



OF THE  
**YEAR**  
**AWARDS**

National Association of Letter Carriers  
Washington, DC

Thursday, March 20, 2025



# NALC

**National Association  
of Letter Carriers**

**BRIAN L. RENFROE** President

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The National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) proudly represents more than 295,000 active and retired city letter carriers. Our members are dedicated public servants who devote their working lives to serving their communities.

Our essential work touches every part of the country. Our customers rely on our affordable and dependable service for their medications, checks, ballots, packages and other essential mail. We are proud of this work that keeps America connected.

Serving our communities does not stop at delivering the mail. Letter carriers are the eyes and ears of every community nationwide. They know their routes and their customers and are often the first to notice something is wrong. They spot problems, keep an eye on the elderly and homebound, and even save lives.

Our commitment to community service exceeds our routes. Every year, NALC hosts the largest one-day food drive in the country, collecting tens of millions of pounds of food, restocking food banks, and helping families put food on their tables nationwide.

Our members also hold fundraisers across the country for our official charity, the Muscular Dystrophy Association. Last year, NALC raised more than one million dollars for this important cause.

This booklet features stories of letter carriers' bravery and commitment to community service over the past year. This is just a sampling of some of the countless heroic acts and other ways letter carriers have given back.

I hope you enjoy these inspiring stories and gain a better understanding of the dedicated people who deliver America's mail every day.

Sincerely,



Brian L. Renfro  
President, National Association of Letter Carriers

The NALC represents 280,000 active and retired letter carriers of the U.S. Postal Service in all 50 states and U.S. jurisdictions.

Affiliated with the AFL-CIO & UNI Global Union



# Tesfaye Deyasso

Minneapolis, MN Branch 9

**Tesfaye Deyasso** was driving home from work in St. Louis Park, MN, on April 18 around 6:30 p.m. when he witnessed a man driving off the highway and into a highway barrier. As the



car smashed into a pole, the front caught on fire. “Everything happened within, like, a second,” the Minneapolis Branch 9 member said.

The four-year letter carrier pulled over and ran up to the car. Seeing that the driver was unconscious, Deyasso attempted to open the door, but it was locked.

Deyasso finally got the attention of the driver, who unlocked the door. With the help of some good Samaritans, Deyasso got the door partly open.

“We tried our best to open the door [farther], but it was like six inches from the barrier... so we could not let him out,” Deyasso said.

Deyasso told everyone to try to find something to break open the window. One person tried using a large piece of plastic he had found on the ground, but it didn’t work. Finally, a highway assistance person arrived with a device that could be used to open the window. The group hoisted the driver out of the car and to safety.

Seconds later, the rest of the car, including where the driver had been sitting, burst into flames.

“I think, like, maybe 20 seconds later the whole car just burned,” Deyasso said.

Seeing the driver was in good hands, Deyasso, who was feeling the effects of the spreading smoke, left the scene. For the next six hours, Deyasso struggled to breathe and wheezed due to smoke inhalation. As he was driving back home, he recalled it being so bad that he called a doctor, who instructed him on how to slow his breathing.

The smoke had been intense enough that one of the good Samaritans had to go to the hospital with the driver due to smoke inhalation, Deyasso said. The driver is doing fine now, having sustained only minor injuries.

The local Fox affiliate aired footage from a dashcam that captured the incident.

“A lot of people think that we only deliver mail and packages, but I would like to let them know we can also save a life,” Deyasso said. “We can help people.”



EASTERN REGION  
HERO OF THE YEAR

# Brian Meyers Sr.

Johnstown, PA Branch 451

**Brian Meyers Sr., a 15-year letter carrier, was delivering mail on Aug. 13 when he heard a man screaming for help.**

The Johnstown, PA Branch 451 carrier saw two men wrestling in the side yard of a house on his route. One of the men appeared to have stabbed the other.

"I didn't think about nothing," Meyers said. "I just went up and took the [attacker] down. Just to help him, that's all I thought of doing."

Meyers's quick action prevented the assailant from stabbing the other man again.

"I just grabbed [the attacker's] arm and threw him straight down to the ground and jumped on him and held him there," said Meyers.

He subdued the man until the police, who had been called by someone who heard the commotion, arrived. "I had the situation under control," Meyers said. Once officers arrived, Meyers answered their questions, and the victim was taken to the hospital. Police soon charged the suspect with felony aggravated assault.

Meyers talked to the victim after he returned from the hospital—and learned that he had two big gashes on his stomach, and that the knife had just missed his spleen.





# Rungphet Bodnar

Mid-Michigan Branch 256

On April 11, Mid-Michigan Branch 256 letter carrier **Rungphet Bodnar** was driving on her route when she noticed children at a bus stop running and screaming. Then she noticed a dog dragging a little girl across a lawn by her leg.

