



The JOURNAL

Fall 2005

Ronald McDonald House Charities®

Vol. XIV, No. 2

Cobra Roofing Cares About Our Families

Spokane came together to raise money for families in crisis while enjoying *Tents Hats and Champagne* during the inaugural polo benefit presented by Cobra Roofing. Guests were treated to a delicious buffet, beautiful hats of all designs, classic cars, an art walk, silent auction and even skydivers. That was topped off with beautiful horses and riders sprinting up and down the polo field. The National Anthem was sung by Abbey Silveria, cancer survivor and part of our RMHC family. Abbey's mother Gail and her brother Matt stayed many nights at the Ronald McDonald House during Abbey's several year long struggle to beat cancer. Her lovely voice rang out and we were all reminded of the reason for the day's festivities - the families of the Ronald McDonald House.

The benefit was attended by over 750 guests with over 1,000 people onsite including vendors, wait staff,

Cont. on P. 7



Abbey, Matt and Gail Silveria in festive garb at the inaugural "Tents, Hats and Champagne" event benefiting the Ronald McDonald House of Spokane.

Where Have All The Bears Gone?



Andrew Kominack enjoying a bear at polo benefit

The Friends of Ronald McDonald House had a vision of raising money for the families of the House using life-sized bear statues painted by local artists. After a summer of gracing the streets of Spokane, the bears migrated to the Davenport Hotel on October 8th to be auctioned. All forty-four bears ranging in themes from nature to outer space were presented in one magnificent display around the mezzanine of the hotel. The excitement abounded as people strived to be the highest bidder on their favorite bear. When the dust settled that evening every bear had a new family. But the real success was the many families that were touched during the year long process of making this project happen. One life that was changed during this project was that of artist Edie Dunlap. She submitted this letter to the House after meeting one of our very special guests, Danielle Perkins. *Cont. on P. 6*

"The House That Love Built"[®]

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THE JOURNAL

The Journal is published three times a year by Ronald McDonald House Charities of Spokane. RMHC of Spokane, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, provides temporary housing for families who travel to Spokane seeking medical care for their children. We create, find and support programs in the Inland Northwest that enhance the health and well-being of children and families. Your comments and questions are welcome. Call (509) 624-0500 or fax (509) 624-3267.

Ronald McDonald House Charities of Spokane
1015 W. 5th Ave.
Spokane, WA 99204-3001

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Visit our Web site at www.rmhsokane.org

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A Family's Personal "Katrina"



Mike Forness, Executive
Director

There is no doubt the magnitude of devastation from recent national and international disasters is staggering. And no doubt these resilient countries and people will restore their lives, although life will be different than before *Katrina*, flooding in the northeast and the earthquake in Pakistan. How do these areas and people restore themselves in such overwhelming circumstances? By getting through what faces them with the help of others.

The same question can be asked of the Perkins family, who after a year long struggle with cancer, lost their seven year old daughter Danielle. Imagine the personal *Katrina* they have been going through. Isabelle Bermeo also comes to mind. She passed away in August after a life long battle with Cystic Fibrosis. Imagine the magnitude of devastation for these families; some of you know this first hand. On a personal level, families report they feel like they've been hit by a hurricane. How do these families restore themselves? By getting through what faces them with the help of others.

Not all of the families that stay at our Ronald McDonald House have to deal with the loss of a child. Most return home with their parents and siblings. You'll read about Abbey Silveria and Nina Kominack in this issue. They are thriving. However, facing loss or recovery, the level of devastation to a family is significant and the need for restoration is critical. Initially our families don't know if restoration will include a child's healthy recovery or the adjustment to the loss of a child. They just know that hurricane *Katrina* hit their shores and they need the help of others.

How can we help? There are three ways to participate in an RMHC family's restoration from their own personal *Katrina*. The most important is providing them with a safe, nurturing and comfortable place to stay so they can be close to their ill or injured child. This includes far more than just providing a roof over the family during a medical crisis. Food, transportation, communication back home via email and phone, laundry, auto repairs, birthday activities and very importantly emotional support; the list goes on. If a family needs something, we try and provide it. And with your help, we are very good at fulfilling our mission to serve these families and be part of their restoration.

