



Ronald McDonald House Charities® of Memphis Communications Guide

History

Initial efforts to build a Ronald McDonald House® in Memphis began in the early 1980s when local McDonald's owners/operators, led by Saul Kaplan discussed the possibility of a Ronald McDonald House in Memphis.

When in 1983, Dr. Joe Simone became the medical director of St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, a group of McDonald's operators met with St. Jude administrators to formally discuss the formation of the Ronald McDonald House of Memphis, a program of Ronald McDonald House Charities® of Memphis. In April of 1989, the Board purchased the current 2.7 acre site of Ronald McDonald House of Memphis and Grace & Associates Architectural Firm immediately began work on the set of plans for the new site. Construction began in 1990 and the house opened in September 1991.

Shortly after opening, Ronald McDonald House Charities® of Memphis joined with ROCK 103 to create what would become its signature fundraising event, the ROCK 103 – Ronald McDonald House Radiothon. Each year ROCK 103 dedicates 28 hours of programming time to community awareness and support and over the course of 19 years, Radiothon has raised more than \$6.2 million for the children and families of Ronald McDonald House Charities® of Memphis. The history of Ronald McDonald House of Memphis is synonymous with the history of the ROCK 103 - Ronald McDonald House Radiothon, with both celebrating their 20th Anniversary in 2011.

In the late 1990's St. Jude announced plans for a major expansion and the demand for patient housing increased dramatically. In 1999 St. Jude officials asked the Ronald McDonald House Board of Directors to consider expanding the House. The expansion was completed in 2000 and Ronald McDonald House became more than twice its original size as twenty-seven bedrooms were added to the original 24.

Ronald McDonald House Charities® of Memphis was also one of several organizations to benefit from the generosity of the late Paul W. Barret, Jr., a Memphis-area banker and philanthropist. In 2005, Ronald McDonald House officially opened the Paul W. Barret, Jr. Park & Pavilion which includes a recreational area for the families with basketball courts, playground equipment, grill area and picnic pavilion.

With support from friends such as the Alpha Delta Pi Sorority, the FedEx Pilots' Wives Association and Buddy Up For Kids Golf Tournament, "The House That Love Built" now features a fitness room with state-of-the-art exercise equipment, a meditation room and a teen room with pool tables, gaming systems and lounge areas.

Nineteen years after opening, nearly 5,700 families have made Ronald McDonald House Charities® of Memphis their "home-away-from-home".