

the **Hearth**

January 2011



RONALD McDONALD
HOUSE CHARITIES
WESTERN WASHINGTON & ALASKA

Malachi's story



Malachi is looking forward to playing Little League again

Age: 10 years old
Hometown: Kennewick, Wa.
Diagnosis: Leukemia

WATCHING THE TELEVISION show *House* may be entertaining, but Malachi (Mal-ah-kye) will tell you it's no fun living through anything like it in real life. An active, athletic 10-year-old, Malachi was practicing his little league pitching skills only to wake up the next morning with an incredibly painful left shoulder. What followed over the next several weeks was a baffling series of inflammations, recoveries and diagnoses. Even after being admitted to Seattle Children's Hospital, the puzzlement over what was afflicting Malachi continued.

These were anguishing days for his parents, Joan and Tom, especially when they

suddenly found themselves almost 200 miles from home and still without answers. Before learning about the Ronald McDonald House just blocks from the hospital, Tom spent a couple nights in the family car while Joan stayed bedside with Malachi.

After many tests and different diagnoses, a bone marrow biopsy finally revealed Malachi had Leukemia. Grateful for having a treatment plan at last, the family also learned they would need to stay in Seattle for almost a year. While Joan now lives with Malachi at the House full-time, Tom must travel often to Kennewick, both for his work as pastor of a church, and to care for Malachi's older brother, Isaac. Their room at the House allows them to be together as a family as often as possible.

After staying at the House now for over 10 months, the parents marvel at the support offered to their family and others going through similar situations. "It has been so much more than I expected," says Joan. "I had no idea there would be so much to help us – the resource center, activities and meals...our experience has been overwhelmingly good."

"You never imagine you'll have to go through something like this, and how would you ever think of everything that's needed? Thankfully, someone else has," adds Tom. "This place is so much more than people know. I won't ever leave a McDonald's with change in my pocket again. If people had the experience of living here, they would be as amazed and totally grateful as we are."

A cool-headed and strong boy, Malachi has made friends with other kids staying at the House and Joan expresses appreciation for the communal aspects of living here. "It would be one thing financially if we had to pay to stay at a motel, but staying in a place like that would also leave you isolated. Here there are other parents who can listen and understand, and also prepare you for what is ahead. That is a huge benefit."

Asked what he is most looking forward to when going home, Malachi brightens and mentions his mischievous toy poodle, TJ. Sitting close by, Tom teases, "don't you miss your dad?" Malachi, not missing a beat, replies with a smile, "No, because you're always here."

“
*You never imagine
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Thankfully,
someone else has.*

Malachi's dad



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LIFE AT THE HOUSE

Fitness Helps Caregivers Stay Strong

Many families enjoy active lives until illness strikes. Suddenly, the tumultuous changes, stress and schedules that come with a diagnosis make taking the time to stay fit more difficult.

“BC (Before Cancer), I stayed fit to get the most out of life,” says Debbie, 12-year-old Taylor’s mom. “The stronger you are, the more you can do. But AD (After Diagnosis), it occurred to me: I needed to take care of myself so I could be there for Taylor. It’s a well-known fact that exercising helps boost the immune system, and I wouldn’t be allowed to be where I needed to be at the House or the hospital if I was sick, so I have kept exercising.”

The goal of exercising while one’s child is going through treatment for serious illness is certainly not to fit into skinny jeans or win weightlifting competitions. Improved sleep, stress reduction and stronger immune systems are the goal. “It’s really important to take care of yourself as a caregiver. I see so many parents at the hospital hunched over with exhaustion. I encourage everyone to take just a 10-minute walk, or an hour to do something active. It enables you to be a much better caregiver and helps with the stress,” says Liz Dunn, a nurse at Seattle Children’s Hospital and volunteer yoga instructor at the House. “One of my favorite things to hear from a parent is, “I slept so well...I feel better,” continues Liz, reflecting on why she volunteers to teach yoga at the House.

In addition to its location near the Burke Gilman Trail, the House is fortunate to have two fitness rooms which can be used by caregivers any time of day, and ProRobics, a locally owned fitness club nearby, also allows use of its space. “Staying active has helped me deal with the anger and grief,” notes Debbie. “I’ve also made friends with other parents going through the same thing, and it’s great to have that support.”