Of course, what we do would not be possible without your support. You play a key part in our families' restoration by contributing to RMHC. Your contributions keep the RMHC mission alive and well, allowing us to serve families during their most critical time of need. Thank you for your contributions of time through volunteering and finances through participation in Share-A-Night and other RMHC fund-raising activities. You are all part of the restoration process for RMHC families.

The last way we help RMHC families is by being good stewards of the contributions we receive from individuals, corporations, foundations and community groups. As costs seem to rise every year, we are very diligent in our efficiency. In 2003 we brought the average cost of housing a family down from nearly \$70 per night to \$64.79. We are pleased to announce that in 2004 we reduced this cost further by 3.7% to \$62.38 per family night. Restoration includes being accountable for what role we can play in the process. You can be assured that your contributions are directly helping families during their own personal *Katrina* in the most efficient manner possible.

Please consider a Share-A-Night gift for 2005. Your help is greatly appreciated by the Perkins, Bermeo's, Silveria's, Kominack's and other RMHC families.

Respectfully,
Mike Forness, Executive Director

Ronald McDonald House Thanks ...

Our generous friends

Ronald McDonald House Charities of Spokane would like to express our sincere appreciation to the following individuals, businesses, service organizations and groups who demonstrate their friendship and support in so many ways. **This list is intended to acknowledge all contributions received from March 1st, 2005 through August 31st, 2005.** If we have erred or omitted anyone, please accept our sincere apology. You can help us correct our records by calling (509) 624-0500 or writing to Ronald McDonald House Charities, 1015 W. 5th Ave., Spokane, WA 99204. Thank you for your generous support!

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Ms Suzanne Dix(H)
McDonald's Corporation
Mr Michael J Merritt and Mrs Jeri Self-Merritt(H)
West Coast Hospitality Corp

Ronald McDonald House Wish List

These are items we always need. If you can help us out, your donations would be most appreciated.

Household Items:

Laundry Detergent
Toilet Tissue/Kleenex
Cleaning Rags
Lysol Bathroom Cleaner
Lysol Spray Disinfectant
Powdered Bleach
Window Cleaner
Light Bulbs-75 W, 3-Way,
75 Watt reflector flood

Food Items

Tuna
Single Serving Boxes of Cold Cereal
Canned Meat or Canned Fruit
Cooking Oil
Hearty Soups
Ground Coffee (Regular & Decaf)
Coffee Creamer (powdered)
Granola Bars
Canned Juice (8 oz. size)
Crackers, Sugar, Flour

Kitchen Items

Saran Wrap
Aluminum Foil
Paper Towels
Pots and Pans (call House for sizes)
Casserole dishes
Microwavable Cookware

Office Supplies

HP #15 Ink Cartridges
HP#45 Ink Cartridges
HP#78 Ink Cartridges
Avery Labels 5160, 5162, 8462
Miscellaneous Batteries Type AAA, AA, & D Flashlights that use D batteries
Postage Stamps
New Release Family Videos (English & Spanish)
New Premature Baby Clothing
Diapers (Infant & Toddlers)

Keeping Our Families Warm

Ashley Cordobes is a Junior at El Segundo High School in Los Angeles, California. She has been a Girl Scout for 10 years and has been working on earning her Gold Award for 6 months. Ashley chose to sew blankets for our families to honor her second cousin Christopher Mathew West who died at the age of eleven from Hopkin's Disease. She donated 50 blankets to give children something to hold on to and something that reminded them of home.



Thank You, Ashley, and congratulations on your Gold Award!

Bears Leave Their Mark On Spokane

Where Have All The Bears Gone? (cont. from pg. 1)

By Edie Dunlap:

The bravest person I know is 6 years old. Old enough to leave her home in Montana 9 months ago and come to Spokane with her mother for a battery of tests, surgery, chemotherapy, the loss of her hair, her appetite, her strength, the need for a stomach tube and not getting to see her sister, her dad, her grandparents for far too long. How can one remain brave under such appalling circumstances?

