



Ways to raise money for MDA

When I speak with MDA representatives around the country, many ask me about fund-raising. What are the best ideas out there for fund-raising? What kinds of MDA fund-raising events have been the most successful in NALC?

The easy, obvious answer is that the best events are fun. Fun events attract members and get them excited about how they can help people with MDA-covered diseases. The best answer is that all successful events require thorough planning and follow-through.

I've listed here some of the best ideas in the union for MDA fund-raising events. While not an exhaustive list, these ideas are tried and true. Many of them can be found in the NALC-MDA *Event Handbook*, available to any branch representative who wishes to get involved.

Branch Bowl-a-Thons—An MDA bowling tournament is a yearly event for many branches. This is a fun way to get union members, their families and others involved in a friendly competition to raise money for MDA. Many branches invite MDA families to attend so participants can get to know them. The *Event Handbook* contains a detailed planning guide for bowl-a-thons, which can be used as a template for planning any event (see p. 56).

Stride and Rides—This fund-raiser is usually held inside a shopping mall, although some branches have held them outside in good weather. Local union officials should contact the local Muscular Dystrophy Association coordinator for assistance with planning a Stride and Ride. The event is essentially a brief walk-a-thon. A date is set well in advance, and walkers collect pledges for their participation from fellow employees, family members and friends. On the day of the event, participants are joined by MDA families and they all walk the mall together. In many cases a Stride and Ride has grown into a citywide event.

Texas Hold'em tournaments (in accordance with state law)—Texas Hold'em is a national craze and NALC members love to play. Before you plan a local tournament, make sure you contact local authorities about the rules and restrictions for charitable gambling events. Texas Hold'em tournaments are great fun for participants and branches running them have increased the take for MDA.

Golf tournaments—While these events require a great deal of planning, many of our members are passionate about golf and many branches hold yearly events. MDA co-

ordinators will tell you that for a golf tournament to succeed, the planning must be year-round.

Raffles—Many branches raise money for MDA by selling raffle tickets and offering a split of the money received. MDA coordinators caution that branches should be careful to assign a specific person to collect funds and ensure that the branch exercises close accounting oversight at all times.

Trivia tournaments—Branches are beginning to offer trivia nights, which generate fun competition between delivery units and between participants. The *Event Handbook* provides sample trivia questions and scoring sheets.

Branches have found many creative ways to get members to join fun activities that raise money for people afflicted with neuromuscular diseases. For more help with your own branch event, seek out your local MDA organization. These people are your best allies, for they can offer you truly expert advice and assistance. They can provide sample letters for donation requests, thank-you notes, sample press releases, lists of media contacts, MDA materials, donation receipts and tax ID information.

Solid planning is the hard work that turns great ideas and advice into a successful branch MDA event. A good plan needs these steps:

1. Determine what your branch would support
2. Decide on the event (3-6 months in advance)
3. Pick a date and time (2-4 months)
4. Determine the location (2-4 months)
5. Request donations for: (2-4 months)
 - Refreshments
 - Auction items
 - Prizes
 - Event supplies
 - Volunteers
6. Publicize the event (1-3 months)
7. Day of the event
8. Convert all cash to a check, complete the Branch Activity Report Form and mail to the local MDA office

Start now to plan for next year. I hope that your branch will be one of those honored next year for its hard work for NALC's national charity. But even if your branch is not one of the national winners, please know that every dollar you raise is important and makes a real difference for these kids and adults.

