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Ronald McDonald House Charities of Austin and Central Texas Receives Global Innovation Award

Award recognizes international impact in social and environmental sustainability

AUSTIN, Texas (August 27, 2009) — Last week, Ronald McDonald House Charities of Austin and Central Texas received the 2009 Innovation Award, which was created at the recent RMHC International Conference. The bi-annual conference, which was held in Chicago, IL, gathers Ronald McDonald House Charities representatives from 30 countries and regions worldwide, to learn about the most compelling issues facing non-profit organizations today as they share best practices with each other about their experiences with their own local RMHC.

With nearly 300 RMHC organizations around the world, new ideas are constantly surfacing on how to better care for and serve the children and families that come to us for help each year. Innovations in programs, processes, and stakeholder engagement exist in the RMHC system every day. This year, the Innovation Award was created to recognize an idea that resulted in scalable improvements that make Ronald McDonald House Charities stronger and more advanced in their practices. Austin's Ronald McDonald House, which has been certified as LEED Platinum, was recognized for its commitment to build green and promote environmental responsibility. With this award, the RMHC global organization recognizes the Austin House for having a global impact in sustainable building and design.

"RMHC of Austin & Central Texas has shown leadership in the [RMHC] system by demonstrating social and environmental sustainability," says Linda Dunham, chairwoman of RMHC Board of Trustees. "We are so proud of the LEED Platinum Certified House. It truly demonstrates the extended mission of RMHC beyond our families, into responsible citizenship within our communities."

In addition to this RMHC Global award, RMHC Austin was also a finalist in the Austin Chamber of Commerce 2009 Greater Austin Business Awards in the Environment: Non-Profit category. The Ronald McDonald House is the first Platinum-NC (new construction) project in Austin. The decision to build toward this certification was made in 2004 and required significant vision and risk-taking on behalf of the organization's leadership.

The new Ronald McDonald House was designed with maximum use of natural resources in mind, from the precise placement upon the property in order to garner the sun's most positive benefits, to the use of native and adaptive low water plants on the balconies and rooftops.

According to Kent Burress, Chief Executive Officer, "The incorporation of environmentally responsible sustainable design and construction has enabled the Ronald McDonald House to meet our mission of

service to families and children while helping ensure the long-term sustainability of the organization through strong fiscal conservancy and commitment to the environment.”

About the Ronald McDonald House

Ronald McDonald House Charities of Austin and Central Texas provides lodging and support services in a nurturing home-like environment to families of critically ill or injured children receiving treatment in Austin-area medical centers. For just \$10 a night, the Ronald McDonald House provides families with private bedrooms, home-cooked meals, transportation, laundry facilities and activities for patients and their siblings. For more information, visit www.RMHC-Austin.org

The attached photo is Derrick Lesnau, Director of Programs, RMHC of Austin and Central Texas; Marty Coyne, Chief Executive Officer, Ronald McDonald House Charities; Kent Burrese, Chief Executive Officer, RMHC of Austin and Central Texas.

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