



## History of the New Orleans Ronald McDonald House®

The New Orleans Ronald McDonald House opened **December 10, 1983**, just nine years after the first Ronald McDonald House opened in Philadelphia. The New Orleans House was the 53rd Ronald McDonald House in the country.

Originally a run-down rooming house on Canal Street, volunteers gutted the building, transforming it into a 15-bedroom facility with a big kitchen and dining room, two laundry areas, a toy room, two dens and a living room – plenty of space for guests to make themselves at home. Since its opening in 1983 the House has been a home away from home for more than 18,000 families with sick children from five different countries, 38 different states, and 63 out of 64 parishes in Louisiana.

On the morning of **Monday, August 29, 2005**, Hurricane Katrina slammed into the Gulf Coast. Soon after, the levee system in New Orleans failed. Surging floodwaters, destructive winds and storms tore through the New Orleans Ronald McDonald House in the historic Mid-City area. The floodwaters destroyed the entire first floor. Winds ripped off portions of the roof and several skylights, part of one wall, and took the House's van.

When the staff was able to return to the House **two weeks** after Hurricane Katrina hit, they discovered that flooding had reached the second floor of the House and winds had severely damaged the roof. Massive amounts of mold and mildew blackened the walls on the first floor. Everything inside was destroyed. The next day they began seeking the help of a contractor to begin renovations.

**Within the next week**, Ronald McDonald House Charities® (RMHC®) Chapters around the world were notified of the situation at the New Orleans House. In true RMHC fashion, support was there, and the response was overwhelming – sometimes from unexpected places such as RMHC Taiwan, which sent \$100,000 to help with the rebuilding of the House. More than \$1.5 million was granted by 83 different RMHC Chapters and other donors.

As the House reopens today on **August 16, 2006** – less than one year after it was devastated by Hurricane Katrina – it will continue to serve three children's hospitals in the New Orleans area and families from all around the Gulf Coast.

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