ensure the future of our House by remembering us in your will.

To learn more about planned giving options, please contact Planned Giving Director Tracy Monroe at [TMonroe@RMHouse.org](mailto:TMonroe@RMHouse.org); or, feel free to speak with any member of our staff.

## Wish List of Items Needed Around the House

Please help us stock our shelves with much-needed household items, such as cereal, healthy snacks and daily staples.

Currently our five most-needed items are: disinfectant wipes, zip-lock bags, cereal, foil, cooking oil, fresh fruits and vegetables and freezer meals.

To see more needed items, please visit our website at [www.RMHCincinnati.org](http://www.RMHCincinnati.org) or email Carine deLonge at [CdeLonge@RMHouse.org](mailto:CdeLonge@RMHouse.org).



Now that the kids are back in school, here's a great project for their classroom, sports team or scout troop. Each time you pull the tab to open a can of soda, soup or even tuna, save the pull tab. Those little tabs add up to some big dollars for Ronald McDonald House. Bring all the saved tabs to Cincinnati's Ronald McDonald House. We will recycle them to raise funds for all the children and families who call our House a "home."

## Save the Date

October 23 Red Tie Gala  
Hyatt Regency Cincinnati  
Visit: [www.RedTieGala.org](http://www.RedTieGala.org)

November 25 Thanksgiving Day Race

December 6 Share a Night

For more information, please visit our website at [www.rmhcincinnati.org](http://www.rmhcincinnati.org); or, contact Events Manager Tracy Carl at [TCarl@RMHouse.org](mailto:TCarl@RMHouse.org); or (513) 636-5551.

## Remember Our Donation Boxes

*Whether you're driving through or dining in, please remember our donation boxes at your local McDonald's. Your spare change directly supports the children and families of Ronald McDonald House Charities.*