A woman was there trying to grab the child, but the dog kept ripping the girl from the woman's grip. Bodnar stopped her postal vehicle and sprung into action. She used her dog spray and sprayed the dog many times. After several minutes, the two women were able to pry the dog off and free the girl.

The girl was rushed to the hospital, where she underwent multiple surgeries for her wounds. She was able to return to school one month later.





# Gerald “Jerry” Loney

Topeka, KS Branch 10

**On March 29, Topeka, KS Branch 10 letter carrier Gerald “Jerry” Loney** had just finished delivering mail to apartments on his route and returned to his mail truck. A young man came up to the vehicle needing help. He was bloody and had just tried to attempt suicide. Loney recognized him as a 33-year-old customer on his route.

The carrier immediately started care for the young man and dialed 911 at the same time. The 911 operator talked Loney through the process of finding something to use as a tourniquet and how to apply it to both wrists. Loney kept talking to and praying over the man until police, paramedics and firefighters arrived to take over.

The police officer who took a statement from Loney told him they were thankful that he helped the young man, and that most people would just quickly drive on by.

Loney suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder due to a personal incident that occurred five years ago. While trying to help the man and get the bleeding to stop, the carrier was dealing with his own past trauma, but he was able to push through it for the sake of his customer. In part because of Loney’s quick and selfless actions, the man survived.





# Matthew Ross Sr.

Syracuse, NY Branch 134

**Matthew Ross Sr. always looks for ways he can help out** in his community. As a letter carrier, he sees more than most the needs of the people he serves. As an artist, he helps his community to see in new ways.

Contributing to the community has long been a commitment for the Syracuse, NY Branch 134 member. In 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, he helped raise funds for the local community center on his former route in Westcott for a new van to transport seniors.

Last year, when he delivered mail and noticed that some report cards from the local middle school were going to a hotel, he decided to find out more. Knowing that child poverty in the area was a real concern, Ross checked in with the school counselor to see what he could do.

“I told them that if they needed me to help out somewhere in a specific spot, to let me know,” he said. The counselor suggested some students who might benefit from holiday help and reached out to the parents, giving them Ross’s phone number.

Ross said he felt for the kids, some of whom were constantly moving. “They’re growing up in a place that’s not so nice, and they don’t really have any options, and they’re just going from house to house, always getting evicted,” he said. “It was important for me to be able to help out these people.”

The seven-year carrier soon fundraised every cent he could from the community to buy some local middle-school students Christmas gifts. “I was able to help out three different families,” he said, providing items such as a Christmas tree, toys, video games, winter clothes, craft supplies and art—the latter a newfound hobby of Ross’s.

Ross picked up abstract acrylic painting in 2021 and created Mattopolis Art Gallery. He uses social media to show artwork in what he calls a “nice, safe little area of the internet.” It wasn’t long before Ross figured out a way he could use his pastime to help in the community as well.

When he visited the school, Ross met one youngster in particular who was having behavioral issues. “He was breaking pencils and being rather violent,” the carrier said, and added, “He started to pick up painting as, like, a way to not get angry anymore. And I got a couple of his little paintings here in my art gallery that I put up on the back of my stream sometimes.”

In addition to donating paintings to raise money for the



Muscular Dystrophy Association, he has proposed to the local Young Women's Christian Association on one of his routes the idea of making a group painting on a 36-inch by 48-inch canvas sometime in December to be displayed in the YWCA building's foyer afterward.

"Unfortunately, one of our letter carriers died this past year, and I'm using all the paint that he had bought and left behind," Ross said. "I'm going to take all of these young girls and the coordinators and everyone there and we can make a painting."

Walking around the city every day, "I find it very depressing," Ross said. "I walk through a lot of trash and filth and garbage. I try and let people know that art's a way of escaping from what you're dealing with at a certain time and place, and that can alleviate some stresses in your life."

Ross uses his "imagination and dedication" to try to be a good role model for others, but he never expected recognition for any of his good deeds. He's been featured on local TV and newspapers in the Syracuse area over the years, sometimes getting honked at by parents on the street, indicating that they want their kids to be like him.

"It was very self-gratifying, because I had planned on doing this without being on TV," he said of his efforts, adding, "Because this happened, I know that these people look up to me and they know that I can, you know, do the right thing. You can do things to impact your community at a local level."

Delivering mail makes doing good that much easier, too. If any carriers want to make a difference on their route, it's easily doable, says Ross.

"Chances are, they already know with their gut intuition who actually needs the help. [They need] to just follow through on their own intuition and use their own creativity. It doesn't have to be elaborate," he added. "As letter carriers, we have access to a lot of involved people, places, things—and if you just put all that together, you can make good things happen."





