

Help and hope to those in need



Jim Williams

“To succeed, jump as quickly at opportunities as you do at conclusions.”—Benjamin Franklin

The first postmaster general, Benjamin Franklin, is quoted many times for many reasons, not least about the importance of what we now know as the United States Postal Service. His vision of a system to connect all of America is alive and well.

But he is also a Founding Father who understood that opportunities are all around us. It is the wise person who has the vision to recognize them. So what does that have to do with the Muscular Dystrophy Association? Perhaps it is time for a new idea in our quest

to support MDA. Muscle walks may well be the answer.

NALC branches across America are always looking for fresh ways to raise money for MDA families. Right now, a branch can choose from golf, bowling and softball tourna-

“To succeed, jump as quickly at opportunities as you do at conclusions.”

ments among many other ways to help MDA provide help and hope to children and adults dealing with the more than 40 diseases covered by this organization.

What is a muscle walk? The MDA Muscle Walk is a series of local walk events across the country held to pay tribute to and raise funds for children and adults served by the Muscular Dystrophy Association. The walks are family-oriented gatherings and light exercise for everyone—children, adults, grandparents, students, teams and more. We walk to honor adults and children with any of the more than 40 muscle diseases in MDA’s program. We walk to have fun and to get some light exercise with our kids, friends, parents, grandparents, students, corporate teams and more. (Most muscle walks average a mile or less.) But most importantly, we walk to raise funds to help the Muscular Dystrophy Association foster research and provide vital services to families affected by neuro-muscular disease.

The best way to get on board is to access the MDA web page at walk.mda.org to learn how to prepare and organize a muscle walk. All the tools you will need are there,

including pictures and captions to use in your personal fundraising page. So how does it work? First, sign up for the walk nearest you. Click on “Find a walk and register” and a listing of walks for the rest of 2014 will come up. While many have already occurred, you can also plan for 2015 if the one in your area has already happened.

Next, set a goal and share it with your members. Involve your friends and family in this effort. Third, set up your personal fundraising page, which makes it easy to raise funds for MDA by using e-mail and other social-networking tools. Use your page to explain why you are walking and to manage your “friend-raising” list. Make your page relevant by uploading meaningful photos of family members and others in your life that inspired you to take part in the muscle walk. The No. 1 reason people contribute to a worthwhile cause is because someone they know reached out and asked them. Then, send e-mails to those you know and check your personal page to monitor your fundraising progress.

Many people use social networking to increase the amount of money raised, and it works. Do you use Facebook or Twitter? Register online to download a copy of the new MDA Social Networking Toolkit. There are many downloads available to help you prepare.

Last, start a team and send invitations to your family, friends and co-workers so they can sign up under your team. Encourage your team members to use the same on-line tools that you use and help them get started.

I would encourage any branch of any size to consider participating in an MDA Muscle Walk in your area, especially if your branch has not held an event in the past. You will not find an easier way to raise funds for this worthy cause.

We will be having a special presentation at the Philadelphia convention focusing on muscle walks. The MDA seminar will be the place to be to learn the ins and outs. Make sure you have a branch representative there to take notes.