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RONALD McDONALD HOUSE® OF MIAMI OFFERS A HOME AWAY FROM HOME FOR MIRACLE BABY

MIAMI, FL – August 29, 2007 – Beatriz Suarez was told her son would never survive. She was just two months pregnant when the doctors delivered the devastating news that her son suffered from urine blockage and would die because his lungs would never develop.

But Suarez refused to accept the diagnosis. She pleaded with physicians to try anything to save her baby. Two surgeries and three procedures later, she gave birth to Anthony Suarez on May 31, 2006 at Jackson Memorial Hospital in Miami.

Doctors told her he wouldn't live more than 30 minutes. Then they said he wouldn't live through the night. He received his final blessing from a priest. But Anthony and his mother are fighters.

Suarez commuted between Miami and her home in the Florida Keys daily, driving a total of eight hours a day so that she could care for her 5-year-old son Edward, and be there for Anthony. A sense of comfort and support was finally offered to Suarez and her family at the Ronald McDonald House of Miami, which is celebrating its 25th Anniversary this month.



"I was so tired, I was sleeping in my car," said Suarez. "The Ronald McDonald House helped me so much. I was able to move with Edward to Miami so that I could be close to the hospital and take care of both of my children. "

Anthony has had four additional surgeries since his birth, and as soon as he reaches 22 pounds he is expected to undergo a kidney transplant with his mother serving as the donor. Every day Anthony grows stronger. At 15 months he is standing, crawling and almost walking. Doctors are amazed at his ability to eat through his mouth.

"They said it is a miracle that he is alive – they have no explanation," said Suarez, holding Anthony with extreme pride. "Doctors failed to ever give me a bit of hope that my child would perhaps survive, but my heart was telling me that my baby was going to be OK. The Ronald McDonald House staff, other families and volunteers have offered so much support and has truly acted like family."

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The Ronald McDonald House® of Miami is the cornerstone program of Ronald McDonald House Charities of South Florida, a not-for-profit foundation dedicated to helping local children live

happier, healthier and more productive lives by supporting health care and medical research programs, education and the arts, and civic and social programs.

The Ronald McDonald House of Miami is a “home-away-from-home” for families of seriously ill children receiving treatment at any pediatric medical facility. Since opening its doors in 1982, the 28-bedroom House has provided shelter and solace for more than 18000 families from all over the world. Twenty-four hours a day, 365 days a year, the House offers parents and family members of ill children a refuge from the hospital.