

Reaching -for the Stars for Self—Growth

The Ronald McDonald House

Linda Schmidt Zeta Epsilon #2344 Overland Park, Ks - 1987

If you have never been in a Ronald McDonald House are you in for a big surprise. What a loving, warm environment to be in. Diane Power, day resident manager and Jack Walter, night resident manager greeted us with warm smiles and open arms. The Ronald McDonald House has been one of our chapter's philanthropic projects for approximately four years, and it is always nice to visit our friends.

The Ronald McDonald House in Kansas City opened in September, 1981 after the property was purchased in March, 1980 and the house was refurbished. This was the 27th House to open. It is located at 1901 Olathe Blvd. in Kansas City, Kansas, across from the K. U. Medical Center. The doctors and hospital staff worked closely with an architectural firm to design plans for a comfortable, functional home for eleven families and a live-in manager. The House has had so much support from the community that the mortgage was paid off in three years. Many different organizations and businesses donate services and products each month for the use of the guests. A city must be there for the House for it to succeed, and the Greater Kansas City Area sure is.

The Ronald McDonald House is able to accommodate eleven families at one time because of everything available besides just the bedrooms. There is a large kitchen with two of every major appliance in it. This works because usually families cook, eat, and clean up together. There are also two washers and driers for their use. While the parents are doing their laundry there is a children's playroom and a recreational room in the next room. The recreational room has a television, VCR and many movie tapes, and lots of games for all. Upstairs, off of the kitchen is a screened in porch and a living room. Finally, on the second floor there is a library strictly for quiet time.

The entire House is just as comfortable as your own home would be. The staff helps the guest feel like this is their home away from home. This is important because the guests are staying here under unfortunate circumstances, and they need to come to a place to unwind and try to cope with all sorts of feelings.

The requirements for a stay are the family must live outside of a 50 mile radius of the Kansas City area and have a sick child under the care of a physician. The average stay is 7 days, but sometimes it is only one day. Some instances warrant a 30 day stay, which is the maximum stay without leaving, re-registering on the waiting list, and coming back after 3 days away. Families with children who have cancer have priority over others. The maximum charged per night is \$7.50, but if a family cannot afford to pay, they stay for free. The staff does not determine this, but the social worker at the hospital does. This makes it easier

for both the staff and the guests.

The first Ronald McDonald House was opened 12 years ago in Philadelphia, and has grown to 100 houses in the country during 1986. Currently there are many cities working hard to begin one there. The way to start one in your community is to determine a need, by questionnaires. This must be approved by the McDonald's Company. Then you have to prove the need and get support from the community. It is a struggle in the beginning, but with the backing of the community, one can succeed. Every Ronald McDonald House is different. Each has different numbers of rooms and charges their own price for the night. Some are brand new structures, and some are refurbished homes. Everyone is filled with love to make them alike.

There are speakers who are willing to talk to interested groups. There is also a slide show which lasts 15 — 20 minutes. Also, tours are given by arrangement.