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**FUNDRAISER BALL TO BENEFIT RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE;
HOUSE IS HOME AWAY FROM HOME FOR FAMILIES IN NEED**

Topeka, KS – In celebration of the house's 20th anniversary of serving families in Northeast Kansas, **Ronald McDonald House Charities (RMHC) will host its annual fundraiser on Saturday, August 23, at the Capitol Plaza Hotel in Topeka.** This year's theme is a Cinderella Storybook Ball, with attendees enjoying an evening of cocktails and dinner, followed by live and silent auctions, and dancing with the Bop Daddies.

The 2007 event was a great success with a total of \$82,000 raised to support the mission critical programming of the organization. The goal for 2008 is \$100,000.

"Ronald McDonald House provides support for families during traumatic times, and our annual fund raiser enables us to continue that support," said Karen Telian-Tyler, said RMHC president. "We hope the Topeka and surrounding community will join us on Saturday, August 23 to keep our mission alive."

To purchase tickets and sponsorships or donate items for the auction, contact Martha Hagedorn-Krass, RMHC CEO and executive director, at (785) 235-6852 or martha@rmhctopeka.org.

The house has been a blessing for the young couple from Fort Riley. The Madrons have been staying at the house since the birth of their twin girls in late January at Stormont Vail Hospital in Topeka. Weighing in at 1.6 and 1.7 pounds at birth, Lillian and Jewel

— more —

were born four months premature and needed to stay in the hospital's neonatal intensive care unit until they were strong enough to go home.

"The house has been *wonderful*," said Traci "Spending 10 to 12 hours at the hospital each day, it's nice to come home, eat a home-cooked meal and sit on the couch to relax."

Truly a house that love built, the Ronald McDonald House serves as residency for parents and families of sick children being treated in area hospitals. Over the past 20 years, the house has provided a home away from home for thousands of Northeast Kansas families.

Thomas, who prefers to be called Tommy, serves in the military and is stationed at Fort Riley. He says that staying at the house has also provided camaraderie and an opportunity to share with the other families.

"We sit and talk, and they help us see that there is light at the end of the tunnel," said Tommy. "Now we're the long-timers at the house and give advice from our own experiences."

Supported by community donations and volunteers, the house is open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The three-story house includes eight bedrooms, each with a full bath; a kitchen; a dining room; a living room; a family room; and a laundry room. Television and internet access are also available to the families, and evening meals are prepared by volunteers from the community.

After a three-month stay at Stormont, the twins were released in late April, and while Traci and Tommy's stay at Ronald McDonald House has made life easier, they are glad to be back home with their girls and take on new experiences and challenges as parents.

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