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**Ronald McDonald House Charities of Central Illinois**

**Awards Michael R. Pranzatelli, M.D., as its 2011 Medical Honoree**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

SPRINGFIELD, IL -- Ronald McDonald House Charities of Central Illinois (RMHCCI) presented Michael R. Pranzatelli, M.D., with its first ever Medical Honoree Award at its 25th Anniversary Gala on Friday, November 4, 2011. Dr. Pranzatelli, who joined the Southern Illinois University (SIU) School of Medicine in 1999, is currently a Professor of Neurology & Pediatrics at SIU School of Medicine and the Director of the National Pediatric Myoclonus Center.

According to Kelly Thompson, Executive Director, “On behalf of Ronald McDonald House Charities of Central Illinois and our Board of Directors, we are so pleased to present Dr. Pranzatelli with this well-deserved recognition as our 2011 Medical Honoree due to his incredible dedication to serving families who have children with opsoclonus-myoclonus syndrome (OMS) through his world renown National Pediatric Myoclonus Center.”

Dr. Pranzatelli’s patients travel to Springfield, IL from all over the world to be treated at the National Pediatric Myoclonus Center, and many of these families also stay at the Ronald McDonald House in Springfield while in his care. Featured in a video testimony at the Gala were young patients of Dr. Pranzatelli’s from South Carolina and Florida. These families and children had stayed at the Ronald McDonald House in 2011 during treatment at the Center.

"Opsoclonus" is an unusual disorder of eye movement in which both eyes dart involuntarily (dancing eyes). "Myoclonus" simply means brief muscle jerks and "ataxia" indicates incoordination. The syndrome has been called by many other names, such as "Kinsbourne syndrome," "dancing-eyes-dancing-feet" or opsoclonus-myoclonus syndrome (OMS). Most children are less than two years old when diagnosed. Boys and girls are nearly equally affected. The syndrome often follows an apparent viral infection, such as flu. [This information has been taken from [www.omsusa.org](http://www.omsusa.org), or visit [www.siumed.edu](http://www.siumed.edu) for more information about Dr. Pranzatelli and the National Pediatric Myoclonus Center.]

*Editor’s Note: Over 300 people were in attendance at the Gala when Dr. Pranzatelli was presented with his award. A link to the video shown at the Gala about Dr. Pranzatelli will be posted to the RMHCCI website this Friday.*

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About The Ronald McDonald House Charities of Central Illinois (RMHCCI)

The mission of Ronald McDonald House Charities of Central Illinois exists to provide a supportive home away from home for families with children receiving medical care in Springfield. RMHCCI is celebrating 25 years of service to the central Illinois area in 2011, having opened its doors to the public in February 1986. RMHCCI serves over 400 families per year who travel to Springfield from across the U.S., Illinois and the world. For more information, visit www.rmhc-centralillinois.org.