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Media release



Architects provide award-winning gift of generosity

Ronald McDonald House Charities' new Ronald McDonald Family Retreat has got off to an award winning start after picking up a multiple housing award for the Bay of Plenty/Waikato region, at the 2009 Institute of Architects awards.

The Ronald McDonald Family Retreat, which provides free holiday accommodation for sick New Zealand children and their families, was designed by husband and wife duo Jim and Vanessa Elliott, and since the retreat's inception in May 2009 it has helped 26 families take a much needed break in Rotorua's luxury surroundings, with capacity to provide up to 100 families with a relaxing holiday each year.

"The stress of having a sick child can really take its toll on a family," Ronald McDonald House Charities chairman Lionel Whitehead says.

"The retreat helps them to escape the sadness and stress of everyday life and spend quality time together as a family – something that those more fortunate can often take for granted."

"When a child is sick, often one or both parents have to give up work to care for the child. It's important for these families to take time out to spend time together, however holidays can be costly - the Ronald McDonald Family Retreat makes this viable," Mr. Whitehead says.

When Jim and Vanessa Elliott of Elliot architects, were first approached by Ronald McDonald House Charities with the concept of the retreat, they were so touched by the project that they offered their expert services free of charge.

"It's great to have the Elliott's fabulous work recognised – particularly given their generosity. Not only have they provided us with an award winning design, they've also helped to provide a place where families can relax and spend time together."

Elliot architects are also the designers of many of McDonald's restaurants around the country.

McDonald's have supported Ronald McDonald House Charities for 20 years offering financial support to the tune of over \$12 million, and through McDonald's ongoing support and the generosity of New Zealanders, Ronald McDonald House Charities helps over 25,000 New Zealanders annually.

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About McDonald's New Zealand

New Zealand's first McDonald's restaurant opened in Porirua in 1976. Today there are 149 McDonald's restaurants across New Zealand, 80 per cent of which are franchised and run by local business men and women. The organisation employs 8500 people in restaurants nationwide. In 2008, McDonald's spent \$120 million with New Zealand suppliers, buying produce and products for its restaurants. For more information visit www.mcdonalds.co.nz