



Reflecting on change

One of the most rewarding things that can happen in the life of a teacher is seeing the moment when the “light goes on” in the mind of a student. While we don’t see the literal light bulb, we do see and hear when a student grasps a difficult concept or gets turned on to an idea.

NALC’s Leadership Academy is full of those moments. Whether it’s NALC history, learning how to run a better meeting, or dealing with the administrative needs of our union, these prospective leaders are challenged to understand that the union is about more than filing grievances. Upholding our members’ rights will always be a primary focus, but our future will be shaped by how we respond to challenges outside traditional union functions.

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Change is said to be the only constant. People say they like change so long as it affects someone else. The change we are trying to bring about through the Leadership Academy is just one way NALC works to shape the future. There are many others.

The Muscular Dystrophy Association also is in the midst of tremendous change. As with all organizations, the way we handle that change will dictate our survival.

For many years, MDA used the National Telethon to fund much of the research done to help find cures for those afflicted with muscular dystrophy. NALC has been there with them every step of the way. Our commitment has been, and continues to be, that we will be there until a cure is found. But change is around the corner.

MDA has announced that this year’s telethon will be a three-hour show on Labor Day weekend. While that is a significant change in and of itself, compared to what used

to be a 22-hour show, all the pieces of the show will be taped in advance, which will require NALC to determine how we will reward those branches that win their category. There will be no live moments in the show except for cut-aways to local markets. President Rolando and I will be discussing these matters soon and I will announce whatever we come up with as soon as possible.

All eyes are on Minneapolis for the upcoming NALC national convention July 23-27. NALC and MDA will host a reception during the convention, and details about the event will be in the next *Postal Record*. As usual, we will honor those branches that achieved excellence in fundraising during 2011. In addition, we will have a seminar laying out our long-range program for the next few years as we look to continue our efforts to help find a cure.

Finally, let me say a few words about the unsung heroes of NALC’s efforts for MDA. We honor the local branch MDA coordinators who labor every year to put on fundraising activities to

make a difference. Some of them don’t get involved in traditional union activities but find that helping those who cannot help themselves is a fulfilling way to help build our union. For that is the point. All of us have different talents and abilities. Your local MDA branch coordinator is an example of the fact that our union has room for all to get involved in some way. Say “thank you” to them and give them a pat on the back. And while you’re at it, make sure that you don’t take for granted all the officers and stewards who make your life just a little bit better.

Change is coming for all of us. Our craft is under great pressure, and the Postal Service needs to be saved from itself and a Congress that is out of control. How we handle change and preserve our identity will be the test for our generation. The same is true for the Muscular Dystrophy Association. Let’s go forward together during these times of change. ☒