

March 7, 2011

Martin J. Coyne, Jr.  
President and CEO  
Ronald McDonald House Charities  
One Kroc Drive  
Oak Brook, IL 60523

Dear Mr. Coyne:

This letter is to request that your company initiate a review to determine if \$125,000 awarded to the Save A Life Foundation Inc. by Ronald McDonald House Charities and by Ronald McDonald House Charities of Chicagoland & Northwest Indiana was properly administered.

Further, this is to request a review to determine if the destruction of related financial and other records, confirmed in an e-mail sent last year by Doug Porter, CEO of Ronald McDonald House Charities of Chicagoland & Northwest Indiana, was premature and constitutes a violation of Ronald McDonald House Charities' Records Management Policy.

If such reviews are conducted by your company, this is to request that upon completion all relevant documents and findings be made available for public inspection.

#### **I. \$125,000 paid by RMHC to the Save A Life Foundation Inc.**

According to Internal Revenue Service filings, from 2004-06 Ronald McDonald House Charities Inc. (RMHC) awarded \$87,500 to the Save A Life Foundation (SALF).<sup>1</sup>

According to a July 4, 2010 e-mail from CEO Doug Porter of Ronald McDonald House Charities of Chicagoland & Northwest Indiana (RMHC-CH/IN), in 2004 that corporation awarded \$37,500 to SALF.<sup>2</sup>

$\$87,500 + \$37,500 = \$125,000$

#### **II. Concerns regarding SALF's use of the RMHC funds**

According to the following records, SALF was awarded these funds to provide first aid training classes for 18,000 students in the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) during school years 2004/05 and 2005/06.

The year 2004/05 program is described in an October 14, 2004 SALF press release, "Ronald McDonald House Charities Awards SALF Grant" (emphasis added).<sup>3</sup>

*On June 22, Save A Life Foundation (SALF) was awarded a grant from Ronald McDonald House Charities Global and the Chicagoland and Northwest Indiana Chapter and Chicago Public Schools totaling \$75,000. **The grant will allow SALF to training (sic) nearly 8,000 4th and 5th grade children in the Chicagoland area.***

*...The main instructor of record will be Sid Blustain, a Chicago Fire EMT veteran and SALF associate of six years.... "With the support of Chicago Public Schools and RMHC, we can guarantee that our children will live in a safer, better emergency prepared community," said SALF National Communications Director, Dane Neal.*

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<sup>1</sup> <http://scr.bi/dTxkfkf>

<sup>2</sup> <http://scr.bi/hrjBjz>

<sup>3</sup> <http://scr.bi/ea5KSX>

The 2005/06 program is described in an August 5, 2005 letter from SALF founder/president Carol J. Spizzirri to Chicago Schools CEO Arne Duncan that accompanied a six-page grant request:<sup>4</sup>

*We are pleased to submit this funding request to Chicago Board of education (sic) for the amount of \$25,000... **We are excited about maintaining our partnership between Chicago's Board of Education and Ronald McDonald House Charities.***

From the grant request:

*The Save A Life Foundation is requesting the financial assistance for its on-going work to provide professional training of life-support first aid skills for 10,000 grade children within the Chicago Public Schools... **The total cost of this project will be \$100,000 of which SALF requests \$37,500 RMHC \$37,500 Global \$37,500 and \$25,000 from the Chicago Public Schools.***<sup>5</sup>

In a December 8, 2005 letter to Ms. Spizzirri in which he approved the program, Mr. Duncan wrote:<sup>6</sup>

*It is very encouraging to learn that 10,000 grade school students will be trained during the 2005-06 school year...As a result of our meeting, I have authorized payment in the amount of \$24,500 to fund your program during the 2005-06 school year. **Our contribution will complement the funding you have received from Ronald McDonald House Charities.***

However, as detailed in a January 5, 2011 letter I submitted to CPS Inspector General James M. Sullivan, CPS records obtained via a 2009 federal court subpoena and FOIA requests fail to substantiate that these training classes ever took place.<sup>7</sup>

Therefore, given these discrepancies, it's unclear that the \$125,000 awarded to SALF by RMHC and by RMHC-CH/IN was properly administered.

### III. Concerns regarding the premature destruction of records

In the above-referenced July 4, 2010 e-mail, Doug Porter, CEO of Ronald McDonald House Charities of Chicagoland and Northwest Indiana wrote:

*I'm sorry to report that those records being 6+ years old have been destroyed. We do not have any files left on this grant and given that we had turned down any future requests, never in a million years did I think they would ever be relevant again. But again, the records that you had (we discussed) seemed to be accurate. That \$37,500 from our local chapter (matched by global) in 2004 was the only one I recall.*<sup>8</sup>

This appears to be a clear violation of the records retention guidelines as stated in Ronald McDonald House Charities' Records Management Policy:

*Grant Administration - Administration of donations made by RMHC to other organizations - including applications and agreements. While Active + 10 years thereafter*<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> <http://scr.bi/fxBt8z>

<sup>5</sup> The total of these amounts is not \$100,000 as written, but \$137,500.

