

## Strengthen your branch with MDA



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**A**re you looking for ways to build a stronger local branch? Maybe you are looking for a way to turn apathy into action. Maybe you are just looking for a way to get members to understand how the NALC is involved in more than filing grievances and why this is so important. If any of this sounds like you, I encourage you to let MDA fundraising activities help you reach your branch's goals and move members to be a bigger part of who we are and what the NALC is all about. You can do this in the following ways:

- **Participate in MDA Summer Camp:**

The Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA) is set to kick off another season of summer camp. Now in its 62nd year, MDA Summer Camp supports families by hosting thousands of kids and providing a barrier-free, weeklong camp for kids with neuromuscular disease. Your fundraising activities help make this possible. Letter carriers across the country have joined MDA staff and others to help make camp the best week of the year. MDA Summer Camp provides thousands of kids with muscular dystrophy and related muscle-debilitating diseases an opportunity to be like other kids who get the camp experience. At camp, kids are living beyond limits in a place where anything is possible. It's a week where they're free to enjoy adventures like horseback riding, swimming and fishing. Kids also develop lifelong friendships, and the camp experience builds self-confidence and independence. Encourage your members to volunteer at camp as part of Sponsor Day or for the entire week. It can be a life-changing experience and build positive relationships within your branch.

- **Muscle walks:** The current Muscle Walk 2017 schedule is listed on the MDA website. You can also contact your local MDA office for upcoming walks in your area that may not have been made public yet. As walks are added, the schedule is updated.
- **Other fundraisers:** A great way to get members involved, especially those who may not be as active as you hope, is through MDA fundraisers. Fun events help build a stronger NALC while making a difference in our communities and the lives of others. Contact the NALC about MDA issues at [mda@nalc.org](mailto:mda@nalc.org) or your local MDA office for ideas and support.

All this is important because it not only builds a stronger union through its membership, it also helps MDA families live longer and stronger—all while developing treatments

for symptoms and ultimately a cure.

In December, the FDA approved Spinraza, a first-of-its-kind treatment option for kids and adults with spinal muscular atrophy (SMA) caused by a deficiency of SMN protein. Spinraza is a significant step forward—one of continued progress in MDA's mission to find treatments and cures for SMA and all the diseases under MDA's umbrella. Dozens of promising therapies are in development and testing right now, and MDA will continue to help move these potential treatments toward the finish line by funding critical scientific research, facilitating clinical trial participation, and advocating for policies that help ensure drug development and regulatory review processes move as quickly and effectively as possible.

**The 2016 MDA Honor Roll will be posted soon. I have** sent letters to branches that recorded activity with NALC Headquarters or for which MDA reported any fundraising by your local branch. If you do not recall getting a letter, or if the information in that letter was not up-to-date or accurate, I need to hear from you immediately.



Doing their part to deliver the cure for MDA, Downers Grove, IL Branch 1870 member Cesar Medina (left) participated in an MDA Team Momentum run in Chicago, while New Jersey Merged Branch 38 (above) held multiple MDA fundraisers this past year.

### Important note

**Caution:** If your branch is sending money to MDA through a mail solicitation, there is really no way for MDA to apply that to your NALC branch for credit in the Honor Roll. I strongly discourage this practice if you want your branch's donations to be credited to your local branch. Whenever you make a donation, send an activity form with your donation to the MDA representative at the office nearest to your branch. That office can be found by going to [mda.org](http://mda.org) and putting your ZIP code in the "Find MDA in Your Community" box, or you can give me a call at 202-756-7403 for assistance.