Liz Dunn’s yoga class takes place every week. Families staying at the House are welcome, including children 10 years and older.



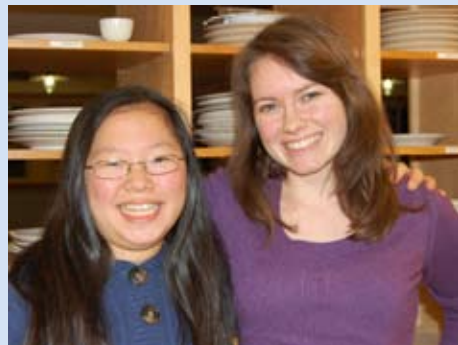
Volunteers from Chateau Ste. Michelle paint a mural of regional scenes for the fitness room in House A

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Meal Program Recipe Book Helps Volunteers Answer the Question, “Whats for dinner?!”

Groups of volunteers came together 3-5 nights per week in 2010 to provide homemade dinners for families staying at the House. Using the communal kitchens in Houses A and C, they served up everything from sloppy joes to prime rib, every meal garnished with a generous helping of care. These fresh, warm meals give families staying at the House one less thing to worry about after tiring days at the hospital and any leftovers are packaged up for those who must return to their home-away-from-home late into the night.

Janette Newton, BSN, Bastyr University, and Kate Ptasnik, a senior at Roosevelt High School, recently decided to make things easier for these wonderful groups and compiled a wide variety of recipes into a cookbook which is now available online at the House’s website.



Cookbook Creators Kate Ptasnik and Janette Newton

The cookbook currently contains over 86 recipes in nine categories ranging from meat and poultry to salads, desserts and beverages. It also contains helpful set-up charts for each kitchen’s workflow and a conversion chart of ingredients for those wishing to create dishes from their own recipes. House A requires meals that feed 75 people; House C dinners feed 25.

“The meal program is something that truly makes a difference and is meaningful in the lives of our families. This cookbook is going to be a great tool for the dinner groups,” says Eleanor Garrison, meal program coordinator.



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 \$80 a night.

Yes! I want to help. Use the attached envelope to pay for a family’s stay at the House.



STAFF AND FAMILIES at the House would like to thank the following individuals and groups for embodying the spirit of the holidays and generously providing their time and donations. Thank you for helping make the entire holiday season more special.

November

Metropolitan Market, food drive Nov – Dec

Greenlake Church of Seventh Day Adventists, food for Thanksgiving meal • **Bob Leong and friends**, cooked Thanksgiving dinner

SCCA, Thanksgiving meal baskets for BMT families

D. Lark, Inc., boneless turkeys for Thanksgiving dinner

December

WhitePages, pre-prepared frozen meals for BMT families

McKinstry Co., food drive • **Dave Bulliman**, van outings to see lights and movies *Tangled* and *Narnia* • **Rick Rizs** and **Toys for Kids**, toys and visit from **Dave Henderson**, **Dan Wilson** and the **Mariner Moose Dorian Studios**, holiday portraits and cards • **Peter Kron**, gingerbread house making activity • **Foresters**, Build a Bear event at the House

Sportraits, Santa portraits and dinner • **Bill Knight**, Santa

Block Party Quilters, made stockings • **Wells Fargo Federal Way**

Home Mortgage Group, bought items for stockings and came caroling

Forgotten Children's Fund, gift cards for teens • **Premera Blue**

Cross, food drive, bedding and kitchen items • **Chasing Fireflies**,

stocking stuffers • **Franz Bakery**, gingerbread houses, Christmas

dinner rolls and meal baskets • **RMH Holiday Cruise Group**, Argosy

Cruise on Christmas Eve • **Sara Lattimer and family**, cooked

Christmas Eve dinner • **Allrecipes.com**, funding for Christmas Eve

dinner, holiday cookie decorating activity, movie and activity baskets for

BMT families on Christmas Eve • **Martin Selig Real Estate**, food drive

and gift cards • **The Hansen Family**, Christmas Eve dessert funding

• **Patrick Guisti and friends from Oracle**, funding for Christmas

dinner • **Wickstrand and Curran families**, Christmas breakfast •

Bob Leong and friends, cooked Christmas dinner • **Comprehensive**

Payment Recovery Service, Inc., shopping trip for groceries and

household goods • **David Santillanes and Doug Townsend**,

Christmas turkeys • **The Nerland Agency**, gift cards for Christmas

dinner and family games for BMT families • **Mr. Rooter Plumbing**,

food drive • **GE Healthcare**, 4th annual New Year's Eve party

Thank You

We couldn't do it without you!

