



# FROM OUR HOUSE TO YOUR HOME



YOUR RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE CHARITIES OF ALABAMA NEWSLETTER [www.rmhca.org](http://www.rmhca.org) ♥ (205) 212-7255

FALL 2009

Ronald McDonald House Charities of Alabama 1700 4th Ave. South, Birmingham AL 35233

## Celebrating 30 Years and 31,000 Families with Your Support



On Sunday, September 13 the Ronald McDonald House celebrated thirty years and 31,000 families by inviting past families and friends of the House to a "Family Reunion." Families from all over the state came back for the occasion to show their appreciation for the services the

Ronald McDonald House provided them during their time of need.

Faye Ray brought her daughter Claudia and made a cake for the occasion (far right picture). She and Claudia stayed at the House for about six months when Claudia was born premature with a heart defect on October 28, 2008.

The Lee family (center picture) also returned from their home in Enterprise after being at the House in 2008 for

one month when twins Meona Eloise and Melissa Grace were born weighing two and three pounds.

The twins' father, Donnie Lee, told the Birmingham News, "We couldn't have afforded to have stayed up here in a



hotel. It's a blessing. It was like coming home, coming back up here."

Three generations of women came from Montgomery in memory of their daughter and granddaughter. Even though their little girl did not make it through her illness, they felt the house was a special

place and wanted to come back to pay their respect for the special occasion.

Birmingham's original nine-bedroom house opened on May 30, 1979. It was the fifth in the nation, the first to open debt free, and the first to open in a city without an NFL franchise. The house expanded to thirty-two bedrooms in 1991, and in the Fall of 2007 the families and staff moved into the current house with forty-one bedrooms. Birmingham's Ronald McDonald House is now one of 286 houses in 30 countries.

Thanks to the support of the many generous people out there, the facility has improved, but the challenge of being far from home while battling a life-threatening illness or injury has not changed over the past thirty years.



## Founders Dinner 2009 Honoring Coach Gene Stallings



Our heartfelt appreciation goes out to everyone who attended, donated or volunteered for the 7th Annual Founders Dinner on August 20. In this difficult economy it took much more effort than usual, but the hard work paid off!

Guests mingled and bid on a fabulous array of items including luxurious vacations, shiny jewelry, instant wine cel-

lars and beautiful art, not to mention a SmartCar, Harley Davidson and plenty of sports memorabilia.



It was an exciting night with Coach Gene Stallings and Bart Starr in the house. Starr presented Coach Stallings with the Founders Award quoting Winston Churchill, "We make a living from what we get, we make a life from what we give." This quote is Coach Stallings." Stallings, honored and surprised by the Founders Award, urged attendees to give of themselves saying,

"Do the best you can with what you've got and make it a little easier on somebody else. Thank you for making a difference in somebody else's life."



Check out more pictures from the event on our website: [www.rmhca.org](http://www.rmhca.org).



[www.rmhca.org](http://www.rmhca.org)

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**New RMHCA Staff**

Patricia Mattison Craft, joined the Ronald McDonald House family in July as Development Manager. Craft comes to us from the Birmingham Regional Chamber of Commerce. After graduating from the College of Charleston in 2005 with a Bachelors degree in Political Science, she moved to DC during which time she achieved a certificate in Event Management. Craft is committed to making Birmingham a better place by serving as Chair of the civic group Catalyst for Birmingham and in her spare time, she trains for half marathons.



**Christopher Lowell and Jo-Ann make contribution to Library**

A big thank you to Christopher Lowell and Jo-Ann fabric and craft store for decorating the Ronald McDonald House library. Decorating the library was part of the Grand Opening of the new store in Riverchase Plaza. Lowell contributed his design of new drapes and newly covered cushions in the window seat with fabric donated from the new store.

The fabric and craft store also donated a



gift certificate as well as many bags of Halloween and fall goodies and decorations. (As shown in the picture with Lowell). Also, on Saturday, September 26, Jo-Ann held a project day where customers could create blankets for the families staying here at the Ronald McDonald House.

We are so grateful for all of the exciting contributions, come by and check out the decorations in the library and the house which is ready for fall and Halloween!

**New Young Leadership Board Officers Elected**

*Calling all 20's and 30's to join the Young Leadership Board*

The Young Leadership Board (YLB) for the Ronald McDonald House meets on the second Tuesday of each month planning family dinners, fundraisers, and other ways to garner attention for the Ronald McDonald House. The YLB recently raised almost \$2,000 with the Red Stiletto Party where attendees donned red stilettos and red ties. Red noses were also a fun addition.

The YLB named new officers at the September meeting and have planned many fun parties for the families including a tailgating cookout for the Ole Miss v. South Carolina game on September 24 (pictured left) and a Holiday Party on December 8 where the kids can get their photos with Santa and families can decorate ginger bread cookies. The YLB brings much happiness and light to the families staying at the House with their dinners



and fun events. If you are between the ages of 18-38 and are interested in joining the YLB, contact Patricia Craft at [patricia.craft@rmhca.org](mailto:patricia.craft@rmhca.org) or 205-212-7263.