VIGILANT AWARD  
HERO OF THE YEAR

# Michael Waite

New Haven, CT Branch 19

**Michael Waite, a five-year carrier and a New Haven, CT Branch 19 member, was driving his route one day in late December 2023 when he saw a man walk out of the front door of his townhouse. He wasn't wearing a shirt or shoes, and his body was covered in soot. A thick plume of smoke billowed out from above**

his head, hinting at the chaos from within.

Waite swiftly dialed 911 on his phone as flames erupted from the windows of the burning building. Urgently, he knocked on the neighboring doors, ensuring that all the residents in the vicinity were safely evacuated before the fire had a chance to engulf their homes.

The owner of the apartment where the fire started had medical oxygen tanks, which Waite said, "Once the fire got to those, they started exploding."

All 14 townhomes were heavily affected, and "they've been vacant since that day, but luckily no one was injured," Waite said.

The saved occupants included the family of a clerk at Waite's station. "This man is my hero forever," the co-worker, Monique Johnson, wrote in praise.

"It just feels good knowing that nobody was hurt," Waite said.





VIGILANT AWARD  
HERO OF THE YEAR

# Taya Cradle

Laurel, MD Branch 3755

**On Feb. 28,** Laurel, MD Branch 3755 member **Taya Cradle** walked into a high-rise apartment building on her route. As Cradle

looked to her left, she noticed four people standing in front of an elevator observing an unconscious man lying in his own vomit.

The carrier asked if anyone had contacted 911 and no one said anything, so she called 911 and told the operator, "I am a mail carrier and I see a man lying unconscious in his own throw-up."

The operator was instructing Cradle to check for a pulse and to count to see if he is breathing. She followed the operator's instructions, but unfortunately could not find a pulse. The operator then instructed Cradle to lay the man on his back and carefully hold his head; the carrier did just that with assistance from another patron.

Cradle listened for the next step; the 911 operator told her to give the man CPR. The operator gave instructions on how to give chest compressions, telling her to count to four and keep giving CPR until the ambulance arrived. "I'm doing everything they're saying, and she [911 operator] is informing me that I'm doing a good [job]," Cradle said.

Once an ambulance arrived, the EMTs took over and continued to give the unconscious man CPR. The EMTs then placed the man on a breathing machine and loaded him in the ambulance.

At this point, "I broke down, because what if I wasn't there? Then what would've happened?" Cradle asked. "The people that were standing, three were teenagers making a mockery of the man and his vomit, the fourth person was an Army man that assisted me with the man. I'm glad that I was there to help save someone's life, because I would want the same treatment."



# Skyler Wilburg

Long Island Merged, NY Branch 6000



HONORABLE ACT AWARD  
HERO OF THE YEAR

**Skyler Wilburg, a nine-month city carrier assistant** in Albertson, NY, was finishing up a few deliveries to some local businesses one spring day when an elderly woman saw him. She was planning to go into the post office but saw the Long Island Merged Branch 6000 carrier outside, so she thought that she would instead just give him her mail to save time.

The woman got out of her SUV, thinking she had put it in park, but she was mistaken. It began rolling and the door hit her, knocking her to the ground. When this happened, both of her legs were in the path of the truck.

“In a situation like this, there was no thinking—just reaction,” Wilburg said.

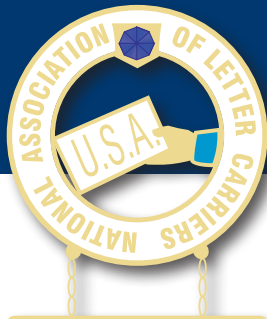
Wilburg dropped everything and ran to drag the woman from underneath the vehicle. He then jumped inside, slamming on the brakes and putting it into park as it nearly smashed into the gate of the parking lot.

After saving the woman, the carrier went into the post office to let his supervisor and postmaster know what had happened.

“Not even 20 minutes after the situation occurred, the lady [found] me on my route to thank me multiple times and say, ‘God bless you for saving my life,’ ” Wilburg said.

She’s not the only one who commended him. While telling his story to his mom, she told him that “you are my ‘hero,’ ” he said.





# David Moulton

## MA Northeast Merged Branch 25

**On Dec. 9, 2023, eight-year Massachusetts Northeast Merged Branch 25 carrier David Moulton** was on his route in Salem when a 3-year-old boy ran past him in the opposite direction into a nearby park.

Moulton said, “I found it odd that he wasn’t wearing a jacket and a hat or shoes.”

About a minute went by and he again saw the boy running out of the corner of his eye, this time toward a

busy intersection.

Moulton knew that meant trouble. “I just made a run for him before he could get to the street,” he said. “And it’s a good thing that I did make a run for him, because, I mean, he’s just a tiny little kid and there were cars coming. They would have never seen him. He would have been struck.”

