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THE FIRST HOUSE THAT LOVE BUILT™ TURNS THIRTY-FIVE
Celebrations planned to mark anniversary of the first Ronald McDonald House® in the world

Philadelphia, PA September 3, 2009----It started in 1974 with a simple idea – children need their parents close by when they are battling serious illness. From this premise, the first Ronald McDonald House was born on October 15, 1974. (Today there are more than 288 houses worldwide) To mark this historic occasion, a **celebration will be held on October 15, 2009, from 6-10 AM** at 39th and Chestnut Streets in Philadelphia to honor the impact the House has had on families.

The Ronald McDonald House co-founders including former Philadelphia Eagles player Fred Hill, former Eagles General Manager Jimmy Murray, pediatric oncologist Dr. Audrey Evans, families and staff who were there at the beginning (as well as children currently staying at the house) will gather to **bake a giant cake in thirty-five pieces in the shape of the first House** (the Swain Mansion). After “Happy Birthday” has been sung and the candles blown out, the **cake will be taken to Philadelphia regional hospitals and shared** with children in treatment.

The House will also be **unveiling an art display** created by the children who have stayed at the House. Children are being asked to share happy moments of their time spent in this “home away from home.” The artwork can be viewed until the end of the month and proceeds from sale of the artwork will benefit the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House Chapter.

Since opening its doors in 1974, the Philadelphia House has served 30,000 families helping provide comfort and care during a tragic time in their lives. More than 2,200

meals have been served by countless volunteers and over 41,000 trips have been made to and from area hospitals in donated vans so children can have access to the hospitals and treatments they need to heal. In honor of those milestones and the thousands of companies who have cooked during the Guest Chef program, representatives from **global partners Coca-Cola and Southwest Airlines** will be on hand to prepare dinner.

The Story Behind the First House

Throughout her career, world-renowned oncologist Dr. Audrey Evans watched families spend every waking moment at their child's bedside in the hospital. And in the early 1970's the Philadelphia Eagles were helping to raise funds to help a little girl named Kim Hill who had just been diagnosed with leukemia. Kim was the daughter of Eagles player Fred Hill and his wife Fran and the couple was sleeping in chairs in their daughter's hospital room to be close to her while she was receiving treatment.

Through the Eagles' fundraising, the team's General Manager Jimmy Murray got to know Dr. Evans. She shared her vision to provide a "home away from home" for families of children being treated at nearby hospitals. At the time, McDonald's® Regional Manager Ed Rensi agreed to support a fundraiser to raise money for what would become known as the *Ronald McDonald House*. McDonald's restaurants gave a portion of the proceeds from the sale of the famous McDonald's Shamrock Shake.

This one House has grown into a worldwide network of support for children and families through Ronald McDonald House Charities® (RMHC®) and today there are 288 Ronald McDonald Houses; 144 Ronald McDonald Family Rooms; and 38 Ronald McDonald Care Mobiles across 52 countries and regions.

About Ronald McDonald House Charities

Ronald McDonald House Charities, a non-profit, 501 (c) (3) corporation, creates, finds and supports programs that directly improve the health and well being of children. Its programs are grassroots-driven to enable the Charity to offer help where children need it most – right in their own communities. RMHC® makes an immediate, positive impact on children's lives through its global network of local Chapters in 52 countries and its three core programs: the Ronald McDonald House®, Ronald McDonald Family Room® and Ronald McDonald Care Mobile®. These programs provide a bridge to accessible health care and allow families more time together, which help in the healing process. RMHC and its global network of local Chapters also have awarded more than \$460 million in grants and program services to children's programs around the world. For more information, visit www.rmhc.org.

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Visuals: Ronald McDonald®, pictures of the first House, portraits of children who have stayed at the House over the years, video of children engaged in activities and events, cake in the shape

of the House, artwork created by the children, representatives from the Philadelphia Eagles, Coca-Cola, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, and the first families, staff and doctors.