

Partners in progress: MDA and NALC



Jim Williams

Officer Steve Derks, MDA Executive Vice President and Chief Development Officer Ann McNamara, Boyle, NALC President Fredric Rolando, NALC MDA Coordinator Jim Williams and I

This month, the MDA Coordinator column has been written by NALC Community and Membership Outreach Coordinator Pam Donato.

NALC and MDA have a 63-year partnership and proud tradition to “Deliver the Cure.”

“Letter carriers’ significant role in helping make important research development and potential breakthroughs possible cannot be underestimated,” Muscular Dystrophy Association Vice President Tom Boyle said. “Their hard work and dedication to advance MDA’s mission to save and improve the lives of the millions worldwide fighting muscle diseases has helped MDA bring help and hope to the families MDA serves.”

MDA President and Chief Executive

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recently met to discuss the NALC’s partnership with MDA and our commitment to continue that work until a cure is found. This was the first face-to-face meeting for President Rolando and new MDA President and CEO Derks at MDA’s new headquarters office in Chicago. Derks and several MDA staff members shared an interesting and inspiring review of the progress that has been made through MDA research and work to help those affected by muscular diseases. We also spent hours talking about our future work together, our need for MDA support on the ground where events are planned and take place, resources needed at those events, and ways we can innovate our MDA efforts.

Just recently, the MDA held its 2015 scientific conference in Washington, DC. The meeting represented a preeminent gathering of the nation’s leading scientists, researchers and professionals specializing in neuromuscular disease research and care, designed to accelerate discoveries and drug development for families fighting neuromuscular diseases, for which there are currently no cures. More than

400 attendees from academic laboratories, clinics and the biotech and pharmaceutical industry attended, with more than 40 platform presentations and more than 130 poster presentations given.

The conference is part of MDA’s annual conference series, which hosts clinical gatherings and scientific research gatherings in alternate years. Progress like this couldn’t have happened without critical support from the NALC and all of the carriers who are dedicated to their communities. The letter carriers’ continued efforts at special events happening this year in communities around the country will help fulfill the promise made in the earliest days of the partnership between NALC and MDA—to join forces and fight back against muscle disease until a cure is found.

“One key strategy to accelerating lifesaving and life-enhancing treatments and cures for neuromuscular and motor neuron diseases is to ensure collaboration among the nation’s top thought leaders in our scientific community,” Derks said. “This conference underscores two foundational commitments our board recently affirmed in our new Mission 2020 plan. First, MDA wants to continue to be the research leader in the neuromuscular and motor neuron space and second, MDA believes it needs to be an even more impactful and effective convener, collaborator and knowledge broker than in the past.”

MDA’s next generation of clinical and research changes are part of a bold plan to support families “solutions for them can’t come quickly enough,” Derks said.

Boyle added, “MDA has played a role in nearly every neuromuscular disease breakthrough since we started this fight in 1950. As our friends in the fight, America’s letter carriers are raising vital funds to support MDA’s mission. They should know that their hard work and their commitment to our cause helped make all these exciting new developments possible.”

That’s progress carriers can hang their hats—and satchels—on!

Reminder

We are working to publish the 2014 MDA Honor Roll for all branches soon. Please remember that all donations made to MDA need to be documented on an MDA-NALC Activity Report and sent to the appropriate recipients listed on the bottom of the form to be counted in the branch competition. The Honor Roll is determined by a reconciliation of all donations recorded and the report of money received by MDA. If you need MDA Activity Report forms, call Pam Donato at 202-662-2489, or go to nalc.org/mda to download and print.