

the **Hearth**

Fall 2011



RONALD McDONALD
HOUSE CHARITIES
WESTERN WASHINGTON & ALASKA

Kyler's story



Kyler takes his demanding treatments in stride, letting the doctors do what they need to do to make him well

Age: 2 years old
Hometown: Great Falls, Montana
Diagnosis: Acute Lymphoblastic
Leukemia (ALL)

Embodying the endearing charms of toddlerhood, Kyler brightens the days of his friends and neighbors at the House with his burgeoning vocabulary and sparkling brown eyes. Whenever he's able, he helps his mom with mopping, sweeping and vacuuming, and loves to walk up the stairs holding his dad's hand on yet another visit to the train table in the lobby of the House.

Just a few months ago, he was enjoying the growing independence that comes with learning to walk and communicating with words when he developed a limp and became unusually quiet. His symptoms were

considered the affects of a fever until the third doctor's visit, when a blood test finally revealed the frightening diagnosis: ALL, a fast growing cancer of the white blood cells.

Kyler's dad, Rob, had just over an hour to pack what he could before taking an ambulance with Kyler to the airport and boarding a Life Flight to Seattle Children's emergency room. Kyler's mom, Misty, stayed behind at first to arrange care for Kyler's older sister, Felicity, and all the other family business.

Four days later, the family was together and established in the House, in close proximity to the hospital for Kyler's many months of treatment. "All of Kyler's chemotherapy is outpatient," explains Misty. "We have to be in Seattle so I don't know what we'd do without the House. We'd have to get an apartment, or live in a hotel." Fortunately, Rob's job with an oil drilling company involves a two weeks on, two weeks off schedule, so he is able to keep working and still spend time with Kyler while supporting the family.

One of the biggest surprises to the family was how many other families are going through the same thing. "The amount of support from people here is incredible. When this happens, your whole life is flipped upside down and you're living in a different world. Many times you can't go out in public with your child because of their immunity issues. Staying at the House, you make a lot of lifetime friends," Misty reflects.

One extra challenge for many parents is guiding their child through treatment with steroids, which are administered to calm nausea and make chemotherapy even more effective but also contribute to wild and unpleasant mood swings. Again, the supportive community at the House helps make a stressful situation a little less so.

With almost six more months of treatment ahead of him, Kyler has regained his ability to walk and continues to master the art of conversation. "It is really strange to see your kid have to learn how to walk twice," says Misty, but in between the medicine, shots, blood counts and chemotherapy, Kyler remains a loving and huggable two-year-old boy who loves to play basketball outside and is crazy about trains.

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The amount of support from people here is incredible.

– Kyler's mom

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LIFE AT THE HOUSE

Leaking and Flooding and Drain Clogs, Oh My!

As with any home, the House sometimes suffers the occasional plumbing crisis or needs to install a new faucet. The cause might be a child trying to see how many paper towels will flush down the toilet (answer: none please!), or a tremendous rainfall causing overflow in all the wrong places.

Fortunately, Mr. Rooter® Plumbing became a national sponsor of Ronald McDonald House Charities® in 2010, and throughout 2011 the Seattle Ronald McDonald House has been the happy recipient of our local franchise's expert plumbing skills and all-around generosity.

In addition to fixing broken pipes, replacing toilets, clearing drains and hooking up water heaters and dishwashers, the team at Mr. Rooter has cooked dinner for our families and also held a very successful food drive.

Mr. Rooter is a great partner for the House because, along with their expertise, they pride themselves on a professional appearance, including clean uniforms and booties and gloves while working. These are important attributes which contribute to the safe environment necessary within the House.

Calling their experiences at the House both "eye-opening" and "heart-warming," the participating crew loved the chance to see families devour their delicious barbecue chicken and was surprised to see the whole event turn into "one big family dinner." Alisha McFadden, Assistant Office Manager for Seattle's Mr. Rooter says "I have lost a child, and to be helping the families at the House, personally, it makes me feel 10 times better. There are also the occasions when we learn a family is having one of their last dinners at the House because their child is better and they're going home soon - that is a great experience!"

Don Hawkins, one of the plumbers, says his goal at the House is the same as with any client, "leave the area cleaner than when I arrive." We love the way you think, Don, and thank you to everyone at Mr. Rooter!



Team members from Seattle's Mr. Rooter get dinner ready for families at the House

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Deeds in words and actions give reason to smile



We ask families to pay **\$25*** a night to stay at the House. However, no one is ever turned away due to an inability to pay. Most families are struggling financially and often stay for several months or longer.

* Actual cost is \$108 a night.

Yes! I want to help.

Use the attached envelope to pay for a family's stay at the House.



Meet Emily. She likes to dye her hair in vibrant colors and listen to dance music on her big headphones while she vacuums House A from top to bottom four times a week. Volunteers like Emily are a big reason you're likely to hear kids giggle and see families at the House with smiles on their faces. She's one of many caring and generous community members who regularly donate their time to keeping the House a safe, clean and compassionate place for families going through a difficult time.

