Join us in delivering the cure for MDA

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Have you ever thought about participating in a sponsor day at MDA Summer Camp? Maybe this is the year you take this opportunity to help those with muscular dystrophy "Live Unlimited." MDA camp is a magical place for children where anything is possible. Your MDA fundraising dollars help make camp possible, but volunteer time is equally important. Volunteers are needed for the week or for special events at camp. If you have grown children, maybe this is something you can do together that makes you and your family feel good while giving back at the same time. Think of the impact you can have on a child's life when you help at an MDA Summer Camp. Call your local Muscular Dystophy Association office, tell them that you are with NALC, and ask how you can help. If you need ideas for a sponsor day, give me a call. We have a few to share that incorporate what we do as letter carriers and supporters of MDA into meaningful activities with campers.

MDA will have a booth at the national convention in July. There will be an opportunity for delegates and guests to donate to MDA, with credit for donations going to a branch or other NALC organization. More details about our convention MDA fundraiser will be contained in a future MDA article. I hope that many of you will stop by the booth to get an update on reporting, accounting and participating in MDA fundraising. I also would like to hear about good ideas in the field, so we can share what works and maybe what should be avoided.

There are several ways to get people involved. Branches, members, family and friends can support someone who is participating in a Muscle Walk, Team Momentum Race or Lock Up. To ensure that you get credit for your branch, there are some details you will need to gather prior to requesting donations. We will help you set up the event so that we can track your efforts for an upcoming MDA Honor Roll.

What does your fundraising help MDA to achieve? MDA is the world's largest non-profit supporter of research on neuromuscular diseases. MDA supports nearly 350 physicians and scientists each year, with a research commitment in about 40 different neuromuscular diseases. As such, MDA has contributed to almost every development in muscle biology in the last 50 years.

MDA sponsored research has resulted in breakthroughs in treating devastating diseases. For example, MDA-funded research helped Genzyme develop a therapy for Pompe disease called Myozyme, which has saved the lives of many patients. Even where no "cure" is yet available, MDA research has resulted in better treatments that result in increased survival and better quality of life. In the past, boys with Duchenne muscular dystrophy (DMD) died in their teens, but now there are some 40-year-old men living with the disease.

MDA has been involved in research in basic muscle and nerve biology since its inception, when virtually nothing was known about how muscles were formed or functioned, even in non-diseased tissues. Since then, thousands of scientific papers have been published explaining how the tissues work and what goes wrong in neuromuscular disease. MDA funding supported the research that led to the discovery of the genetic causes of dozens of diseases, starting with the discovery of the dystrophin gene in 1986. Without this knowledge, there was no hope for curing neuromuscular diseases. While continuing to make new discoveries in this area, this research is also paying dividends as new therapies move into clinical testing and to market.

MDA Muscle Walk

An MDA Muscle Walk is an event where MDA families are the stars and heroes. Participation in a Muscle Walk event gives us the opportunity to unite around this cause that binds us together, and to celebrate all the stars who are touched by MD—you, supporters, caregivers, friends and family—and who make this journey possible.

On May 19, NALC President Fredric Rolando will take a few steps to help "Deliver the Cure" for MDA in Alexandria, VA, when he takes part in a Muscle Walk fundraiser.

"Every day, kids and adults are diagnosed with muscular dystrophy, ALS and related diseases that take away from the most basic freedoms—the freedom to walk, talk, hug and even breathe," Rolando said. "By taking part in this Muscle Walk to help raise money and awareness for NALC's only official charity, I hope to help those striving to give some of those freedoms back."

If you are in the Alexandria, VA, area, sign up for Muscle Walk as part of Rolando's team at http://www2.mda.org/goto/TeamRolando. If you are not able to participate, support President Rolando with a donation by sending a check written to MDA to NALC Headquarters. (See page 18.) We will make sure the donations get credited to your branch. You'll be grateful for a fun, easy way to fight back that really makes a difference.

Please join an MDA Muscle Walk near you so MDA can continue to enhance its support and care, offer the highest-quality programs and accelerate research efforts to bring more treatments to families faster. Let's do what we can to "Deliver the Cure."

President Rolando participated in an MDA Muscle Walk in Dallas in September 2016.