

Making a difference



Jim Williams

“The purpose of life is not to be happy. It is to be useful, to be honorable, to be compassionate, to have it make some difference that you have lived and lived well.” —Ralph Waldo Emerson

In my role as NALC’s coordinator to the Muscular Dystrophy Association, I get to meet and talk with some of the most incredible people I have known. Of course, they don’t see themselves that way, and they have a large measure of humility about what they do. I’m writing about those who work so hard to raise funds for MDA.

One of those people is Randy Sorby. I’ve known Randy for a number of years and when you meet him,

you will notice he doesn’t like to talk about himself. In fact, he will tell you that he is not the only person who raises funds for MDA in Branch 205 in Fargo-West Fargo, ND. While that is true, I also know that he is a driving force there behind his branch’s efforts. As a result, Fargo-West Fargo wins its category almost yearly.

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Recently I spoke with Randy so that I could share with you how that branch is so successful. Branch 205 has at least a couple of fundraisers during the year. One is the selling of a local coupon book that features local businesses, with discounts for goods and services. The book sells for \$20 and the branch nets \$8 per book. They sell around 125 of the coupons books each fall. But that is not all they do.

Every spring for a number of years, Branch 205 has held an auction and the community is invited to bid on prizes the branch has collected during the year. The auction is held at the local convention center and is the culmination of a lot of work by the branch. Members go to businesses in Fargo and the surrounding area to ask them to support MDA by donating items.

Those items run the gamut from what is offered in the local community. Hotels donate rooms for bid, restaurants provide gift certificates and businesses give cash cards to be offered at auction. Other goods and services include haircuts, movie passes, oil changes, alcohol and rounds of golf at nearby courses.

More than 250 people attend the event and the community really contributes to the cause. Last year, the branch raised \$15,966, and already in 2015, the branch has raised more than \$16,000 at its auction. The 2014 total for Branch 205, a branch of 161 members, was more than the total contribution of six of the 12 largest branches (each of them with more than 2,700 members) in the NALC.

I spoke with Region 7 National Business Agent Chris Wittenburg about the work Fargo-West Fargo does for MDA. Chris said that it was amazing what a branch can do when people step up to make a difference in their community.

Not only does Randy do the work, but he also takes the time to attend MDA camp. Chris has met Randy at Camp Courage in Maple Lake, MN, where kids affected by muscle disease attend each year. “One person can make a huge impact on the lives of people who deal with these diseases,” Chris said.

MDA coordinators in our branches understand why they are so involved. I asked Randy why he does what he does. He simply said that it was for the kids: “I don’t know how I can pass these kids by without doing all I can to help them.”

Is your branch involved and doing all it can? If not, won’t you join Branch 205 and all those who work diligently for MDA? Please join us in this effort. I know President Rolando and the whole NALC Executive Council would appreciate your help.

2014 MDA Honor Roll Update

Recently, I was contacted by a number of branches about errors in the MDA Honor Roll, which was published last month. I want to recognize Manteca, CA Branch 4249 for raising \$5,710 in 2014. Also, Branch 1131 of Jonesboro, AR, brought in \$893 for MDA. Finally, Branch 5801 in Southhampton, NJ, contributed \$4,100. Thanks to all of you for your help in providing hope to MDA families.