

# *RONALD McDONALD HOUSE STORY*

When an unlikely partnership was formed in Philadelphia in 1974 between an NFL team, a children's hospital and a restaurant chain, none of its members could have imagined that their dream of a "home-away-from-home" for families of seriously ill children would grow to become an international phenomenon. They simply wanted to create a place where parents of sick children could be with others who understood each others' situations and could provide emotional support.

The seeds of the partnership were planted when Kim Hill, the 3-year-old daughter of Philadelphia Eagles tight end Fred Hill, was diagnosed with leukemia. Hill and his wife camped out on hospital chairs and benches, ate food from vending machines and did all they could to keep Kim from seeing their sadness, exhaustion and frustration.

All around them, the Hills saw other parents doing exactly the same thing. They learned that many of the families had traveled great distances to bring their children to the medical facility; but the high cost of hotel rooms was prohibitive. They continued to think, "there has to be a happy medium."

Hill rallied the support of his teammates to raise funds to help other families experiencing the same emotional and financial traumas as his own. Through the Philadelphia Eagles' general manager, Jim Murray, the team offered its support to Dr. Audrey Evans, head of the pediatric oncology unit at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. It was Dr. Evans' dream for a house that could serve as temporary residence for families of children being treated at her hospital that led to the first Ronald McDonald House.

By 1979, 10 more Ronald McDonald Houses had opened. In the next five years, local communities founded 60 more Houses; then 53 more opened in the next five years. Across the country and throughout the world, people viewed Ronald McDonald House as a way for a community to band together for their neighbors in need of comfort and security during a particularly difficult time.

Currently, there are 257 Ronald McDonald Houses in 28 countries: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, England, Finland, France, Germany, Guatemala, Honduras, Hong Kong, Hungary, Ireland, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Puerto Rico, Romania, Scotland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United States, and Venezuela. All told, nearly 6,000 bedrooms are available for families every night.

The Houses are supported by nearly 30,000 volunteers who annually donate more than three million hours of their time. Ronald McDonald House is the cornerstone program of Ronald McDonald House Charities, a non-profit, 501(c)(3), that creates, finds and supports programs that directly improve the health and well being of children. To date, RMHC's and its global network of local Chapters have awarded **\$410 million** in grants and program services to children's nonprofit organizations worldwide.