



Living lives of significance: Augie Nieto and Luke Christie

What is success? Many ask that question as they move through life. All of us want to believe that we've accomplished something of lasting value in the greater scheme of things.

A book scheduled to be published in November has been written by a man who has dealt with that very question. His name is Augie Nieto. The title of the book, *Augie's Quest: One Man's Journey from Success to Significance*, says it all. In the early 1970s, Augie invented the Lifecycle, which was the first in a wave of personal fitness machines. In the middle of a lifetime of success, he was diagnosed with ALS, Lou Gehrig's disease, in 2005.

Since that day, he has dedicated himself to helping raise money to find a cure for ALS. His book tells the tale of how the disease has led him to realize that true success is a significant life.

I had not talked to Augie since the last MDA Telethon.

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His physical condition has worsened in the last year but his resolve has not. Augie's Quest, a foundation he started that raises money for ALS research, contributed more than \$10 million at this year's Jerry Lewis MDA Telethon. Clearly, he has made a difference in the lives of many through these efforts.

Letter carriers who help raise money and volunteer for MDA get that simple truth. Every carrier who has met with a family afflicted with one of the more than 40 neuromuscular diseases covered by MDA knows the reality of the need. Those who have contributed time and/or money are adding significance to their lives.

All who attended the national convention in Las Vegas will remember the next example of a person who is living



Luke Christie

a significant life. When Luke Christie was introduced to the delegates on the last day of the convention, he spoke eloquently and won the hearts of all who heard him. Luke has been the national goodwill ambassador for MDA for the last two years. He lives in South Carolina. Part of his duties is to travel the United States appearing at MDA events. Everywhere he goes, people see the same thing we saw at the convention. He is a young man who is articulate and charming. He is an old soul who understands much more than one would expect from a youngster of just 14 years.

Luke suffers from spinal muscular atrophy, which is a progressive neuromuscular disease. SMA takes away his strength and energy and confines him to a wheelchair. One of the great things about Luke is his positive attitude and his plans for the future. He radiates hope. He wants to be a novelist, journalist or pastor when he grows up.

His parents, Brad and Gloria, support Luke in all that he does. Spending time with their family was one of the highlights for me at the telethon.

Significance has been defined as having “meaning” or “importance.” These two individuals are examples of how a life can have even more significance in the midst of difficulty, pain and suffering. Maybe that is the true meaning of success.

I'm proud of all that we do as a union to support those afflicted with muscular dystrophy. Already this year, we are nearly 50 percent ahead of last year. Please keep up the good work. Let's be an organization that continues our success while at the same time remaining significant to those who need our help. Together we can “deliver the cure.” ☒