We received overwhelming support this past holiday season. Because of space limitations, we are only able to list the largest donations. To see a full list of our generous donors, please go to our website and under "Thank You" select "Recent Donors."

EVENTS

- **Fighting Children's Cancer Foundation**, Annual Golf Tournament, \$937
- **Kappa Kappa Gamma** Spring Fling and CPK Fundraiser, \$1,440
- **Travis Roberts & Friends** Halloween Party, \$2,058
- **McOpCo** Holiday Party, \$2,608
- **Patricia Cook** and **Kitty Ballard** Cookie Exchange, \$2,735
- **Washington State Society of Health Engineers** Holiday Party and Auction, \$3,666
- **Shamrock Charities** Annual Golf Tournament, \$5,000
- **Sterling Savings Bank** Tricycle Races, \$5,481
- **Holidate With the Girls at University Village**, \$8,623
- **Laurier Enterprises**, \$21,187

DONORS

- **Snider Petroleum**, \$1,000
- **Titus Will Families Foundation**, \$1,000
- **Walmart Foundation**, \$1,000
- **Hanby Construction Company, Inc.**, \$1,200
- **Washington State - Northern Idaho Moose Association**, \$1,793
- **Lake Washington Windows & Doors**, \$2,000
- **Union Bank Foundation**, \$2,500
- **Johnson International**, \$2,500
- **Wheeler Family Foundation**, \$4,000
- **Rainier Investment Management, Inc.**, \$5,000
- **Society of Port Engineers of Puget Sound**, \$9,000
- **Employees Community Fund of Boeing Puget Sound**, \$40,000

SPECIAL GIFT

In memory of Cooper Schulke

- **Jeff, Kara, Campbell and Emerson Schulke**, \$1,150 for family room chairs. Also 30 sets of drinking glasses, 8 pitchers and 10 sets of sheets.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

FEBRUARY

26 & 27—13th Annual Hockey Challenge, Showare Center, Kent. See below for more details.

JUNE

25—Seattle Rock 'n' Roll Marathon and Half

Marathon, Seattle. See below for more details.

OCTOBER

15—23rd Annual RMHC Gala Sheraton Hotel & Towers, Seattle

WANT EVENT DETAILS

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

1. Visit www.rmhcseattle.org
2. Email ellen@rmhcseattle.org
3. Call Ellen at (206) 838-0629
4. 'Like' us on Facebook!

Hockey Challenge 2011

It's almost here! The 2011 RMHC Hockey Challenge will be presented by the Seattle Thunderbirds on February 26 and 27 at ShoWare Center in Kent. Join us for a weekend full of great hockey as local and recreational teams battle on the ice while raising money for RMHC. The event also features an All-Star Game on Saturday night. Tickets give you entrance to all the matches on that day, including the T-Birds game. For more information, contact Vanessa at (206) 838-0613 or email vanessa@rmhcseattle.org.

Rock 'n' Roll for RMHC!

The 2011 Seattle Rock 'n' Roll Marathon is set for June 25, 2011 and we want YOU to be part of Team RMHC! Whether you're a runner or a walker; full or half-marathoner, our team is open to anyone who would like to join. We will be training together in honor of the House and the hundreds of families we serve each year – fundraising for our mission along the way. To learn more or sign up, contact Ellen Sontra at (206) 838-0629.

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:

- Six high chairs with wheels*
- Four Pack n' Play pens*
- Food for pantry*
- Mugs, drinking glasses, dinner plates and cereal bowls*
- Infant formula and baby food

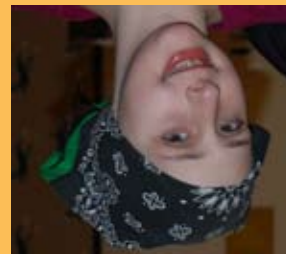
*Item details available at rmhcseattle.org under "How to Help/Donate/Wish List"

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

“Rhema loved all the activities and meals. The House made a very difficult time much more bearable.” – Rhema's mom



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

WESTERN WASHINGTON & ALASKA

RONALD McDONALD
HOUSE CHARITIES



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