



## Onward and upward

**N**ALC and the Muscular Dystrophy Association have worked diligently for many years to support those who have been afflicted by neuromuscular diseases. These kids and adults don't have the luxury of complaining for long about their plight in life. Every day is an exercise in fighting for the things many of us take for granted, like walking and running and riding a bicycle. These are the lost parts of a life with muscular dystrophy for many.

We are in the midst of a great battle for the future of our craft and way of life. There are forces that would heartlessly tear apart the fabric of our country and leave those in the "99 percent" to fend for themselves in a world that caters to the rich in our society. It is incredible to see them act like only those with money are deserving of notice.

For just a moment, let me draw a connection between those who have little in our society and those with MD. People with diseases that are debilitating are the true silent ones. Few think of them, and even fewer do anything to lessen their suffering. It is the people in the middle who show up and give of their time and treasure to make a difference for them. Why? Because we have the numbers and we care. The "1 percent" is too busy counting and protecting what they have to spend an afternoon at a bowlathon or help fill a satchel for these families.

As I watch the events unfolding around us, I was reminded of a quote from Ralph Waldo Emerson. He was asked what a life well lived looked like. He said: "To laugh often and much; to win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children; to earn the appreciation of honest critics and to endure the betrayal of false friends; to appreciate beauty; to find the best in others; to leave the world a bit better, whether by healthy child, a garden patch or a redeemed social condition; to know that even one life breathed easier because you have lived. This is to have succeeded."

**Thank you to all the branches that took part in our first annual event to collect from the public.** Branches set up collection points at locations on street corners, shopping centers and sports events. I know that many of you had numerous obstacles to overcome, including local jurisdic-

tion issues and failures of local MDA representatives to support your efforts.

Any new venture will be met with opposition, but we will be working with MDA and others to make next year's more successful. President Rolando and I will have our annual meeting with MDA this month in Washington, DC, to discuss and problem-solve what happened this time and plan for next year's event.

With all the problems, however, many branches used their ingenuity to overcome those obstacles. Some partnered with the same grocery stores they work with on the NALC food drive to allow them to collect on store premises. This was absolutely necessary when local ordinances didn't allow them to set up on street corners. Branches that have sports teams contacted them and set up collection points during and after games. They raised significant dollars.

If you have a story of your efforts to "Fill the Satchel" in an innovative way, please share your story by writing to me at NALC Headquarters and I will get the word out.

One branch really pushed the envelope by coming up with a creative way to raise funds. Branch 82 in Portland, OR, partnered with Northwest Priority Credit Union to collect from members of the credit union when they came in to do their banking. President Jim Cook, along with branch MDA Coordinator Debby Burbank, developed a plan that credit union members could have their name placed on a picture of a satchel, which was then displayed at the credit union branch. Local Branch 82 member Sue Canfield provided her skills and enthusiasm.

Mark Turnham, CEO of NW Priority, was a great resource in their effort. He set up a special account and encouraged each teller to ask members to donate to this worthy cause. After a two-week period, Branch 82 raised more than \$3,200. They plan on making this a yearly event. Letter carriers and other members of the credit union family were glad to help. If you can convince your local credit union to partner with us, contact Mark at 503-760-5304. He would be glad to offer your credit union his expertise.

All in all, the first time for "Fill the Satchel" was a learning experience. Next year we'll do even better. Thanks again for whatever you were able to accomplish. We are the 99 percent, and we care! 