After Moulton scooped him up, the boy began to cry. The carrier put him down on the sidewalk and called his supervisor and 911.

“I felt bad that I scared him half to death because I’m a stranger to him,” Moulton said, but added that he was glad he had intervened, because the child’s skin was showing effects from having been out in the cold for so long. “I mean, I’m wearing four layers and I’m still cold, you know?”

Emergency personnel arrived a few minutes later and were eventually able to deduce that the child had escaped from a nearby day care facility.

Moulton’s story appeared in multiple local news outlets and the child’s parents called Moulton to personally thank him for rescuing their son.

“I don’t even think I’m a hero,” Moulton said. “I just didn’t want anything to happen to the little guy.”



# Andrew Fontanetta and Anthony “Tony” Paolillo

Flushing, NY Branch 294



**Some branches measure the success of their** community service in dollars, food, clothing or toys. Flushing, NY Branch 294 measures its progress in blood.

After two decades, the branch’s blood donation efforts have reached a milestone—1,500 pints of blood donated. Since each donor gives about a pint, that represents 1,500 times a letter carrier or other donor sat down and gave their life-saving gifts over the years.

The tradition began in 2001, when then-Vice President Brian Keelen, who served in Vietnam as a combat medic, organized the branch’s first blood drive as a service to the community. The branch made it an annual tradition, then began holding them twice a year. Now they hold three every year—in winter, spring and summer. When Keelen retired, he handed the reins to current blood drive coordinator **Andrew Fontanetta**, who organizes the events with recently retired longtime Branch President **Tony Paolillo**.

The local Knights of Columbus Hall hosts each blood drive after a regular branch meeting. To remind branch members of the role their donations play in saving lives, the branch votes to dedicate each blood drive to a deceased branch member. The branch also holds a “hero’s night” before the blood drive to recognize a heroic member who has come to the aid of someone while out on their route or who has gone out of their way to serve the community, Paolillo said.

To reach the milestone, the branch must first coordinate with the New York Blood Center, a not-for-profit blood bank that sends medical personnel to collect and store the blood.

The branch’s main job is to bring people out to donate—the more people giving blood, the more blood they can collect, of course.

“In theory, to donate, we get anywhere from 30 to 50 people” for each drive, Paolillo said. But sometimes would-be donors find that they are ineligible for medical reasons—anything from high blood pressure to low iron to having a recent tattoo could disqualify a donor, either to protect the health of the donor or recipient.

Even if carriers know they can’t donate blood, he added, they can still help. “We always encourage the members, even if you yourself can’t donate blood,” he said. “We tell them, ‘Perhaps you could bring a family member, a neighbor, a friend who is eligible to donate.’”

The branch attracts donors by sending flyers to each of its 21 postal stations, while the New York Blood Center mails reminders to previous donors. But with three events happening each year, carriers are usually aware that the next one is approaching. And the branch makes each blood drive a fun event, too.

“Anybody who donates or attempts to donate,” Paolillo said, “we have their name, and we raffle off a bunch of prizes for them during the meeting. We have a lot of prizes, a lot of gifts that are donated to our branch from the members. That’s nice. Plus, on top of that, we have the catered food.”

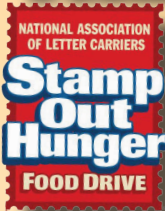
“It’s just a great feeling knowing that you made a difference, knowing that one donation can save up to three lives,” he added, because a donated pint might be used in more than one transfusion. “There’s always an emergency blood shortage going around.

It’s something that I’m very proud of our branch [for] that we’ve been able to host this on a regular basis.”



**Andrew Fontanetta (r)**  
**and Tony Paolillo (far r)**

# CARRYING THE LOAD



**L**etter carriers once again fulfilled a pledge to bring food to the needy during the Letter Carriers' Stamp Out Hunger® Food Drive held on Saturday, May 11. With the exception of two years during the COVID-19 pandemic, when an online donor drive replaced in-person food collection, the annual food drive has filled the nation's food banks the second Saturday in May since 1993.

In the 31 years since it began, the food drive has collected approximately



1.9 billion pounds of food for those in need.

**With approximately 50 percent of branches reporting, the 2024 drive added 36,054,989 pounds of food and \$392,738.20 to that total.**

On May 11, letter carriers, with the help of postal employees in other crafts, managers, family, friends and volunteers, collected bags of nonperishable food placed near their mailboxes by residents.

"Everyone knows that their letter carrier is going to show up and get the job done, and they demonstrated that again for this year's food drive," NALC President Brian L. Renfroe said. "In one day, they collected tens of millions of pounds of food for hungry people in their communities. I couldn't be prouder of the carriers, retirees and volunteers who made this food drive a success."



