



## Keeping MDA on the front burner

**I** am issuing a call to all branches intending to be a part of NALC's support of MDA to register as soon as possible. Thanks to each of the over 300 branches that have already done so! If the form we sent has been misplaced, a fill-able form is available on the NALC website, [www.nalc.org](http://www.nalc.org). Clicking on the MDA page or the article on the home page will take you to the fill-able form or to a PDF copy that can be printed and mailed to me at NALC Headquarters, 100 Indiana Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001.

Registering helps NALC keep accurate records and enables us to provide information to branch presidents and local NALC MDA coordinators in a timely manner. It will also allow us to check MDA records so that all branches will get proper credit for the work they do. A database for e-mail communications is being developed and will be used for MDA purposes only. It is my hope a secure online forum can be built so that MDA coordinators can exchange ideas for fund-raising and share best practices and successes with each other in a timely way.

It was my hope that by mid-March the packets would have been mailed to each registered branch containing the new DVD and the "Delivering the Cure" handbook. Delay caused by production pushed back the date of mailing until the end of April. Many of you have already been holding fund-raisers and we thank you for your efforts. Rest assured all information will be mailed as soon as possible.

In addition, to increase the opportunities for branches to be represented in the national MDA telethon, we have changed the number of category winners for MDA awards by changing the branch membership size for award categories. This will give branches a better chance to compete. The categories for awards at this year's telethon are:

	<u>No. of members</u>
<b>Category 1</b>	0-49
<b>Category 2</b>	50-99
<b>Category 3</b>	100-199
<b>Category 4</b>	200-349
<b>Category 5</b>	350-499
<b>Category 6</b>	500-699
<b>Category 7</b>	700-999
<b>Category 8</b>	1000-1499
<b>Category 9</b>	1500-1999
<b>Category 10</b>	2000+

In the past, we sent the first and second place winners in five categories. This change will mean that only one winner in each category will go, but our overall number will remain the same at 10.

We have also established two awards to be given to all branches that achieve excellence in fund-raising. A branch that raises more than \$5,000 will receive a certificate naming it a "Friend of MDA." Branches that raise more than \$10,000 will win the President's Award, which will be commemorated by a plaque signed by our National President. These awards will be given each calendar year.

**While the new booklet contains numerous ideas for getting** involved more deeply in MDA, I wanted to alert all branches of a unique effort being made by NALC member Gary Fitch of Branch 28 in St. Paul, Minnesota. Gary has taken a significant amount of time off work to do an extraordinary thing. He is riding his bicycle across the United States to challenge people to write down their hopes and dreams. These letters will be given to NASA in electronic form and be aboard the next launching of the space shuttle. Gary begins this effort on May 28 in Seattle, Washington and plans to pedal to Washington, DC by August 11, bringing publicity to this effort. A web page at [www.letterofhope2007.com](http://www.letterofhope2007.com) describes the purpose of the ride and gives all the particulars.

What does this have to do with the NALC and MDA? Branch 28 suggests that branches all over America use this message of hope and the story of Gary's ride to have one additional fund-raiser for MDA this year. That way the families of those stricken with neuromuscular diseases can have their dreams met as well.

The key to successful fund-raising is to make sure events are fun for all those involved. Work with your local MDA coordinator, who will help plan your event and get all the details covered in a professional way. Include MDA families, who look forward to meeting those who work so hard on their behalf. Our members get to put a name with a face and meet some of the most courageous people they will ever know. Together, we can not only make our efforts more successful, but create an environment where our members look forward to the next opportunity. 