



FROM OUR HOUSE TO YOUR HOME



YOUR RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE CHARITIES OF ALABAMA NEWSLETTER www.rmhca.org ♥ (205) 212-7255

FALL 2008

Ronald McDonald House Charities of Alabama | 700 4th Ave. South, Birmingham AL 35233

Your Support Has Given Hope to the Long Family

When LaTonya Long gave birth at 23 weeks, on Christmas Day, her doctors told her that she shouldn't expect Alissa to live more than a day. As Alissa fought to survive, her Tuscaloosa doctors soon realized she needed more specialized care than they could provide. Alissa got to ride



in a helicopter at a very early age as she was flown to Children's Hospital. Her father, Allen and LaTonya moved into the Ronald McDonald House on January 15, 2008. At just 15 ounces, the gold bracelet in the photo is her father's wedding band. Throughout the stress of

having a seriously ill child, who needed multiple surgeries, Allen and LaTonya have counted on a few things. First, their faith has allowed them to believe that their little girl would get better. Second, they used their situation to get closer to each other. Third, they were able to stay close to Alissa throughout her ups and downs by staying at the Ronald McDonald House. Early each morning, LaTonya and Allen would go to the NICU to stay by their daughter's side. When the unit closed, they would make their way back to the House for an afternoon snack and a quick nap. After dinner, they would return again until they were forced to leave at closing time again.

Allen has commuted to his nightly job in Northport, driving back to Birmingham when he had a couple of free days. Meanwhile, LaTonya has been at the House every day since Alissa came to Birmingham.

Not only have they had to deal with Alissa's condition, but LaTonya's aunt passed away in March, their house caught

fire in May and they were involved in a car accident in June. Any one of these would be enough to make anyone ask "Why Me?", but the Longs have been philosophical. Their faith has kept them strong and together and Alissa's grave situation taught them that all that really matters is family.



We said a sad farewell to the Long Family the week of September 23rd. Although Alissa is not quite ready to go home, they will stay with her at the hospital until she is strong enough to leave. And, we made Allen and LaTonya promise to visit with Alissa often.

Did You Know?

- ♥ We have a meeting room that your community, work or other group can use. Please call us at 212-7261 for more details.
- ♥ We have been fully occupied since opening our new house in June of 2007 and our average waiting list has 17 names on it.
- ♥ According to the Greater Birmingham Convention and Visitors Bureau, our guests save over \$1.7 million dollars annually in hotel costs alone-based upon a \$130 average nightly cost of area hotels.
- ♥ We use over 250 rolls of toilet paper and 50 rolls of paper towels a week. We can always use paper goods.
- ♥ So far this year, we have collected over \$10,000 from pop tab and recycling aluminum. We are trying to beat 2007's total of \$15,000. Please collect pop tabs and bring them to us. You can also recycle aluminum in your area and send us the check from the proceeds.



www.rmhca.org

FAQ's

Q: Why do you need my money if McDonald's is your partner?

A: While McDonald's is a valuable partner, Ronald McDonald Houses are all solely responsible for raising operational funds. Over 85% of our funds come from you.

Q: How do you raise money with those aluminum pop tabs?

A: Pop tabs that you donate are picked up by a local recycler. We then get a check

for their value, based on the weight of the tabs. Last year, we made over \$15,000 from pop tabs! TWO MEN & A TRUCK accepts cans on our behalf at their three Birmingham -area locations, which we also receive the proceeds from.

Q: If you are a United Way agency, why do you need any additional money?

A: We are a designations-only affiliate of the United Way of Central AL, which means we get no money other than what

you designate on your pledge form during campaign season. For an example on how to designate RMHCA, please visit our website: www.rmhca.org. Your support is critical to our success!

Q: How do I know that the money I donate is being used for helping families and not for big salaries?

A: We make our financial information available to anyone who asks for it, either online or in person. Form 990, filed with the IRS, puts our

overhead at 11.4%. So for each dollar donated, 88.6 cents goes to help families in need. We are also very proud to note that although we have a brand-new facility, we are not using any ongoing donations to pay a mortgage or interest. Our Capital Campaign has been successful enough that we can put all of your donated monies back into providing shelter and support for families in need.

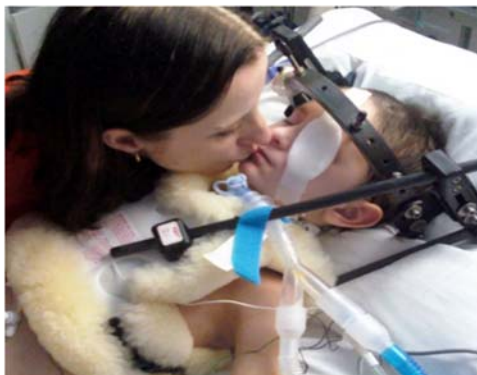
New Board Members:

Katherine Estes Billmeier worked on the Ronald McDonald House's Capital Campaign as a volunteer and consultant. She is committed to making Birmingham a better place, overseeing Vulcan Park's renovation in 2002, now Katherine is working on the Railroad Reservation Park project.