You'd expect she'd be flat on her back in bed, whining and complaining. Not this little girl....not Danielle. Early on Danielle learned on of life's secrets: ACCEPTANCE. My mother used to say "Life is like a deck of cards and you play the hand you're dealt." Danielle is playing hers admirably.

The wisest person I know is 6 years old. She's brown-eyed, bald, 40" tall and adorable. After the loss of her hair, her parents got her a wig that matched Danielle's hair so closely they broke down and cried. Danielle snatched it off her head and declared she wouldn't wear it. "Why?" asked her bewildered parents. "Because," Danielle emphatically replied, "it made you cry." Though she was persuaded to wear it, she later chose not to, saying it was hot and people looked at her with it on and she didn't like people looking at her. Wise enough to trust her feelings and judgment and go her own way.

The most beautiful person I know is 6 years old. Her sparkling eyes flash with excitement, her smile is often, her dimples pop out, and her head looks so soft you want to pet it.

I met Danielle a couple of months ago when I took some designs and prints to Ronald McDonald House. I'd been selected to paint one of Spokane Bears to be displayed on city streets and later auctioned to benefit Ronald McDonald House. I had not yet received my bear.

I was placing my prints here and there against the bear in the entry when out popped this little charmer who proceeded to help me decide where to put the rooster on roller skates, the blue bear on a bike, the 2 ducks dancing, the turtle on a skate board, among others. When we finished, she put her chin in her palm and asked, "Now, what shall we put on his foot?" I thought quickly and suggested lady bugs. She considered that without much enthusiasm. "I know!" I said. "How about a little mouse upside down, hanging by his tail from the bear's claw?" She clapped her hands "Oh yes!"

Thus Whimsical Willie, Danielle's bear came to be.



Danielle pointing to the bear paw she painted on Whimsical Willie

The "Bear Necessities" project has touched the lives of many whether it be those admiring the masterful work of the artists or the artists and families of the Ronald McDonald House.

Thank you to all those who attended, to the sponsors and those of you who are going to be taking care of these wonderful pieces of art for years to come.

Three bears have been donated to local hospitals and Ronald Bear will be comforting families at the Ronald McDonald House courtesy of the Tri-State McDonald's Owner Operators Association. Keep a look out for other bears around town as they migrate to their new homes.

You too can help the families of the Ronald McDonald House by adopting the bears. For a contribution of just \$15.00, you can own an illustrated book featuring a short story about each bear and their artist. Inventory is limited, please call the Ronald McDonald House at (509)624-0500 to order your book today.

Heaven is a little bit sweeter now.

Danielle lost her battle with cancer

October 16th, 2005.

Good bye, Danielle, you will be missed by all your family at the Ronald McDonald House of Spokane.



A Family Shares Their Story



Leah, Gary, Andrew & Nina Kominack enjoy polo benefit after celebrating Nina's first birthday

My family came to Ronald McDonald House last September 2004 after I delivered twin girls at 27 weeks gestation, Nina at 1 lb 11 oz, and Eva at 2 lb 1 oz. Being from Twisp, RMH came to be a “home away from home” for us while I stayed in Spokane with our two year old, Andrew, and my husband and parents traded off coming during the weeks and weekends. I know many families that stay at the RMH experience the same sort of nightmarish rollercoaster ride of having a sick child in the hospital, in our case the NICU. I came to appreciate the safe, clean, quiet, well-ordered haven of the house, the support and information sharing of other parents with preemies, the people who so generously made dinners, lunches and cookies often when I felt too tired and emotionally spent to cook, the volunteer effort to make the holidays festive, and the wonderful privacy of my own room where I could give Andrew some sense of “home”. Ironically, our Christmas at RMH stands out as my most memorable. For many reasons, one of the gifts of crisis and suffering seems to be that it clarifies perspective and vision. Gary, Andrew, and I spent Christmas Eve with Nina and then ate late night Chinese takeout in our pajamas. My folks surprised us by driving over Christmas morning. We shared time together, sat with Nina, ice-

skated downtown, and came back to the tail end of a feast and a full-house at RMH. Christmas morning was a topper. Not the gifts at the door, as much as the over-whelming generosity of the givers.

