



Save the date—Oct. 2

Our first annual “Fill the Satchel” date has been set and plans are moving forward for this great event. I have already announced the national bowlathon on Nov. 6 and branches are planning for both events. You will recall that we had scheduled the “Fill the Satchel” event for summer, but our brothers and sisters, the firefighters, felt it was too close to their Labor Day fundraiser.

President Rolando and I have been discussing how we can continue to build on the good work you all are doing for MDA. While having the two national events close together will be difficult, we thought that waiting another year to kick off “Fill the Satchel” would be a lost opportunity. I urge you as leaders to start now to get ready for both. The following timeline can be used to prepare for this key day.

July—Schedule planning meetings as soon as possible between the Muscular Dystrophy Association and NALC leadership. The local MDA folks have been briefed about our Satchel event and are ready to work with you on the particulars. Your branch also should decide who will be your point person. In most branches, a local NALC MDA representative already has been appointed. If not, this is a good time to make it happen. Remember to have a committee work with the local MDA coordinator.

After the committee has been formed, begin talking with local jurisdictions about any permits or approvals necessary to have collection points in your area. Suggestions would be busy intersections or retail areas like a mall or store. Finalize your list of collection points. While it is the branch’s decision to determine how long the collection points will be open, we are suggesting no longer than three hours. Rotating someone every hour or so will make it easier to get our membership to volunteer.

Consider whether to have incentives for our members to turn out and help.

Identify your local MDA camps and try to have branch members attend a day session so that the vision of what MDA does will be seen. The more our members understand MDA, the more they will want to get involved.

August—Work with your local MDA person to schedule an MDA family to visit your branch meeting to tell their story. You can begin to order supplies for the Satchel event from your MDA local contact. We will have posters and packets, which will include stickers to give to each individual who contributes to our campaign. If there are any problems, contact us at NALC headquarters.

During this time frame, develop how the collected money will be handled. Establish a method to keep track of all the money that comes in. Make sure you provide at least two people for each location for safety reasons and accountability. Set a goal for your branch, but remember: This is the first year and we will build on our success each year. It is better to start small and do a good job.

Coordinate with MDA staff on the publicity drive to inform the public about the specifics of the drive. MDA will help you prepare publicity for the event. Keep your membership continually informed, through newsletters and other ways, about your plans so they know what is going to happen.

September—Implement your publicity campaign in conjunction with local MDA representatives and have at least one meeting with all your collectors. Share the collection guidelines and make sure everyone knows where they will collect and how money will be returned.

Make sure each location has the supplies and support needed to be successful. One suggestion is to have the branch MDA coordinator visit each site to help them with any problems that arise. Make sure the collectors have the coordinator’s cell phone number.

October—Hold the event on Oct. 2 and make the collection a fun time for all. After the collection, announce the branch totals at your next branch meeting and celebrate the successes of the collectors. Thank the branch members in newsletters and other forums.

Meet with your committee and begin planning for next year’s event. Make sure you report the totals raised to MDA and NALC Headquarters.

I hope you can see the potential for this new national effort to increase our totals for MDA. Together we can make a difference and make a muscle for Jerry’s kids! ☒