

Ronald McDonald House Charities

Ronald McDonald House Charities is a global charitable network that has served children and their families in 48 countries including the United States since 1974. The foundation is probably best known for its Ronald McDonald Houses, which provide an affordable “home away from home” for families of seriously ill children while they receive treatment at a nearby hospital.



In Kansas City (Missouri), construction plans for a new Ronald McDonald House recently presented the organization with an opportunity to meet the family’s communications needs and network the new and existing 18-year-old Ronald McDonald House located across the street.

Ronald McDonald House Charities (RMHC) works to better the lives of children and their families around the world by creating and supporting programs that directly improve the health and well-being of children. While the core principle of Ronald McDonald House Charities is to help children in need, its cornerstone program is the Ronald McDonald House (RMH). More than 245 Ronald McDonald Houses in 26 countries have been built, and more than 10 million families around the world have benefited from their stay since the first RMH opened Philadelphia more than 30 years ago.

The homes are located near hospitals so children can be near their parents while traveling great distances to get medical treatments (lasting anywhere from one day, to one year or longer). They offer a comfortable place to sleep, eat, relax – in some cases at no cost – and find support from other families in similar situations.

The Challenge

Recently, the organization constructed a new fourlevel RMH house in the Longfellow Park community Kansas City (Missouri). The house was built with 41 bedrooms, family/living room space and seven offices for staff. The new structure has tripled the number of families served at Children's Mercy Hospital, up from 19 to a combined total of 60.

Addressing the growing need to serve more families and making it easier for them to communicate via the Internet were the driving factors in the design process. Making the Internet more readily available meant including hard wired Internet access points in each bedroom as well as four Internet connection sites in the family room. Other factors in the design process included providing staff offices and wiring them for Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) as well as Internet access.

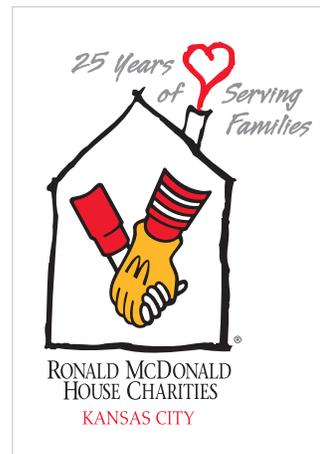
Ann Jerome, CEO/Executive Director, Ronald McDonald House Charities, Kansas City, explained, "Internet access is important because so many of the families leave the hospital and come to the house to do medical research after talking with the doctors; and use the Internet as a way to stay in touch with their families back at home and to communicate with their offices." The older and smaller RMD home does not offer Internet access in the bedrooms and provides only two Internet connections in the living room.

Long-term, the new and existing houses will be networked. Besides providing temporary living space for families, the older home will continue to be a work site for staff.

The Solution

Teague Electric, one of the largest commercial, residential, and industrial electrical contractors in the metropolitan Kansas City area, was the project contractor. Teague Electric installed a hardware solution composed exclusively of Superior Essex copper and fiber optics cable and Sprint Products connectivity. Selected cabling products included CAT 5e and CAT 3 copper cabling and 62.5 Multimode Fiber Optics Cable.

More than 50,000 feet of CAT5e Cobra copper cabling was installed on the horizontal and connected to Sprint blocks, 5e jacks, and face plates throughout the house. All total, about 100 cable drops were made throughout the house.



By installing this Copper Cabling System, the system is guaranteed to meet IEEE 802.3ab Bit Error Rate requirements, and guaranteed to support current and future applications designed for CAT 5e, including Voice over IP and Power over Ethernet. In addition to achieving exceptional performance, typical installations with approved connectivity, such as Sprint products, when installed by a Superior Essex certified contractor, qualify for the extended Lifetime warranty program offered by Superior Essex. The PerformaLink™ warranty covers the permanent link of the network (as defined by TIA/EIA 568-B.1) for Category 5e, which includes the cable and connecting hardware.



Along the backbone, both CAT 3 cabling and 62.5 Multimode Fiber Optics Cable were installed for the data lines and connect the TR closets.

Sprint North Supply (SNS), a division of Sprint communications, played a significant roll in the logistics throughout the duration of this project. SNS is a leading wholesale distributor of integrated solutions for voice, data and video conferencing needs, CATV and security/alarm systems.

The Results

The Ronald McDonald House (RMH) of Kansas City is now able to better serve families of ill children by offering more accessibility to the Internet. And by choosing Superior Essex products along with Sprint connectivity, the organization has purchased a complete cabling system that removes any worries over long-term performance and gives them enough headroom to grow.