Hunger affects 1 in 8 Americans, including millions of children, senior citizens and veterans. The Stamp Out Hunger food drive is held in 10,000 cities and towns across the United States, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and Guam. It's the largest single-day food drive in the country. All food collected in a community helps local residents in that community.

The annual Stamp Out Hunger food drive comes at a critical time for food pantries. Donations from the winter holidays have been depleted, while free or reduced-cost school meals that many children rely on are not available during the summer months.

"This food drive would not be a success without the dedication of the letter carriers who work hard every day to serve those in their communities beyond delivering mail," Assistant to the President for Community Services Crystal Smith said. "The tremendous efforts by letter carriers brings an abundance of food to tables in communities across the country and U.S. territories."

Many branches also continued to use the online donor drive tools developed to replace the in-person food drive when the pandemic forced the cancellation of the in-person food collection in 2020 and 2021. The online cash donations received go directly to local food banks, enhancing their food-collection efforts.

As in past years, letter carriers in Puerto Rico put in an extra effort to collect both food and cash donations, supporting the effort with a large ad campaign. Working with the United Way, which sponsors the ads that run heavily on five TV stations on the island, San Juan, PR Branch 869 and



Ann Arbor, MI Br. 434

Ponce, PR Branch 826 once again reported impressive results on Food Drive Day.

The beneficiaries of the food drive—food banks and the communities that rely on them—expressed their appreciation through local media outlets in communities from coast to coast.

"We are blown away by the outcome of the Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive," K. Brent Hill, executive director of Greenwich, CT, food bank Neighbor to Neighbor, reported in the *Greenwich Free Press*. Neighbor to Neighbor serves more than 575 households in Greenwich.

"Thank you to everyone who contributed or volunteered to ensure that this drive was a success," Hill added. "And a special thank-you to the Greenwich letter carriers whose efforts will guarantee that Greenwich residents in need will have access to food."



Wheeling, WV Br. 66

Pasadena, CA  
Br. 2200



In a letter to the *Caldwell Journal* in North Carolina, Sharon V. Harmon, executive director of Yokefellow Ministries in Lenoir, NC, thanked letter carriers and volunteers for their efforts.

"I stand amazed at the many hands, in love, handling the many bags of food donated," Harmon wrote. "The hands in the home donating, the carrier who picks up and brings to the post office, the volunteers who unload the postal trucks, the volunteers who re-pack and weigh the food, the trucks loaders and drivers, the volunteers who unload the food at the agencies served, and the

army of volunteers who are still sorting and stacking food even this week at these agencies. What an effort of love for the hungry!"

The food drive brought in 1,959 pounds of food to benefit Yokefellow and the Lenoir Soup Kitchen.

"Thank you to everyone who participated in the National Association of Letter Carriers annual Stamp Out Hunger food drive," Eileen DiCicco, secretary of the Dallas (OR) Food Bank Board of Directors, wrote to the *Polk County Itemizer-Observer* in Oregon. "On May 11, Dallas postal carriers collected 1,484 pounds of food from area residents to benefit Dallas Food Bank and local families in need."

News website Huntington Now of Long Island, NY, reported that the food drive yielded 382,175 pounds of food for food pantries, soup kitchens and other emergency feeding programs in communities in Nassau and Suffolk counties.

"We are grateful for the generosity of Long Islanders who donated to this year's Stamp Out Hunger campaign, whether it was just a can of soup or a bag full of groceries; that simple act of kindness will go a long way in improving the life of a person struggling with the uncertainty of not knowing where their next meal may be," Randi Shubin Dresner, president and CEO of Island Harvest Food Bank in Melville, NY, told Huntington Now. "Island Harvest also acknowledges the hard work and dedication of the leadership of the National Association of Letter Carriers, Branch 6000, and the postal workers across Long Island, along with the support of our sponsors for their generosity and tireless efforts in our efforts





to help our neighbors in need,” Shubin Dresner added.

The food drive sent more than 7,500 pounds of food to the Derby Community Family Services Food Pantry in Derby, KS, reported the *Derby Informer*.

Schaumburg, IL, took full advantage of the food drive by setting up additional collection points, adding to the total collection.

“The Township of Schaumburg would like to share a sincere thank you to its donor community and Schaumburg postal workers for their generosity in the 2024 Letter Carriers’ Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive,” the town said in a statement in the local newspaper, the *Daily Herald*.

“This year, the township received 3,875.44 pounds of food from the Schaumburg Post Office. In addition to these donations, the township extended the drive with the help of many community partners and received several hundred pounds of food from that effort.”

