



The economy impacts us all

Recently, I received a letter from MDA that explains the current financial situation from MDA's point of view. I feel it is very important for our members to know what is happening and why NALC's involvement is so important. We cannot let up on our efforts or forget what MDA does every day for "Jerry's kids." I have reprinted it here for your information.

A Message to Families and Individuals Served by the Muscular Dystrophy Association

We want all the families and individuals who count on the Association for help and hope to know how monumental an effort we're making to preserve MDA's programs as fully as possible in the face of one of the worst financial crises ever faced by the nation.

We're proud of our success in doing so thus far in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds, but the prolongation of the deep recession we're all in makes it incumbent upon us to acquaint you with the reality of MDA's situation and to seek your understanding and, where possible, your help.

The inability of large segments of the public to give MDA their continued level of support last year left us with a significant income shortfall of nearly \$25 million. This was as impossible for us to anticipate as the suddenness of last year's economic collapse was for the nation's top business and financial experts. On top of the shortfall, our 2009 fund-raising efforts as of last week were some \$2.3 million short of those of the prior year at the comparable time.

We're deeply grateful for the outstanding efforts being made this year by our national and local sponsors, Telethon stations and loyal donors, but the faltering economy remains a daunting challenge.

In an all-out effort to protect as much as possible our services program, we've cut other expenses as radically as we could. We've been forced to lay off 120 members of staff and have eliminated 18 offices across the country by consolidating them with others.

Remaining staff will be furloughed without pay for a week this fall. We've frozen all salaries and have curtailed meetings across the board, substituting teleconferences and webinars. We've reduced clinic grants by 10 percent and have reduced by 5 percent second and third year funding for renewing research grants. Nonetheless, we've maintained 2009 research support for new projects for the remainder of this year.

One curtailment we've experienced had nothing whatever to do with our financial plight. The cancellation of the latter portion of our Summer Camp Program this year was necessary solely to protect children attending MDA camps from the real threat of swine flu which, as you've probably learned from the media, is expected to only grow greater in coming months. To continue our protective effort in this regard, if the need arises, we're prepared to provide immunization to those we serve when a vaccine is released—in addition, of course, to our annual flu shot program. For more information, please visit our website at www.mda.org, or call your local MDA office.

All the expense-cutting measures cited, and a host of others, have already resulted in anticipated savings of \$16.5 million through 2010, a tremendous achievement but far short of what it will ultimately take to counter the economic challenge. Now, more than ever, we need both the understanding and help of all those we serve and their families. Every possible effort will be made to preserve the integrity of MDA's programs in the face of an unabated crisis; however, it's impossible to know for sure at this point whether temporary sacrifices can be altogether avoided in the future. What's certain is that any assistance you can give our local staff in their fund-raising efforts can help reduce the likelihood of such sacrifices. Please contact your local MDA office to find out how you can help. They'd welcome your call. Working together we can—and will—weather this storm.

Warm Regards,

Gerald C. Weinberg, President & CEO

Thanks to all the branches that participated in the first annual national bowlathon for the Muscular Dystrophy Association. I am excited to see how each branch did and who will win the individual and branch prizes. Every winning branch in the 10 MDA fund-raising categories will receive a laptop loaded with all the NALC contract materials. Individual winners will get a new bowling ball and shoes for their efforts.

Remember to send the provided form to Headquarters by December 1 with all the information listed so we can make sure the prizes are awarded in a timely manner. Only those received by that date will be considered. Thanks again for all the hard work and we will do even better next year!

