

# RONALD MCDONALD SCHOOL



## Classroom Newsletter

Ronald McDonald House  
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### RMH Founders

The upper grade students of the Ronald McDonald House Home School were privileged to spend some time with some of the founders of our House. Prior to meeting and talking with the founders, the students were able to do some research on the beginning of the House in the Twin Cities. The students were very interested in the starting of the House and the way it has grown through the years. The people involved in the House at the beginning were wonderful to meet. The students enjoyed their stories and loved meeting each one that worked so hard to build the "House That Love Built."

### Visit with the Founders

The Founders of the Ronald McDonald House came to visit today. If it would have not been for them, I would have not been able to live in Minneapolis, go to school or see my little brother while he was at Fairview Hospital. It was great to meet them.

We all gathered around a huge meeting table in the office. I was a little nervous because I thought that they might not like me or the questions that I wanted to ask. Soon my fear was overcome once I met them.

I started to think what it was like for them and the low survival rate for kids with cancer in the 70's. Now children have a much better chance of survival. Thank God!

The people I met could really see the need for a House for the families of sick children at the hospital. They built a place that is almost like your home; it makes families more comfortable.

I asked them what their favorite parts about building the House were. They liked making friends with the sponsors and having so many people happily volunteer their time to the project. One time volunteers were recruited and many men wanted to help. It was later discovered that these men were inmates at the nearby prison. Not the best volunteers!

The fraternity house that was rebuilt into the Ronald McDonald House was a horrible mess. There were cobwebs, critters and grime everywhere. At one point, a toilet in the house rusted through and fell through the floor. There were many difficulties with the plumbing and heating. However, the founders continued to work on their dream.

I really learned that I would like to thank the founders for their hard work in starting the "House That Love Built."

By Alyssa Bourgoin

### The Ronald McDonald House

The Ronald McDonald House has come a long way since it originated.

It was originally a fraternity house. In 1977, there were families with kids in the hospital and no money to get a hotel room to stay near them. So some of the families decided to make this fraternity house into a house that families could stay in.

Everyone thought that they wouldn't be able to make this house into the Ronald McDonald House, but they did. The house needed a major makeover. The frat house was terrible. The door fell off its hinges and the toilet fell off the wall.

Before they could remodel the house, they had to have money. They had tons of fundraisers. When they got enough money, they tore down the old house and started building the new house. A doctor stopped by one day and said he used to sleep in the attic of the old house as a student at the University. They finished the first house and eight families moved in.

Joann Christenson lost her son. She still wanted to help build this house. She could have said my son passed away and I don't want anything to do with this house and the hospital. She didn't; she wanted to make it better for other families with sick children.

The house continued to grow. They had to go to the City Planning Commission to see if they could take out the alley, so they could build more of the house. The alleyway was removed and a larger house was built.

House Four was the last house built. After years flew by with families in and out of the Ronald McDonald House, they built two game rooms, a gym, and a school room. The old school room is now the theater. In House Four they added a new school room and a gym. The old school room is now the theater. A gym was built, which is good, so the kids could get some exercise and play around without being in the hot or cold weather.

The founders of the Ronald McDonald House said that this is truly the "House That Love Built." What I also think is that you can never lose the love you've made.

By Samantha Fox

## The Love House

The Ronald Mc Donald House was built out of love. Many people say that empathy is what compelled the founders to make this house, but it was pure love for others. This pure love is really something to talk about.

So many people had to stay with their children at the hospital. Several parents had to leave their child at the hospital alone because they couldn't pay to stay in a hotel. The hospital rooms at the time held 4-5 children. At the beginning there were just over 11 people who got this wonderful house going. Over half of these people had sick children, many of those children past away before they started the house. Having sick children made them realize how hard it is for the family, not just the sick child. This house, I know has made a difference in many lives.

In the spring, in the late 70's, this group decided to find a house to make for families that had no where to stay while their children were in the hospital. Most of the founders say that the love they shared between each other was their favorite part of making this house.

Money was scarce when it came to buying and fixing the house. Several fundraisers were held to help the house. The first fundraiser was the wishing well by Peter Kosmas's father. A balloon sale, one year, raised \$52,000. All this money went to making a home away from home. On Oct. 2, 1977, The Ronald McDonald House was open to the first eight families.

The house started out with eight rooms and grew to forty-eight. Everyone that stays here is grateful and loves the house. We love the "House That Love Built."

By Emma Windsor

## The First Ronald

The first Ronald of the Twin Cities Ronald McDonald House had quite a few stories to share of the very first days of the house. Ronald's real name was Jack.

Ronald was brought in to make a sick child smile for a photo. So Ronald tried everything from balloons to toy skunks but the child's frown wouldn't move!!! Then Ronald had an idea! He picks up the kid's mom and tickles her chin and says "goochy - goochy baby" while holding her. The child was very surprised. Then he smiled.

Ronald also had many photo shoots. Normal right, yeah, that's what you would expect. At one photo shoot there were two kids and a TIGER!!!! A Siberian tiger to be exact. It was the middle of the photo shoot and the tiger out of the blue growls at Ronald. Then they mop up his drool; feed him some raw chicken (so he doesn't like the taste of warm flesh) then they try again. To give you the picture, it's pretty much the same for the second time. Now they try it one more time and the tiger growls again and then bites Ronald on the shoulder. The mom takes her kids and runs away. It turns out the collar of Ronald's shirt was touching the tiger's whiskers!!!!

Ronald had many stories to share with us. I am sure that it was a fun time during the beginning years of the Ronald McDonald House of the Upper Midwest.

By Cody Cobb



The founders built this house with love.