<sup>6</sup> <http://scr.bi/hYR3W5>

<sup>7</sup> <http://scr.bi/gfXgD3>

<sup>8</sup> <http://scr.bi/hrjBjz>

<sup>9</sup> <http://bit.ly/eB7Dvf>

#### IV. Additional information

Since November 2006, broadcast and print media outlets around the country have reported numerous stories describing a variety of fabrications and falsehoods associated with SALF.<sup>10</sup>

According to *The Hill* and other news outlets, SALF is under investigation by the Illinois Attorney General's Charitable Trust Bureau.<sup>11</sup>

According to a November 8, 2010 letter from the Inspector General of the Department of Health and Human Services,<sup>12</sup> concerns regarding SALF are being reviewed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) which awarded \$3,335,578 to SALF.<sup>13</sup> This may also concern RMHC because in reports submitted to the CDC, SALF stated that a portion of those monies were used to solicit funding and support from your organization.

#### V. Conclusion

Based on the above information, past and potential future donors to Ronald McDonald House Charities may harbor concerns as to whether their donations have been or will be properly administered. Given the uncertainties associated with the administration of the \$125,000 RMHC awarded to SALF and what appears to be the premature destruction of related financial records, donors may harbor concerns regarding whether RMHC employees properly administered those funds. Donors may also harbor concerns regarding RMHC employees' relationships with SALF.

In order to allay such concerns, this is to request that your company:

1. Conduct a review to determine if the \$125,000 awarded to SALF was properly administered by obtaining the dates and names of the Chicago schools where SALF was funded to conduct the first aid training classes and the names of all SALF instructors who conducted the classes.

Should your company wish to locate that information, you may wish to contact members of SALF's 2009 executive board; former SALF employees Sid Blustain and Dane Neal, both named in SALF's October 14, 2004 press release about the CPS training program; and Saquan Gholar who, according to CPS records, was SALF's "Education Training Coordinator" for the program.<sup>14</sup> Please find attached a list with contact information for these individuals.

2. Conduct a review to identify which employees were responsible for destroying the records referenced by Mr. Porter (and perhaps any other records) and determine whether their actions violated RMHC policies.

Finally, for the reasons described above, in the event your company chooses to proceed with such a review, this is to request that all findings and relevant documents be made available for public inspection.

Thank you for your consideration and I would appreciate a reply providing me with some indication of how you intend to proceed.

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<sup>10</sup> <http://salf-exposed.medianewsonline.com/>

<sup>11</sup> <http://bit.ly/cShdGg>

<sup>12</sup> <http://scr.bi/dSttYx>

<sup>13</sup> <http://bit.ly/fMSSnp>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.servicelearning.cps.k12.il.us/agencydescription.aspx?id=1856>

Sincerely,



Peter M. Heimlich



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website: <http://medfraud.info>

cc:

US Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Inspector General

Elton Malone, Special Agent in Charge

Special Investigations Branch

Office of the IL Attorney General

Barry Goldberg, Assistant Attorney General, Charitable Trust Bureau

Robyn Ziegler, Press Secretary

**Members of the executive board of the Save A Life Foundation Inc. (2009)**

**PRESIDENT:**

Carol Jean Spizzirri  
1930 W. San Marcos Blvd Space 285  
San Marcos, CA 92078

**SECRETARY:**

Rita Mullins  
858 N. Virginia Lake Ct.  
Palatine, IL 60067

**TREASURER:**

Douglas Browne  
2851 Evans Woods Dr.  
Atlanta, GA 30340

**DIRECTOR:**

John Donleavy  
255 Spruce Lane  
Dorset, VT 05251

**Former SALF employees**

**SALF Education Training Coordinator for Chicago Public Schools**

Saquan Gholar  
[Village of Phoenix Police Department](#)  
629 East 151st Street  
Phoenix, Illinois 60426

Named in the [October 14, 2004 SALF press release](#) re: RMHC/CPS program

Sid Blustain, former SALF instructor  
Chicago Fire Department Human Resources  
ph: (312)746-6920

Dane Neal, former SALF National Communications Director  
Now at [Restaurant Radio](#)  
e-mail: [dane@restaurantradio.tv](mailto:dane@restaurantradio.tv)