“On Saturday, May 11, letter carriers in Lakeville and Middleboro did more than deliver mail to local residents,” reported the *Nemasket Week* in Nemasket, MA. “They also collected food donations left by those same residents during the annual Stamp Out Hunger program.” The effort yielded more than 5,000 pounds of food.

C’Ville Right Now, a news outlet in Charlottesville, VA, reported good results. “The Blue Ridge Area Food Bank’s Les Sinclair says letter carriers picked up 91,000 pounds of food, good for 76,000 meals...and brings the Stamp Out Hunger collections from all the area events to more than 2-and-a-half million.”



Van Nuys, CA  
Br. 2462



“The Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive was a huge success this year,” reported WKOW.com, the website for WKOW-TV in Madison, WI. “Organizers say they collected about 160,000 pounds of food. That’s a 95,000-pound increase over last year.”

The food collected in Madison went to the Second Harvest Foodbank of Southern Wisconsin. WKOW was also a sponsor of the food drive.

The *Tama-Toledo News Chronicle* in Iowa conveyed the gratitude of a local food bank: “The Northeast Iowa Food Bank is extremely grateful for the contributions and success of the annual Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive, hosted by the National Association of Letter Carriers. This initiative aims to fight food insecurity across the nation, thus contributing to our mission of closing the Meal Gap in northeast Iowa.” The food

# Top 33 branches by size category

## Category 1 (2,000 or more members)

Los Angeles, CA Br. 24	1,865,600
New Jersey Mgd. Br. 38	922,000
Pittsburgh, PA Br. 84	745,070

## Category 2 (1,500-1,999 members)

San Antonio, TX Br. 421	490,107
Detroit, MI Br. 1	423,000
Seattle, WA Br. 79	320,778

## Category 3 (1,000-1,499 members)

Tampa, FL Br. 599	1,955,085
W. Coast Florida Br. 1477	612,276
Tucson, AZ Br. 704	397,440

## Category 4 (700-999 members)

Clearwater, FL Br. 2008	1,518,458
Oklahoma City, OK Br. 458	1,011,188
San Juan, PR Br. 869	655,200

## Category 5 (500-699 members)

Ponce, PR Br. 826	628,368
Lexington, KY Br. 361	176,381
Madison, WI Br. 507	163,779

## Category 6 (350-499 members)

Kalamazoo, MI Br. 246	230,584
Spacecoast Florida Br. 2689	227,740
Lakeland, FL Br. 1779	185,438

## Category 7 (200-349 members)

Columbia, MO Br. 763	866,085
Vancouver, WA Br. 1104	269,905
Savannah, GA Br. 578	135,000

## Category 8 (100-199 members)

Aiea-Pearl City, HI Br. 4682	286,103
Southern Delaware Br. 906	204,577
Bridgeport, WV Br. 4458	163,250

## Category 9 (50-99 members)

Butte, MT Br. 621	99,000
Jefferson City, MO Br. 127	97,200
Ocala, FL Br. 1103	97,000

## Category 10 (26-49 members)

Staunton, VA Br. 513	39,160
Watertown, WI Br. 649	28,418
Benton, AR Br. 3706	28,095

## Category 11 (1-25 members)

Morris, MN Br. 1927	57,417
Morristown, TN Br. 1256	22,013
American Fork, UT Br. 2609	17,140

drive collected more than 19,700 pounds for the food bank.

Food pantries also sent messages of thanks on social media. Some samples:

“Wow! 96,000 lbs. of food! We are so grateful! Thank you to our amazing community, letter carriers, volunteers and staff. We are so grateful! God bless everyone for helping feed our community.” —Interfaith Emergency Services, Marion County, FL

“Saturday’s Letter Carrier Food Drive collected 1,123 pounds of food for our pantry. The letter carriers work very hard to make this happen. Thank you to all who supported this food drive!” —Creswell Food Pantry, Creswell, OR

“The Letter Carrier’s Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive was a wonderful success with local carriers collecting almost 1,000 pounds of food. Go Enon!” —Enon Emergency Relief, Enon, OH

“Collecting a record setting 32,000 lbs. takes a village! Thank you to all the Letter Carriers and Postal Employees for your participation. They stuff our mailboxes with postcards and the “blue bags” to bring awareness to the food drive. On top of all this extra work, they do their route twice on the day of the food drive, once delivering mail, then picking up your donations!” —Superstition Community Food Bank, Phoenix, AZ

“Over 2,500 lbs of food were collected during the Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive! Thank you to all the donors and the mail carriers for their assistance!” —Bixby Outreach Center, Bixby, OK

“We are extremely grateful that our Brown County postal carriers collected food for the needy as part of their community service effort. Our Hope Center Food Pantry was the recipient of approximately 10,000 pounds of food from this food drive.” —Hope Center Pantry, Green Bay, WI

“So amazing that over 18,000 pounds of food collected locally made it to the Gemma

Moran Food Center to go back out into the community in need...thank you to everyone who donated food and those who serve the community!" —United Way of Southeastern Connecticut

"We can't thank each and every one of you enough—the community throughout all of Erie County, the volunteers who step up to help the USPS, and all of the USPS mail carriers for the amazing job they did—for The Letter Carriers' "Stamp Out Hunger" Food Drive in 2024 during Mother's Day weekend!

