



It's a new year— what should we resolve to do?

I hardly seems possible that 2010 is over and a new year is here. Just like many of you, I have been thinking about what we can do in 2011 to make a difference for those less fortunate. That certainly includes those who suffer from muscular dystrophies.

I know very well that there are enough struggles in the lives of letter carriers. A day hardly passes that we don't hear news that makes our jobs and lives more difficult. From legislators who want to dismantle the Postal Service to managers who have no clue that their decisions are undermining the very organization they say they care about, it seems that the NALC is the only voice of reason.

To top it all off, this year we negotiate a contract for all city letter carriers. Your leadership will be doing all it can to protect your way of life. The road will be torturous, but we will prevail with your help. You make all the difference. Our resolve will be tested.

At the same time, I write to you asking you to keep those who suffer from these diseases in your heart and minds. The mark of an effective leader is his or her ability to keep many "balls in the air" and to achieve goals we set as an organization. A key aspect is delegating some of the work so that leaders are not overwhelmed.

So, my suggestion is to recruit someone in your branch to do this work for the branch instead of doing it all yourself. A local MDA coordinator can help branch leaders do one of the many tasks we are charged to do.

The question always is: "Whom do we ask to perform this important task? Recruitment is a key ability for leaders. Look for someone who has already expressed an interest. Keep your ears open for those who care. It may be someone in your local church or perhaps an individual who has mentioned a desire to get involved but doesn't want to be a steward. Many folks are scared to get involved with the union because all they hear about is conflict. There is more to the union than processing grievances.

Once you have found a possible candidate, don't dump all the work on him or her. Help the person to meet your

local MDA coordinator so they have someone to help them get past the initial bumps in the road. Go with them to the first few meetings and answer their questions. Remember how it felt the first time you were in a position of leadership. Most of us had someone who mentored us the best they knew how. Few people volunteer if no one is there to walk with them for a time.

I have always felt that part of my job in the union is to prepare others to follow behind me and make the union stronger. By investing in others to do at least part of the job, we invest in the union's future.

So it is with MDA branch coordinators. I want to thank all those who hold those positions now. You are an important part of this union and I encourage all branch leaders to celebrate what MDA coordinators do. Mention them at branch meetings and make sure they know how much we appreciate them.

We have been successful in increasing our contribution to MDA in past years because of branch leadership and coordinators. I can tell you that the Muscular Dystrophy Association sings your praises at every opportunity. My good friend, Tom Boyle, vice president of program development for MDA, has told me that very thing. Branches should be proud of their accomplishments for MDA. At a time when our plates are overflowing, don't forget that there are children and adults who wake up every day thankful for all you do.

Finally, as we face 2011, remember that we have been through tough times before. This union has always risen to the challenges we have faced. Benjamin Franklin, the first postmaster general, writing about the Declaration of Independence, said it best: "We must all hang together or most assuredly we shall all hang separately." Let's resolve to hang together! ☒

Note: All MDA fundraising is reported on a calendar basis, i.e., January to December. If you have not already provided NALC Headquarters with the total amount of funds raised by your branch in 2010, please do so immediately.