

NALC and the Muscular Dystrophy Association at the national convention



Jim Williams

Delegates celebrated the 125th anniversary of our great union at NALC's 69th biennial convention in Philadelphia. It was a good time of looking back at our rich history, but also a time of looking forward to the future and how we might face the challenges that lie ahead. President Fred Rolando and the delegates developed a roadmap both within and outside our organization.

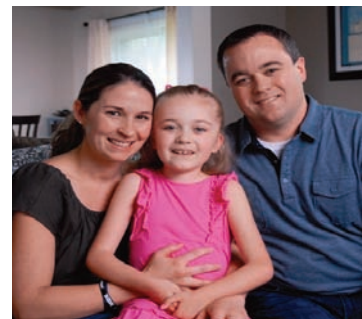
One of the ways we invest in the future by looking back is our work with MDA.

Letter carriers have always involved themselves in community service. From the Letter Carriers' Food Drive to Carrier Alert to the Muscular Dystrophy Association,

we have, both personally and as an association, worked to help those who are less privileged than we are or have suffered from personal or natural disasters.

At this convention, we focused on MDA in a number of ways. On Monday afternoon, we presented a special seminar. First, we had MDA National Goodwill Ambassador Reagan Imhoff and her mother, Jenny, attend and spend time with the delegates. She was amazing, and those who attended were impressed with her personality and desire to serve as MDA's representative. Jenny Imhoff spoke eloquently and was honest with her comments about how their family changed as a result of the diagnosis of a muscular disease.

We also had fundraisers for MDA at the convention. Many branches sold items, and at the national level, we raffled a Harley-Davidson motorcycle and sold tickets for a 50/50 raffle. We raised \$40,200 for the motorcycle and \$10,862 in the 50/50. The winner of the bike was Willie Little of Escondido, CA Branch 2525. Willie was present and will be picking his bike up at a local HD dealership. The winner of the 50/50 was New Jersey Merged Branch 38 member Jerome Crawford, who took home



MDA Goodwill Ambassador Reagan Imhoff, pictured here with her parents, spoke to the delegation at the 69th NALC convention.

\$5,431. All told, we raised more than \$61,000. Congratulations to our winners!

We also heard from Sean Gallagher, a young man who has served as a counselor at MDA camp for the last 10 years. MDA camp requires that each camper be supervised on a one-to-one basis for the complete week. He told stories of kids he had worked with and about the benefits of camp for MDA families. He described the special connection made at camp and the relief that caregivers are given by having a week to refresh themselves. The delegates were touched by how much of a difference camp made in their lives.

Sean explained that MDA-sponsored summer camps offer a wide range of programs for young people ages 6 to 17 who are affected by neuromuscular disease. Campers attend weeklong sessions organized by MDA volunteers and staff. Camp activities are geared to the abilities of campers, and may include fishing, swimming, horseback riding, boating, field hockey and baseball. Less physically demanding activities includes arts and crafts, nature study, talent shows, cookouts and entertainment.

Volunteer counselors (who must be at least 16 years old) receive an orientation and training that includes wheelchair techniques, lifting and transfers, personal hygiene and emergency procedures. The primary responsibility of counselors is to provide both physical and psychological support to their campers, thereby helping them enjoy camp. Medical staff is available throughout the week to meet any health care needs that may arise.

Our National Auxiliary contributed more than \$3,800 to MDA from collecting during the year and presented that money to MDA. The Auxiliary is always there for us and their work for MDA is appreciated.

I want to thank all of the delegates for helping us make the convention a success. Help and hope is what we give to MDA families each time we contribute a dollar to MDA.

We had many folks help out during the convention. I want to thank Jim Korolowicz, Matty Rose, Don and Nancy Southern, Bob Bracy, Ron Brown, Sue Wellhausen, Geneva Kubal, Troy Clark and Jeff Fultz for helping at the booth and the reception. Class 17 of the Leadership Academy was very helpful selling tickets for us as well. MDA National Vice President Tom Boyle also joined us. Tom is a great friend of the NALC and is our contact with MDA.

Our 2013 NALC Honor Roll published in the May *Postal Record* left some branches out, so I want to recognize them. Hudson Valley Merged, NY Branch 137 raised \$2,366 and Fort Collins, CO Branch 849 raised \$2,654 in 2013.