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## RONALD McDONALD HOUSE CHARITIES OF CONNECTICUT AND WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS

### AWARDS OVER \$90,000 TO AREA ORGANIZATIONS

#### *Charity Announces Second Quarter Grant-Making Activity*

JUNE 2011 – Ronald McDonald House Charities® (RMHC®) of Connecticut and Western Massachusetts has awarded \$91,182 to nine area organizations. The grants provide funding for a variety of initiatives, including materials for a summer literacy program serving at-risk youths, SMART Boards technology for inner city and special education schools, and audio-visual equipment for a city arts center.

**“RMHC is thrilled to be supporting so many diverse community organizations,” says Laura Phillips Ward, President of RMHC of Connecticut and Western Massachusetts. “RMHC was created to better the lives of children and their families in our community and we are delighted to be able to continue our work through these selected organizations.”**

RMHC’s second quarter recipients are:

- Camp Howe in Goshen, MA – \$13,716 to purchase furniture including bunk beds and dining tables. Camp Howe is a traditional co-ed summer camp that strives to reach underserved populations with the intent of creating a community that is accepting of differences in others. The camp features its unique Echo Program, which celebrates over 40 years of including youth with disabilities into a camp setting and making summer camp accessible to all youth by providing physically and emotionally safe experiences.
- **Children’s Museum of Southeastern CT in Niantic** – \$6,448 to purchase equipment for a new exhibit at the museum, which opened 18 years ago to provide educational exhibits that encourage family interaction and learning through play for all children and all families. The “Soundbeam” that will be purchased is a device that allows all people to make music, including children with a limited range of motion, vision impairments, attention deficit, hyperactivity and autism. Special needs individuals can become expressive and communicative using music and sound, and the sense of control and independence provided with the Soundbeam can be a powerful motivator, stimulating learning and interaction in other areas.

- Grace Academy in Hartford – \$4,248 for a SMART Board and associated equipment. The school opened in August 2010 and is a private, tuition-free school serving girls from Hartford's neediest neighborhoods. It provides a solid, rigorous academic middle-school program in a safe, secure environment. Students attend the school with the implicit goal of continuing on to a four-year college, and expectations for success are set very high with students responding accordingly. The SMART Boards will help students make valuable and tangible connections to their world, and will allow teachers to maximize their time to accelerate learning for a broad spectrum of students.
- **Lebanon Elementary School Parent Teacher's Association in Lebanon** – \$10,000 awarded for the completion of **"Bailey's Garden," a handicap accessible playground being built in honor of seven-year old Bailey Shifrin** who died from a rare genetic syndrome. The project is in its final phase and is being built in accordance with the requirements of the American Disabilities Act so that all children can enjoy the park.
- Madonna Place, Inc. in Norwich – \$7,101 for books and toys to be used by children of at-risk families **receiving services and participating in the organization's Summer Literacy Program.** The organization has grown since it was founded in 1981 to now serve as a source of information, education and counseling for disadvantaged families in the Norwich area.
- Manchester Memorial Hospital/ECHN in Manchester – \$12,437 for three SMART **Boards for the hospital's Clinical Day School**, a private special education school that offers an alternative school experience for students who need a highly structured, therapeutic environment in order to achieve academic success. The boards will not only provide educators more opportunities to further individualize approaches to teaching, but will also assist students in achieving their academic and behavioral health successes.
- Mount Saint John in Deep River – **\$3,896 to fund materials for the facility's Vocational Enrichment Programs.** Mount Saint John is a comprehensive residential treatment facility that provides a variety of integrated treatment services to adolescent boys who have behavioral, emotional, family and educational challenges as well as other at-risk situations. Mount Saint John provides a safe homelike environment with a focus on education, work and social skills. The Vocational Enrichment Programs provide the boys and young men with vital vocational and social training that will better prepare them to return to their home communities, with the skills necessary to be empowered and confident in achieving success.
- Trinity-On-Main in New Britain – \$24,438 to purchase audio and visual equipment for the arts center, which was founded in 2004 at the old Trinity United Methodist Church, a New Britain landmark. The center works to restore and preserve the historic building as a venue for live performances, cultural events and educational programs, as well as public gatherings and private functions. The programs are aimed at fostering positive and enriching cross-cultural experiences among New Britain's diverse demographic groups and encouraging community revitalization in the city. The grant will fund new microphones, cables and projectors to support the daily dance, music and arts programming.
- YMCA of Greater Hartford – \$8,898 for educational toys and computer software for new **Wilson-Gray Center's Child Watch Amazing Kids Program**, which is a free service providing on-site care for children while their parent/caregivers take part in YMCA programs. The Wilson-Gray YMCA opened in 2009 and is located in the **city's Clay Arsenal neighborhood, serving some of Hartford's most poverty-stricken families.**

RMHC of Connecticut and Western Massachusetts is a non-profit organization managed by a volunteer Board of Directors. RMHC receives its **funding from individual donors, McDonald's customers** who drop change in the in-store canisters, **a portion of all McDonald's Happy Meal® sales**, fundraisers, and through the generosity of **McDonald's owner/operators who are committed to the communities they serve**. For more information on how to help RMHC, visit [www.rmhc-ctma.org/donate](http://www.rmhc-ctma.org/donate).

Since 1988 RMHC of Connecticut and Western Massachusetts has provided more than \$6 million to over 400 non-profit organizations, helping thousands of area children lead happier, healthier and more productive lives. RMHC and its global network of local chapters in over 50 countries and regions have awarded more than \$460 million in grants and program services supporting children worldwide. For more information about RMHC or to apply for a grant, please call Carole Bowman at (860) 659-0514, visit [www.rmhc-ctma.org](http://www.rmhc-ctma.org) or connect on [facebook.com/rmhc.ctma](https://facebook.com/rmhc.ctma).

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