



Contact: Kelsey Marineau
Development/ PR Coordinator
Phone: (813) 258-6430 ext. 2
E-mail: Kelsey@McDonaldsHomes.com

Date: December 1, 2009
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEW RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE FOR TAMPA BAY

Ronald McDonald House Charities of Tampa Bay are Opening Their Forth House in the Tampa Bay Area.

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. -- Ronald McDonald House Charities of Tampa Bay are proud to announce the opening of their forth house scheduled for completion in January 2010. The new House will be located in St. Petersburg inside the All Children's Hospital Outpatient Care Center and will be called St. Petersburg "Central."

This 14 bedroom House will include a lounge, kitchen, computer room, library, laundry room, and nap rooms with private bathrooms. It will serve as a restful haven during the day for parents who cannot leave their child's side during treatment.

"Those families would never leave the hospital because their kids are in critical condition. This allows the parents to get the sleep they need without leaving the hospital and care for their child," Janice Davis, Executive Director of Ronald McDonald House Charities of Tampa Bay said.

The House is meant to complement but not replace the other two houses located in St. Petersburg. Meaning, families watching over their sick or injured children during the day will have access to all the spaces in the hospital. If they plan on staying overnight, families may be allocated a room on a night per night bases in one of the other St. Petersburg Ronald McDonald Houses.

The new facility is estimated to cost \$1 million. RMHC of Tampa Bay has started a capital campaign that has raised about \$.8 million. They are still looking for donations to go to the "Sweet Dreams" room (linens), "Comfort and Joy" room (family supplies), laundry appliances, kitchen appliances and the Caring Hearts donor wall listing. Donating is a unique opportunity to leave a lasting legacy while providing valuable services to many families over the years.

After the completion of this new House there will be 66 bedrooms in the St. Petersburg area by All Children's Hospital.

All Children's Hospital is the only specialty licensed children's hospital on Florida's west coast. It has been named multiple times as Child magazine's top 25 children's hospitals in North America.

Both Davis and Alison Barrick, spokesperson for RMHC of Tampa Bay, believe the demand for pediatric care at All Children's is rising and this new addition is more than needed.

"Even with the two houses in St. Petersburg we had to turn away about 300 families last year," Barrick said.

RMHC of Tampa Bay would not be in establishment without their loving, dedicated volunteers who provide support, encouragement and understanding while waiting for a child's recovery. They have over 250 volunteers that work four-hour shifts, from 10 a.m. – 10 p.m., seven days a week. Volunteers check families in and out, answer telephones, give house tours, perform light housekeeping and assist with clerical work.

"With the new House, we need a new set of volunteers. To qualify to be a volunteer, you need to be 18 years old or older, have a listening ear and a caring heart," says Betsy Wilkinson, House Manager of the Tampa Ronald McDonald House.

The mission of RMHC of Tampa Bay is to create, find and support programs that directly improve the health and well being of children. For 29 years they have provided comfort and care to children and their families by offering them a "home-away-from-home" during hospitalization. Since their first house was built in 1980 and have served over 29 thousand families and they strive to continue to be a part of the change and solution in improving the lives of children and their families in the Tampa Bay Area.

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For more information about the RMHC of Tampa Bay, volunteering or donating please contact Kelsey Marineau at (813) 258-6430 ext. 2 or e-mail Kelsey at Kelsey@McdonaldsHomes.com. You can also visit their website at www.rmhctampabay.com.