Emily began volunteering at the House almost three years ago and is very dedicated to doing her tasks with gusto. "I love coming here," she says. "I always get a nice welcome from the

front desk volunteers and get to pet the therapy dogs. Mostly I like seeing the kids. They're sick and I like making them happy. It inspires me when I see them."

With her enthusiastic manner, Emily is always a welcome sight to kids around the House, especially as she dances and sings while she works, keeping the tempo high with Eminem and other dance music. "The kids love seeing me clown around."

When she's not volunteering at the House, Emily likes to play video games, watch SpongeBob and hang out with friends. According to Emily, though, nothing beats coming to the House and vacuuming. "It makes me sad the kids get sick," she says, "but they are so precious and it makes me happy to help."

"I'd like to volunteer here forever," Emily concludes with her trademark grin.

Annual Gala a Festive Success

Generous Donors Open Hearts and Wallets for the House

ENTICING ITEMS, a grateful family's story and a night of exuberant bidding resulted in \$700,000 raised in support of families staying at the Seattle Ronald McDonald House. Held at the Seattle Sheraton Hotel and Towers on October 15, The 23rd Annual RMHC Gala featured both a silent and live auction, including a Raise the Paddle appeal that netted \$235,000. Honorary Gala Chairs **Thierry and Kathleen Rautureau** set a gracious and celebratory tone for the evening with **Brad Goode** emceeding the live auction alongside auctioneer **Jeff Stokes**. Thank you to all the auction item donors, bidders and volunteers for truly making a difference in the lives of families with seriously ill children.

Bid Card Sponsor

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Pictured from left to right, top row: Brad Tilden, accepting the Heart of the House Award on behalf of Alaska Airlines; Guest of honor Anthony Strang with dad Andy; Gala Chairs Thierry and Kathleen Rautureau; Roger Bialous and Manny Chao of Georgetown Brewing, 2011 Fred Schultz Honoree. Bottom row: bidding excitement.

Thank You

We couldn't do it without you!

We rely on volunteers and donors to help us provide a warm and welcoming home-away-from-home for families. Your fundraising efforts and generous donations provide almost 28,000 nights of lodging and comfort per year for families with seriously ill children.

EVENTS

- 3rd Annual Wyatt's Ride for the House: \$860
- 2nd Annual Sage Rat Run: \$1,200
- School of Rock, Seattle Show: \$1,314
- 4th Annual DirectBuy Charity Ride: \$1,682
- 6th Annual Wyatt Wilson Memorial Ride: \$3,812
- 2nd Annual Day at the Downs hosted by STERLING GROUP
DKI & RESTORx DKI: \$3,880
- 6th Annual Ian Robbins Memorial Trick or Treat in the Heat:
\$10,877
- 6th Annual Georgetown Brewing Company's Bob's Brown
Beer: \$70,758

DONORS

- Ashley Furniture Homestore: \$895
- Ebenezer Christian School, in honor of The Bailey Family:
\$900
- Space Needle Corporation: \$1,000
- Young Presidents' Organization-Alberta Chapter, in honor of
Erik Ristuben: \$1,000
- Squaxin Island Tribe: \$2,500

Additional donors are listed online at www.rmhcseattle.org/content/thank-you and in our annual report.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

DECEMBER

6 & 7—Holidate with the Girls, University Village

FEBRUARY

24 & 26—14th Annual RMHC Hockey Challenge presented by the Seattle Thunderbirds, ShoWare Center, Kent

WANT EVENT DETAILS

and/or a way to keep up on other news at the House?

1. Visit www.rmhcseattle.org
2. Email vanessa@rmhcseattle.org
3. Or call Vanessa at (206) 838-0629

It's time to grab your girlfriends and head to "Holidate with the Girls" at University Village!

Get together for holiday shopping, toasting and laughter before the holiday rush. Tickets are \$25 and all proceeds benefit the House. Each ticket includes a drink and appetizers, plus a VIP Shopping Card that gives the holder a special 20% off at participating Village merchants, along with other special offers. Please contact Vanessa Kirk Briley with questions at (206) 838-0613 or email vanessa@rmhcseattle.org. Registration information will be posted on our website, www.rmhcseattle.org



Ho Ho Ho! The season of giving is upon us. **Please think of families at the House during this special time of year.** They are far from home and their usual festivities, and appreciate your outpouring of caring support. To give in ways large or small, please check our Holiday Wish List at www.rmhcseattle.org/content/donate.

Top 5 Wish List

At the Ronald McDonald House, we need the same kind of items you use at home—only more! Here's how you can help:

- White bath towels and hand towels
- Liquid HE laundry detergent
- Infant and baby food - cereals and jars
- Hand sanitizer
- Hand held can opener

Before donating an item, please contact: kaarin@rmhcseattle.org or call (206) 838-0609.

Thank you
for your generosity!

WWW.RMHCSEATTLE.ORG CALL (206) 838-0600

“The House is a safe place, and the volunteers and donors help make it a good place for a kid, in spite of their illness.” — Noah's dad

The House provides about 28,000 nights of housing per year.



WESTERN WASHINGTON & ALASKA

RONALD McDONALD HOUSE CHARITIES



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