



ORLANDO GONZALEZ

NEW YORK CITY BRANCH 36



The first Vinny's Walk

With the help of fellow carriers in the New York City area who volunteered their time, Branch 36 letter carrier **Orlando Gonzalez**, a 21-year veteran of the Postal Service, organized the first Vinny's Walk, an annual fundraiser for NALC's official charity, the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA). The event was named for NALC President Emeritus and Branch 36 member Vincent R. Sombrotto, who died last year.

On June 23, 2013, letter carriers from throughout New York and New Jersey gathered in Battery Park in Manhattan for the fundraising walk along the Hudson River. Like MDA Muscle Walks sponsored by branches across the country, Vinny's Walk helped raise money to fund research on muscular dystrophy and provide aid to families affected by neuromuscular diseases. After walking, participants, including members of Sombrotto's family, were treated to music and booths filled with food, games and memorabilia for sale.

"We found a way to walk for the cure, honor the great Vinny R. Sombrotto and have a great time doing it," Gonzalez said. "I have to share credit for this remarkable achievement with the entire Region 15. They believed in it and brought it to fruition." NALC Region 15 covers the greater metropolitan New York City area.

Vinny's Walk raised more than \$20,000 for MDA. Letter carriers across the country have raised millions of dollars for the organization. Community service is an important part of an NALC member's responsibilities, Gonzalez said. "Take care of those we serve and they will take care of you."

"This effort was a great example of making the world a little better for everyone," the judges said, "and we commend Mr. Gonzalez for leading it and his fellow carriers for making it happen."

Despite having no elected position in the union, Sombrotto emerged as a leader during the Great Postal Strike of 1970, which began with a walkout by New York carriers. He went on to lead the national union as president from 1979 to 2002.

"Combining our union's commitment to community service with the memory of Vincent Sombrotto—a regular letter carrier who stood up and led when his leadership was needed—strengthened our commitment to MDA and to finding creative new ways to improve the lives of those we serve," NALC President Fredric Rolando said.

A second walk was held in July of this year, and NALC is looking forward to many more Vinny's Walks.