

**Copywriter: Mary Guinane McNamara
New York City Ronald McDonald House Annual Appeal**

Dear Friend of Ronald McDonald House,

It probably seems like only yesterday that you watched in awe as a simple tree was transformed into a magical tower of lights...or breathed the aroma of gingerbread and cinnamon and thought you'd burst with anticipation while waiting for the big day to come. And was it really so many years ago that you gave your first gift – carefully selected and paid for with your own money – to a loved one?

Those very memories that brought you joy as a child can bring happiness – and healing – to a child fighting cancer. And with a little luck, the children staying at Ronald McDonald House this holiday season will remember decorating, baking and Santa's visits instead of the painful cancer treatments or the sadness of being away from home and family this holiday season.

Getting through chemotherapy and facing painful side effects is easier for children when they still get to play games, do crafts and just be themselves. In the chaos cancer creates, any normal activity feels especially nice. Research has proven that a loving and supportive environment like the kind found at Ronald McDonald House gives children a better chance of winning their fight for life.

The staff at Ronald McDonald House and our caring volunteers work extra hard to make this home-away-from-home a place filled with love all year round, but especially during the holidays. In spite of the fact that every child here is fighting for their lives, they still enjoy our papier-mâché reindeer, iced gingerbread cottages, a visit from Santa and even a Christmas day feast.

Families come from all over the United States and 36 countries around the world seeking treatments not available anywhere other than New York City. Many of those treatments cause the children to be in and out of the hospital or receive frequent outpatient care over long periods of time. They often miss out on familiar family traditions usually held this time of year.

But with your help, we can share New York's magnificent holiday traditions with them – the giant tree and ice skating in Rockefeller Center and spectacular window displays on Fifth Avenue. And when you think about the fact that it takes two, sometimes three, buses to transport the children, their families and the necessary nurses and staff to go on an outing, you'll understand why your help is so important.

Obviously, not all activities are so elaborate, and not every child feels well enough to participate each day either. Our full schedule guarantees there's something special to look

forward to all the time. From caroling and decorating the house, to a mailbox full of letters to Santa, every child can find a piece of home here.

Our toy drive ensures that there will be a gift for every child, even those whose families couldn't otherwise afford it because of mounting medical bills. And we don't forget Chanukah, Kwanzaa and the many other special occasions that other families celebrate.

It's amazing that in the midst of the most frightening time in their lives, families live side by side with people so very different from themselves, but with so much in common. They come to us as strangers, but leave as family. Your support of Ronald McDonald House makes that possible.

Your tax-deductible donation assists in relieving the burden of costly hotels and expensive travel, allowing families to focus on healing. Families pay only \$20 per night, and even that small fee is waived whenever a family can't afford it. Yet, \$20 is only 15% of what it actually costs to maintain the House and our full schedule of programs.

Your holiday schedule may be even busier than ours as we plan activities for the children at Ronald McDonald House. But please take a few minutes now to help make the decorations, the day trips and the gingerbread masterpieces a reality, by sending a gift today.

And you'll know that memories – **joyful...powerful...healing memories** – will reach the children who need them most. And your own memories of giving joyfully will be your reward.

Thank you so much,

Vivian Harris
President

P.S. When you send your gift, please sign the enclosed holiday card. Your warm wishes will be displayed at Ronald McDonald House for everyone to share. Just like in your own home, they will be appreciated as holiday greetings from people who care.