After the loss of Eva, and the rollercoaster ride with Nina, we’re now home and it all seems like a lifetime ago and it has literally been a lifetime ago, Eva’s life. But I’ve been transformed by the experience for the better. I often think on some of the families I met when I needed courage and inspiration. And I’m thankful for the friendships that have been formed with some of the RMH staff.

Warmly, Leah Kominack

Gary, Andrew, Nina, and Eva (remembered), Melissa and Terry Larson

Cobra Roofing (cont. from pg. 1)

and volunteers. “Our goal was to give back to the community through a first class event involving our employees,” reports Pete Dix, President of Cobra Roofing Services. “We exceeded all expectations that we had for a first year event.” The polo benefit raised funds for both Ronald McDonald House Charities and the Make-A-Wish Foundation. Other major sponsors included Merrill Lynch, ICM Asset Management, Northern Quest Casino, Seasons At Sandpoint, Suzy Dix Windermere Real Estate Palouse, Fruci Construction, River Park Square, Arbor Crest Wines and Michelob. The date for the second annual *Tents, Hats and Champagne* polo benefit is Sunday, September 10. For sponsorship information or to reserve tables, contact Marti D’Agostino at 993-6018.



Mark Your Calendar To Help Our Families

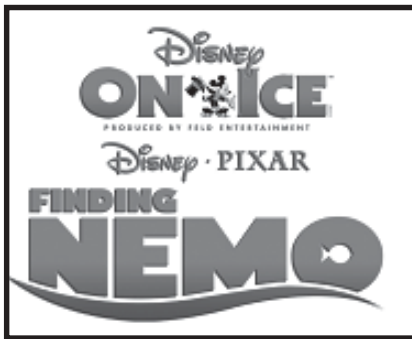


Boy Scout Matt Cannata needs your help to earn his Eagle. Matt and his fellow scouts from Troop 2 will be at Rosares located at 1724 W. Francis on **November 13th from noon to 3 pm** gathering items on our wish list. He has been collecting items for several months from friends, family and his church. Matt is excited to be earning his Eagle while helping families at the Ronald McDonald House. Help Matt by stopping by with an item from the wish list or just to say thank you.

Come Celebrate! World Children's Day Thursday, **Nov.17, 2005** Indian Trail McDonald's 5 pm to 8 pm



To kick off the celebration, WhiteRunkle Employees and Board members from the Ronald McDonald House will be "working" behind the counter, getting you all the delicious McDonald's food you love with a portion of the proceeds directly benefiting the families at our House.



The Spokane Area McDonald's restaurants have teamed up with Feld Entertainment to bring Disney On Ice to Spokane. This years presentation will be "Finding Nemo" and it will be showing at the Spokane Arena from November 30th through December 4th 2005.

You can save money seeing this family friendly show and help the families at our House. Pick up a coupon for a \$10.00 ticket to opening night (**November 30th, 2005**) regularly priced at \$15.00 and \$21.00.

The Spokane Ronald McDonald House will receive \$1.00 for each McDonald's coupon that is redeemed for a ticket to the show on opening night.



A stampede is forming on behalf of our families. What was previously known as the Wishing Star Gallop has found a new home with the Ronald McDonald House. Today, nearly twenty-three years since the inception of the event, Gallop once again gears back up for the 2006 Auction. In 2005, the Gallop grew from a West Coast Event to an International Event with live streaming on the internet allowing bids to be placed from all around the United States and Canada.



The Gallop Stallion Services Auction is pleased and excited to team up in benefiting, yet another great children's charity! What will now be called the "*Ronald McDonald House Gallop*," presented by Rhodes River Ranch & Northern Quest Casino; will take place on **Sunday, February 12, 2006, at the Northern Quest Casino Pavilion in Spokane, Washington.**