**'09-'10 Officers:**

**Keri Till, President**  
(pictured right)  
ProEquities



**Cheryl Oswalt, VP - House Events**  
Sirote & Permutt

**Nick Braud, VP - Social Events**  
Waldrep, Stewart & Kendrick

**Michelle Crunk, Secretary**  
Ferguson, Frost, & Dodson, LLP

**Catherine Hawkins, Communications Chair**  
Dave's Pub

**Ryan Jones, Membership Chair**  
United States Army

**That Could be Me**

*Designate RMHCA!*

It's United Way Campaign time again. This year the theme is "That could be me," expressing that in this difficult economy, any one of us could be hurting, but then again, any one of us can make a difference. At the Ronald McDonald House we are very familiar with that theme. It is even more crucial to help out

now than ever when so many of us are cutting back. Every little bit helps. Please give to the United Way and remember the Ronald McDonald House is a designations only agency, so please designate us!



## RM Family Room @ DCH Regional Medical Center

*Help Us Build the Family Room!*

In early 2010 the Family Room at DCH Regional Medical Center in Tuscaloosa will open and provide a respite for families in the hospital with their sick children knowing they are only steps away from their child's bedside.

When a child is critically ill, parents are reluctant to leave the hospital. Yet they desperately need a break from the ongoing stress of beeping monitors and busy intensive care units. Research shows that a family presence in the hospital helps children heal faster. Staying close by allows parents to better communicate with their child's medical team.

The family room will include:

- ♥ Kitchen
- ♥ LA-Z-BOYS
- ♥ Large Screen Television
- ♥ Computer workstation with internet access

This 78th family room to open in the United States needs your help to be built and to provide this place of healing and hope. If you wish to make a donation to the Family Room DCH Tuscaloosa, please make a note of that on the envelope accompanying this newsletter or when you give online.



### The Holidays are Coming!

Once again this year we will have a holiday mailing with an interactive component. When you receive your holiday card you will receive an ornament which you can write an inspirational message to the families on the back and mail to us to use to decorate our Tree of Hope. Check out the photo to the left to see how wonderful the tree looked in 2008 with your many hopeful words. Please help us continue this tradition by sending the ornament back for the 2009 Tree of Hope when you receive your card.



### Red Nose Run

Check out [www.rednosrun-bham.com](http://www.rednosrun-bham.com) and please sign up to participate on January 9, 2010 in one of the following ways:

- 1 mile, 5k, 10 mile
- Sleep in and still get the t-shirt
- Start a team and win prizes for raising money for RMHCA
- Volunteer at a water stop, registration, packet stuffing

### In Loving Memory of Lorayne Cooper

*Long-time supporter of children's learning and loving wife is mourned*

One year after the passing of Lorayne Cooper, wife of Ronald McDonald House co-founder Max Cooper, John Parker (pictured with Max far right) completed the Butterfly Garden as his Eagle Scout Project and it was dedicated in memory of Lorayne,

who spent years in Chicago as a kindergarten teacher teaching children how to read, on August 4, 2009. About forty people attended the dedication ceremony which unveiled the statue of the little girl reading a book.

Max and Lorayne took an active role in the transition of the original House to the current home, which was completed in 2007. Executive Director, Mike Singer said, "It is because of sacrifice and dedication given by volunteers



like the Coopers that we're able to further our mission of providing a safe, affordable stay for sick or injured children, and their families, while receiving medical care in Birmingham."



### Other ways you can help

- Meals Program
- Collect Pop Tabs
- Decorate the House for Holidays (all year long)
- Put change in canisters at McDonald's
- Designate Ronald McDonald House Charities of Alabama on your United Way or CFC pledge card
- Volunteer around the House-groups welcome!

Proud Affiliate of  
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Ronald McDonald House Charities® of Alabama

1700 4th Avenue South  
Birmingham, AL 35233

Phone: 205-212-7255

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## Upcoming Events

**October 29, 2009**

**Allstate Insurance Presents  
Hallowpalooza**

**December 8, 2009**

**Young Leadership Board  
Holiday Party with Santa**

**January 9, 2010**

**Red Nose Run**

**May 3, 2010**

**8th Annual Ronald  
McDonald House Golf  
Invitational**

**facebook**

Get “connected” with the House! Be a fan on Facebook. Search for Ronald McDonald House Charities of Alabama

## Everyday Wish List Items:

**Gift Cards to Lowe's, Home  
Depot, K-Mart, Wal-Mart,  
Target, Costco, Sam's**

**Paper plates, paper bowls, straws,  
paper beverage cups, plastic  
silverware, napkins, paper towels,  
toilet paper**

**Liquid hand soap**

**Disposable food service gloves**

**Creamer, sugar, artificial  
sweetener**

**Laundry detergent, dishwasher  
detergent and dryer sheets (static-  
cling/softener)**

**Boxed Dinners/Cereal/Snacks**

**Fresh Fruit**

**Pre-paid phone cards**

**55 gallon black trash bags**

**Puzzle Books**

**Universal Remotes**

Have you written your will?

If you have and Ronald McDonald House Charities of Alabama is named, please let us know.

All financial decisions should be made with consultation of a tax advisor and/or attorney.

Thank you Sirote & Permutt for printing this newsletter.

 **Sirote**