

MDA coordinators—keys to success



Jim Williams

“The key is to keep company only with people who uplift you, whose presence calls forth your best.” —Epictetus, Greek philosopher

The workroom floor in the Postal Service can be a brutal place. As a union, one of our jobs is to bring an attitude of help and hope to employees.

So how do we change points of view? Our shop stewards and officers work tirelessly to right wrongs and correct injustice. We support each other in the workplace when managers abuse their power and step on our rights. And we help our communities when the public we serve is in trouble due to hunger or a child is stricken with

muscle disease.

The proof of our effectiveness in turning criticism aside and changing the atmosphere in a station or branch is how

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much the carriers in them are willing to sacrifice and help their brothers or sisters. The proof of whether we provide help and hope to those in need is our involvement with the food drive or with the Muscular Dystrophy Association. These measurements are a clear window to view the heart of the union.

How does your branch measure up? Most of our branches are very effective in the grievance procedure. The results are easy to track in terms of wins and losses. Letter carriers are well represented. What about our community efforts, though? Is your branch active in the food drive? How about MDA?

If your branch is inactive with MDA and you have a heart for those affected, the first step is to go to your branch leadership and offer to help. Maybe you can serve on a committee that helps plan and organize a fundraiser. Perhaps you could even be the branch MDA coordinator.

A branch coordinator works with the officers to help focus on the need. Those who serve in these positions successfully share at least three qualities. They challenge our members with a positive attitude, plan well, and surround

themselves with others who are like-minded about the importance of MDA in the life of their branch.

A “can-do” attitude goes a long way with community service. Everyone is busy, and letter carriers are no different. We have our families to provide for and protect as well as attempting to have a personal life. Plus, working for the Postal Service is a stressful environment. A good MDA coordinator keeps the membership looking at the reasons we work for MDA. Focusing on the “big picture” helps us remember why we do what we do. The quote cited above is important because being around positive people makes us better.

Secondly, MDA coordinators plan well. They understand that the easiest way to be successful is to break down goals into bite-size chunks so that a branch can achieve its goals step by step. Planning enables us to know whether we are moving toward success.

Lastly, the MDA coordinators always use those who have a desire to help others by including them on a committee to support the branch’s goals. They always should be on the lookout for people who have that kind of heart. The committee also allows branches to introduce newer members into union activism. Having a committee of shared responsibility reduces burnout and avoids overwhelming the coordinator.

Underlying all these efforts are the officers of the branch. I firmly believe that successful community service always is the result of branch officers being committed to the work.

As leaders of this great union, we have an obligation to be there for our members and to lift up everyone we can. Certainly that’s true with community service. By doing so, we make our union better and benefit all those we represent.

Unions are measured not only by how they represent their members, but also by how the public views the charities near to the organization’s heart. I want to personally thank all the MDA coordinators and officers who work so hard to accomplish our goals for MDA.

An update to MDA Honor Roll

I want to make sure that our totals from the 2013 MDA Honor Roll are correct. To that end, Madison, WI Branch 507 raised \$1,100. Thank you for your work!