

Soda or Pop?

No matter what you call the beverage,
tabs from aluminum cans have the potential to
bring communities together for a good cause.

by *Tosha Powell*



PHOTOS BY MATTHEW ELLIOTT

A strong mind; a strong body; and a safe, supportive place to grow.” These are things the Ronald McDonald House Charities (RMHC) believe every child needs. And these are things the RMHC is helping provide for children across the nation. The National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) is helping.

“As a junior Board, we felt that the junior members and their families were very fortunate, and we saw an opportunity for the NJAA to give back to the communities we visit,” says Dana May, NJAA membership director. “We have such a sense of community within the NJAA and the adult Association, it just seemed natural

to do something that could benefit a larger community.”

Helping others in need

Many Ronald McDonald Houses work with local recycling centers to raise money by collecting tabs from aluminum cans. Ronald McDonald Houses collect pop tabs instead of entire aluminum cans because the tabs are pure high-quality aluminum, unlike cans, which consist of aluminum and other alloys. Tabs are also easier to store than whole cans.

“The junior Board wanted to select an organization that benefited children,” May says. “We also knew that to help the

service project be successful we needed a project that wouldn’t be too much of a time commitment from juniors and their families during an already hectic NJAS (National Junior Angus Show) week. The Ronald McDonald House shares the value of strong families and supporting those going through tough times. And, what could be easier than saving a pop tab?”

If your local Ronald McDonald House participates in the program, cardboard collection containers in the shape of a house likely have been distributed to schools, community and civic groups and other organizations in your area, as well as at the Ronald McDonald House, local McDonald’s restaurants, local banks and grocery stores.

After the tabs are collected, the local RMHC Chapter brings the collection to local recycling centers, where they are weighed to determine their value. One pound (lb.) of tabs is worth 57¢, and one gallon (gal.) of pop tabs (4,175 tabs) is worth \$1.49. The recycling center then sends the local RMHC Chapter or House a check for the total value. To date, more than 400 million pop tabs have been collected in total, generating more than \$4 million.

Juniors and their families collected more than 14 pounds (lb.) of tabs, totaling around 18,500 tabs, at the 2007 NJAS in Tulsa, Okla., to be donated to the RMHC of Oklahoma City. Each state was given a collection bag for the week of the national show, and states also brought additional containers in which they had collected tabs throughout the year.

This year junior members have proven just how big the Angus family’s giving spirit is with an abundant gift of 655.4 lb. of tabs, which is approximately 830,392 tabs.

“This year’s collection was outstanding!” May says. “It was amazing to see the year-long effort our juniors and their families put into this project. We collected 4,600% more pounds of tabs than last year.”

Brenda Miller, executive director of the Des Moines RMHC, was in attendance at the NJAS. She announced to the junior members present that their donation was the largest she could ever remember being donated.

“In talking with Brenda Miller, she said their largest donations in the past have been between 400 to 500 pounds,” May says. “We exceeded their expectations. The gratitude of the Des Moines RMHC to the NJAA was endless.”



► NJAA Directors Brandon Creamer and Ann Blumer collect the tabs and prepare to weigh them.



► Brenda Miller (left), executive director of the Des Moines Ronald McDonald House Charities, hauls off the largest donation she can remember.

PHOTO BY CRYSTAL YOUNG, API CREATIVE MEDIA

“The Ronald McDonald House shares the value of strong families and supporting those going through tough times. And, what could be easier than saving a pop tab?”

— Dana May



► Junior Board members collected and weighed the 655.4 lb. of tabs.

Beyond pop tabs

Since 1974, when the first Ronald McDonald House opened in Philadelphia, Pa., Ronald McDonald House Charities (RMHC) has grown into a global network of care. Driven by a passion to reach out to children in need, the core programs of RMHC have grown beyond the cornerstone Ronald McDonald House to include Ronald McDonald Family Room and Ronald McDonald Care Mobile.

“It is truly heartwarming to see our membership come together to give such a large donation to the RMHC through collecting pop tabs,” says Dana May, National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) membership director. “It would be fantastic to see our membership expand our community service project to include toy and food donations.”

Additional RMHC programs are described below.

Ronald McDonald House. Known as The House That Love Built,[®] the Ronald McDonald House program has been helping seriously ill children and their families for decades. Each Ronald McDonald House provides a safe, welcoming and warm home away from home for children receiving medical treatment at a nearby medical facility.

Ronald McDonald Family Room. Located near neonatal or pediatric intensive care units and within the hectic environment of the hospital, a Ronald McDonald Family Room provides a haven for families of children undergoing treatment. Many Ronald McDonald Family Rooms include children’s play areas and computer stations, and offer families a place to relax.

Ronald McDonald Care Mobile. Since 2000, the Ronald McDonald Care Mobile program has been providing cost-effective medical, dental and health education services directly to underserved children in rural and urban areas across the globe. Ronald McDonald Care Mobile extends the care of RMHC to children who need it most.