

Satchels full for MDA

Inaugural campaign finds success nationwide



Top: A carrier from South Florida Branch 1071 makes a collection.

Above: Arizona Merged Branch 1902 and Phoenix Branch 576 teamed up to raise money for MDA.

After another year of raising money for the Muscular Dystrophy Association through raffles, poker runs, bowlathons and dozens of other events dreamed up and organized by branches across the country—and presenting a check for \$1.5 million from letter carriers at the MDA Telethon broadcast on Labor Day weekend—did letter carriers take a break from their support for NALC’s official charity?

Of course not.

Modeled on the popular firefighters’ fundraiser, letter carriers launched the first annual “Fill the Satchel” event Oct. 2. With the permission of the Postal Service, they went to public places with their satchels, sometimes in uniform, and asked for donations to MDA.

“This new event takes advantage of our status as the most trusted federal employees in America,” President Rolando said. “People know the money is going to go to MDA, and that we’re going to make a difference with it.”

With assistance from Headquarters, many branches dived right in, recruiting dozens of letter carriers to devote a few hours of their time to help MDA. They stood at busy intersections, holding signs and accepting donations from people in passing cars. They went to neighborhood shopping malls and collected from shoppers. They brought their children to help. From Washington, DC, to Detroit to Phoenix, letter carriers devoted their time to helping people with muscular dystrophy and their families cope with the disease and work toward a cure.

The collections added up quickly, though no national total is available. Because it was an inaugural event, Headquarters did not ask for detailed reports of the amounts collected or name top



fundraising branches. But, a few branches did report encouraging results. “We collected \$503.52,” reported Ozark Mountain, MO Branch 203 member Steve Hill of his branch’s efforts at a local shopping mall. “Not bad for three to four hours’ work.”

Deborah Quinn of Northern Virginia Branch 3520 had plenty of donations, too. “The tally was \$745 in paper money, and the coins were still being counted last night,” she said shortly after the event. “We believe we might have close to \$1,000 when complete.”

All the hard work was appreciated. “I just wanted to say a big MDA thank you for giving up your Saturdays off to participate in the inaugural Fill the Satchel drive,” MDA of Southern Nevada Fundraising Coordinator Suzy Dons said. “It was such a pleasure meeting all of the letter carriers who came out to support MDA, and I know our MDA family members had such a fantastic time with you.”

Fill the Satchel was designed in part to encourage letter carriers to be creative about their fundraising efforts, according to National MDA Coordinator Jim Williams.

“The ideas that letter carriers come up with out there as fundraising events, or new angles on the same ideas, never cease to amaze me,” he said. “Fill the Satchel has lots of room for creativity, and it might inspire some whole new events as well.”

As this issue of *The Postal Record* went to press, letter carriers were already preparing for the next national fundraising event, the third annual National Bowlathon for MDA, on Nov. 6.

“When the weather starts to get cold, it’s time to go to your local alley and bowl for MDA,” Rolando said. “Thanks to the

efforts of letter carriers all over the country, especially the dedicated volunteers who organize these events, Bowlathon keeps growing and our support for MDA keeps getting stronger.”

Rolando challenged branches that haven’t participated in the bowlathon yet to get to the alley this year, and those who have to try to top their previous fundraising marks.

America’s letter carriers have helped lead the search for a cure for neuromuscular diseases for half a century. The NALC was the first national sponsor of the Muscular Dystrophy Association and letter carriers are among MDA’s top fundraisers, collecting more than \$20 million in the past 15 years alone to finance research and provide care and services for children and adults with muscular dystrophies. NALC’s local branches are honored annually during the MDA Telethon for their efforts. ✉

Top left: Kenner, LA Branch 4342 and Metairie Branch 6119 partnered up. Above: A carrier from Detroit Branch 1 flags down drivers. Below: Northern Virginia Branch 3520 members gather donations in Warrenton.