Velinda Block moved to Birmingham in 2007 to take the Chief Nursing Officer Position at UAB Hospital. Velinda served on the Board of Directors at the St. Louis Ronald McDonald House where she was Vice President of Patient Care Services at St. Louis Children's Hospital.

Alison James brings to the board a background in finance, most recently as Director of Financial Services at Somerby at University Park. Alison volunteers extensively in the community and is a member of the Junior League of Birmingham.

Wm. Mike Warren, Jr., CEO of Children's Health System has long-time experience working as both a business leader and as a volunteer advocate for children. Mike's commitment community involvement is invaluable to any organization.



Angela Allen of Collinwood, TN kisses Garrett, age 4 at Children's Hospital. The Allens came to stay at the House in July after a car accident injured both Garrett and his younger brother, Gavin, 2. Garrett is making progress and his mother has checked out of the House to stay with him in his hospital room.



Ronald and Friends celebrate the 1 year birthday of the New House. Tyler, Jacob and Ryan Sexton, along with Rebekah stayed at the House while their two baby sisters were in the hospital.

Update on Old Ronald McDonald House

Birmingham's previous Ronald McDonald House, located at 10th Ave South and 17th Street will be demolished. The University of Alabama Board of Trustees voted on February 8, 2008 to tear down the old building. University of Alabama at Birmingham was generous to purchase the property and allowed us to stay there rent-free for 18 months until the new building was ready to be occupied.

It is bittersweet, as the House held so many memories and helped thousands of people who walked through its doors. But due to its run-down condition, it would be cost-prohibitive to try to convert it into usable space. Soon, the building will be gone, to be replaced with green space on the residential side of UAB's campus.

Thanks to so many of you who kept it going for over 28 years of service!

Would you like to be able to tell people Ronald McDonald is your zany uncle?

Then join the Ronald McDonald House family!

Become an Ambassador or Host a Fundraiser for the Ronald McDonald House

Our **Ambassadors** program needs supporters to help get the word out statewide. We provide the training and materials, we just need you to represent the House around the state.

Church groups, sororities, Kiwanis, Lions Clubs, Rotary. All these and more would love to hear what the Ronald McDonald House does for people in their communities. We'll give you all the materials you will need, along with public speaking tips, data about the us. All we need from you is your enthusiasm.

If you are interested in hosting a **fundraiser**, we would love to help you. You know the people in your community and your creativity can be used to raise funds. You can raise money to help someone you know or you can raise money to help any one of our 41 families who may need help. We charge \$10 nightly at most, and it costs us over \$53 to pay for a room.

If you are interested in being an Ambassador or hosting a fundraiser, please contact Kristy Jaska at 205-212-7263 or kristy.jaska@rmhca.org



Grace Uldrich of Liberty Park raised over \$400 at her lemonade stand. This helps pay for over a week of stays for one family.

Third Party Fundraisers

- Paine Elementary School raises money after concert night.
- Instead of gifts, birthday celebrants asked for donations for the House.
- Host a company-wide 5K run, field day or other fun activity.

2008 Founders Award Dinner "The House We Live In" A Big Success!

Thanks to everyone who attended, donated or volunteered. Your support made the dinner the best we've ever had-and pays for operations for the whole House for 2 1/2 months!

Please visit our website: www.rmhca.org to view photos of the event.

In Loving Memory of Lorayne Cooper

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

The world became a little less bright August 22, the day that Max Cooper's wife of 58 years passed away. Max, one of the co-founders of Ronald McDonald House Charities of Alabama and Lorayne called Chicago home, although Max traveled to Birmingham for work almost every week. Lorayne kept busy in Chicago teaching underprivileged children how to read. Even after she retired from her job as a kindergarten teacher, she continued to be a passionate



advocate for children getting a good start in life.

We have been very moved to receive so many gifts in

Lorayne's honor. She and Max touched the lives of hundreds of people from California to Florida, to Chicago and Alabama.

We will be doing something special at the House to honor Lorayne's memory, starting with a butterfly garden in the courtyard.

Please keep Max in your prayers during this time.

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
Community Health
Charities of Alabama



and

United Way of Central
Alabama



Combined Federal
Campaign #: **55099**



Please give today. It's safe.
It's fast. It's easy online.



Ronald McDonald House Charities® of Alabama

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RONALD McDONALD
HOUSE CHARITIES®
OF ALABAMA

Upcoming Events

December 4, 2008

Ho Ho Hold 'Em

Texas Hold 'Em Tournament at
The Barking Kudu

January 1, 2009

We celebrate our 30th year!

January 10, 2009

Red Nose Run

May 4, 2009

7th Annual Ronald McDonald
House Golf Invitational.

August 20, 2009

Founders Award Dinner with
Live and Silent Auctions

Get your Ronald McDonald House t-shirt and show everyone your support!



Designed by YLB member Laura Womble & photographed by photographer Sheldon Sokol, it features Nyasia and Sanaiya Butler, two young guests who stayed at the House in 2007.

The red-nosed sisters embody what the

Ronald McDonald House is all about: "Helping families, Changing lives, One nose at a time."



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.