

New Year's resolutions

“If you want to be happy, set a goal that commands your thoughts, liberates your energy and inspires your hopes.” —Andrew Carnegie

It hardly seems thinkable, but 2023 is no more and the new year is in motion. For those of us who care deeply about community service, this is a time for looking back at our accomplishments and for planning for the upcoming year.

You should be proud of your union and the work we do to make our communities better. For more than 72 years, we've been there for the Muscular Dystrophy Association each step of the way. NALC and MDA are committed to transforming the lives of people affected by muscular dystrophy, ALS and related neuromuscular diseases through innovations in science and innovations in care.

I want to thank each of you who works to raise funds for the Muscular Dystrophy Association. NALC President Brian L. Renfroe and the whole Executive Council appreciate the hours of hard work each branch puts in to provide help and hope to those affected with muscular dystrophies.

Many people set New Year's resolutions. Has your branch set any goals for community service for 2024? If not, I hope your executive board sits down soon to plan for the whole year. Start by designating an MDA coordinator.

Below are the ways your fundraising has helped achieve goals so families can live longer and grow stronger. You can find this information and more at mda.org/about-mds/our-impact.

MDA takes a big-picture perspective across the full spectrum of neuromuscular diseases to uncover breakthroughs that accelerate treatments and cures. The power in its research approach is that MDA can often apply learnings from one disease to achieve progress in others to bring urgently needed answers to families.

- **Research:** MDA is the largest source of funding for neuromuscular disease research outside the federal government and has committed more than \$1 billion in funding since its inception.
- **Treatments:** Research it has supported is directly linked to approved, life-changing therapies across multiple neuromuscular diseases.
- **Technology:** MDA's MOVR platform is the first and only data hub that uniquely aggregates health care, genetic and patient-reported data, transforming health outcomes and drug development in neuromuscular disease.

Early diagnosis, highly specialized care and access to promising clinical trials help ensure



the best possible outcomes for individuals and families facing muscular dystrophy, ALS and related life-threatening diseases. That's why MDA provides care for kids and adults from Day 1. MDA Care Centers offer families best-in-class, comprehensive care from a wide variety of health care specialists at one location on the same day, while trained information specialists and educational resources offer guidance and support through every step.

Also, every year thousands of children and young adults learn vital life skills and independence at MDA Summer Camp and other recreational programs at no cost to families.

Remember, MDA and NALC dream of a day when every child and adult diagnosed with muscular dystrophy will be able to have a cure or treatment so that families will not be shattered by the nightmare of these diseases. If we can keep planning and fundraising all year long, we will help MDA get ever closer to finding a cure. However, until then, we will continue to provide help and hope to MDA families in need.

Sisters and brothers, we may not go door to door like in the old days, but all the various and vigorous ways of fundraising have helped MDA with that promise.

Brothers and sisters, I want to end by asking you to please mark your calendars. We will be doing branch challenges in March, July and October this year. Remember, during the branch challenges monies raised must be to the MDA office before the end of the month.

If your branch is planning an activity, let me know well in advance. We will use the "Deliver the Cure" Facebook page and other social media avenues to promote the event once we know the exact date. NALC has many MDA giveaways for your scheduled events, if needed. Requests will be handled on a first-come, first-served basis until the supplies are exhausted.

All branches must use the allocation form provided on the website. Also, please send copies of the form and checks to me at: Christina Vela Davidson, Assistant to the President for Community Services, 1101 Northchase Parkway, Suite 3, Marietta, GA 30067, so your branch can get credit for the yearly numbers.

—Christina Vela Davidson