



**Winston-Salem**

*Caring for families caring for children*

# Heart to Heart

Issue 89

November 2009

419 South Hawthorne Road, Winston-Salem, NC 27103 (336) 723-0228 [www.rmhwinstonsalem.org](http://www.rmhwinstonsalem.org)

## 25 Years and Growing!

In recognition of your dedication to the Ronald McDonald House and Family Rooms, you and a guest are invited to attend our



### Volunteer Appreciation Birthday Dinner

**Thursday, November 5**  
**6:00 pm**



#### Salemtowne Community Center

1000 Salemtowne Drive, Winston-Salem

#### Special Guests

- **Speakers - RMH Family, The Everharts**
- **Music - Art Bloom**

**Join us for door prizes, cake, volunteer awards, birthday entertainment, and more!**

If you haven't already, please respond ASAP to:  
[AbbyB@rmhwinstonsalem.org](mailto:AbbyB@rmhwinstonsalem.org) or 723.0228 x11

### Volunteer Opportunities at the Ronald McDonald House and Brenner Family Room during the Holidays

If you would like to spend some time with our House or Family Room guests, we would love to have help from you and your family. If you are able to help at the House, please contact Abby (723-0228 x11). Help is needed at the House during Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's.

Opportunities in the Brenner Family Room are on Thanksgiving and Christmas Days. Because of Flu Season Restrictions and the resulting low census, we will not be opening the Forsyth Family Room for the holidays. If you can help at the Brenner Family Room, please contact Judy (723-0228 x39). Thank you for helping us serve families over the holiday season!



## Family Room Guidelines

### Talking with Guests

By Judy Sangimino, Family Room Manager

From time to time volunteers will ask me for suggestions regarding talking with Family Room guests. I usually explain that the volunteer should put himself or herself in the guests' shoes. Think about how you would feel and what you would want if you were in their place. Because of differences in personalities and preferences, the answer may be somewhat different for each volunteer and each guest. However, here are some general guidelines that should help:

- Most folks want to feel that others care. You can convey this by smiling and greeting each guest who comes into the room. Tell them that you are happy that they are there. Ask if you can help them find something. When the guests are ready to leave, tell them that you hope they will come back soon.
- Our guests are very concerned about their child and often want to share their feelings. Take your cues from the guest to see if they are open to talking about their child. Sometimes it is helpful to imitate the guest's stance. If the guest is sitting, you should sit. If the guest is standing, you should stand. Face the guest. Without prying, ask the guest how their patient is doing. Some folks will grunt in your direction; they are telling you that they do not want to talk about it. Others will take this opportunity to unburden themselves. If they do, listen and nod to let them know that you hear what they are saying.
- Provide helpful feedback. If the guest pauses, briefly summarize how they must be feeling. For example, you could say, "That was difficult for you to hear." or, "You must have been frightened when that happened." We should never say, "Everything will be all right." We don't know that it will, and neither do the parents. You could encourage them by telling them that the hospital has a wonderful medical staff, and their child is in good hands.
- Trust your instincts. A guest may at first give the impression that they don't want to talk. This is especially true if there are other guests in the room. However, if the other guests leave and the room is quiet, they may want to unburden themselves. Pour yourself a glass of lemonade, and ask the guest if she would like some. You might say, "You look sad. Is there anything I can do to help?" That could serve as an opening for the guest to start talking.

We have all been through difficult times, and often what helps us the most is sharing your burden with another human being. Even though nothing has changed, we feel so relieved when we just "get things off our chest." Your presence in the Family Room tells our guests that you are someone who cares and can be trusted. Try giving them the opportunity to share their feelings with you for a little while. You will be amazed at how good it makes you both feel. Thank you all for the powerful gift of your time. Your service to folks who are going through some very difficult days helps make their burden a little easier to bear. If you have any questions about this article, please call Judy at 723.0228 x39.



**Have a wonderful  
Thanksgiving!**