"Not only does Care & Share of Erie County benefit from these food donations, allowing us to continue serving our neighbors in need, but this food drive benefits multiple local food pantries throughout all of Ohio. We are beyond grateful for the support of the local communities, local USPS mail carriers who work extra hard to gather donations, and The Letter Carriers for promoting this food drive nationwide.

"Thank you everyone for coming together as a community to show your love and support for our fellow neighbors and friends!" —Share & Care of Erie County, OH

Though letter carriers put in extra effort on the second Saturday each May to help end hunger in our communities, we can still help all year round with cash donations through NALC's virtual donor drive, an effort that began during the pandemic but that continues to supplement the food drive. Visit [nalc.org/food](http://nalc.org/food) to learn more.

"There's no stopping letter carriers when we act as one," President Renfroe said, "and the Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive is proof. Thanks to all the carriers, volunteers and sponsors for another great food drive."

Staunton, VA Br. 513



Hattiesburg,  
MS Br. 938

# How your branch can help



## How MDA can help your branch

**I**t's been more than 70 years since NALC stepped up to make the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA) the union's official charity and to become one of MDA's most-committed fundraisers. Commitment to MDA has grown each year, because letter carriers constantly dream up new ways to support the charity.

"Letter carriers have always been there for MDA, year after year," NALC President Brian L. Renfroe said. "Through thick and thin, we keep supporting our union's official charity. Our goal is always to do a little better each year."

Our union has led the way for MDA fundraising since the charity was founded in 1950. That year, letter carriers raised money for the new group on the local level. Only two years later, NALC adopted MDA as its official charity and became its first national sponsor. Branches

nationwide took their commitment to MDA into their communities.

Since then, NALC branches have stepped up with fundraising events that grew our fundraising totals to millions of dollars. They hold bowlathons. They run golf and cornhole tournaments. And they participate in muscle walks and many similar social or sporting events and contests to encourage both letter carriers and the people in their communities to support MDA.

The pandemic forced the cancellation of many of these traditional events, but branches shifted rapidly to online appeals, with the help of internet tools NALC created to make it as easy as possible. Though COVID-19 is no longer curtailing live events, many branches continue to use the online tools to complement their efforts.

“The online fundraising tools we set up during the pandemic are now a permanent part of NALC’s MDA fundraising tool kit,” Assistant to the President for Community Services Christina Vela Davidson said. “They can help to supplement in-person events or help make them more successful by getting the word out to a wider audience.”

Letter carriers’ efforts to support MDA help children and adults with neuromuscular diseases, as well as their families, who depend on MDA for medical research and support. Every year, NALC recognizes the top fundraising branches.

## Help from MDA— New people and new tools

MDA is constantly improving the ways it supports our fundraising efforts. Beginning this year, MDA’s new account director for organizational partnerships, Tawny Saunders, will assist every branch in the country, replacing a system of regional assistants.

“I am excited to be the director working with NALC branches across the United States,” Saunders said.

MDA’s new structure will streamline the support branches get for fundraising, volunteering at summer camps and anything else MDA-related. “It’s just one contact,” Saunders said, “and it’s easy for them whenever they have any questions at all—just contact me.”

The change in organization, she added, “allows more money raised to go toward our mission and our families.”

MDA offers many ways to handle the event details for branches so that letter carriers can focus more on the fundraising, Saunders said, and those efforts are expanding.

Branches can get help from fundraising websites that track donations. Many branches already use these for their donation drives, but the sites can also track donations

from in-person events. MDA can even set up web pages for specific events, Saunders said.

“So, if you have a bowling tournament, golf tournament or cornhole tournament, a branch can use it and they can set it up themselves, or we can. For some who maybe aren’t really tech savvy or not comfortable, they can reach out to us and we can set it up for them,” she said. “They can track RSVPs, they can take registrations, they can take payments for a cornhole team or whatever it may be.”

MDA can help with fundraising details as well, from tax information to assisting with donation letters to offering an MDA-branded template for publicity materials. The popular shamrock summer camp and holiday pinups that donors can buy and display their names on a wall also are available.

If there is a person with a neuromuscular disease living near the branch, Saunders can sometimes arrange for them and their family to attend a large event as an ambassador to represent the people whose lives MDA affects.

And MDA has additional exciting plans, such as an incentive program for branches that will recognize their efforts directly, and additional publicity materials that are tailored to specific kinds of events.

Saunders said that she can attend branch meetings remotely around the country to explain more, or provide videos that lay out MDA’s mission and how donations go to good use.



**Tawny Saunders**

## Branch fundraising— New ideas and old standbys

Whatever tools they use, the top branches had varying approaches to their success last year. Some branches spread their efforts out through several events and opportunities to raise money throughout the year; others, especially small branches, went all-in with one big event.

Aside from raffles and donation appeals at its branch meetings and other events, Erie, PA Branch 284 brings in most of its proceeds for MDA from a single annual event, its golf tournament. The branch's first tournament was in 2022, replacing a yearly bowlathon.

"The first year, the golf tournament got \$10,000," branch President **Mark Murphy** said. As the branch's only big event, the tournament gets lots of attention from carriers, who spend their days off canvassing businesses to sponsor holes and to publicize the event. In 2023, the tournament helped put Erie at the top of the Honor Roll for branches of its size, with \$14,235.34 raised.



Erie, PA Branch 284's golf tournament

With the help of letter carrier volunteers, the golfers enjoy food and drinks right on the green. At the 18th hole, participants enjoy a steak dinner in a tent. "Everyone did something," Murphy said. "Everyone enjoyed mixing it up and doing different things."

The event is part of the branch's efforts to include more carriers in MDA

fundraising and to grow the efforts even more.

"We're getting a lot of younger carriers involved," he said. "We have to pass that torch. We always want to do more and more each year."

As MDA coordinator for Fort Wayne, IN Branch 116, **Tim Houx** dreamed up an event that relied on a contact who handles group sales for the Indianapolis Colts of the National Football League. At each home game, the Colts display a huge American flag, nearly the size of the football field, during the singing of the national anthem. About 140 letter carriers and other supporters bought tickets for a game that included a donation to MDA, and in return, they were invited on to the field before the kickoff.

"They offered us to get down on the field and hold the flag for the national anthem, which is a really awesome experience because a lot of our members are veterans as well, so it's a win-win," Houx said. "We can represent our veterans, we can take care of MDA, and we can all get together and build some solidarity with our brothers and sisters."

The event raised more than \$2,000 for MDA, he said. When it came to organizing the event, the team did the hard part.

"The Colts actually put a website together for us to help sell tickets, and then [a] portion of the ticket sales went to MDA, and that's how we were able to raise the \$2,000," Houx said. "I couldn't have done it without the Colts' help." The branch sold tickets to carriers throughout Region 6 (Kentucky, Indiana and Michigan).

Houx plans to put on the flag event again next football season, and he hopes to add a social event for the participants at the game.

Sometimes all it takes is a new take on a classic idea to make things fun. Instead of just a dance, why not have a "sundresses and cigars" dance?

That's what Birmingham, AL Branch 530 did last July. More than 200

participants showed up for the simple, yet fun, event at the union hall.

“We raised \$3,536 to send kids to MDA camp,” Branch President **Antonia Shields** said.

## All for one cause

MDA uses the funds we raise to support medical research on dozens of neuromuscular diseases to develop medications and treatments that ease symptoms, some of which might extend life spans. For instance, most children with Duchenne muscular dystrophy, the most common and severe type of the disease, once died in their teens. Today, there are adults in their 40s living with Duchenne.

The charity also focuses on supporting children and adults with neuromuscular disease, and their families, by improving their quality of life. One way it provides this support is by sponsoring summer camps for children. At these adaptive camps, children participate in traditional summer camp events, including swimming, arts and crafts, sports and games. Letter carriers not only help fund these camps—some carriers volunteer their time to work directly with the children.

As with many fundraising events, COVID-19 prompted MDA to move to online-only summer camps for a few years—and then to keep them when the in-person camps returned—so that as many children as possible would have access to the activities.

MDA is the nation’s largest nonprofit supporter of research on neuromuscular diseases, funding hundreds of physicians and scientists in the struggle to free children, and the families who love them, from the harm caused by muscular dystrophy and by more than 40 related muscle-debilitating diseases, including amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS). MDA’s efforts have contributed to numerous major advances in muscle biology and therapy development.

MDA has been involved in research into basic muscle and nerve biology since



**Fort Wayne, IN Branch 116 teamed up with the Indianapolis Colts to raise money**

its inception, when little was known about how muscles were formed or how they functioned. Since then, thousands of published scientific papers have explained how the tissues work and what goes wrong in neuromuscular diseases, building a knowledge base for finding treatments. MDA funding supported the research that led to the identification of the genetic causes of dozens of diseases, starting with the discovery of the dystrophin gene in 1986. This research is paying dividends as new medications and therapies are being developed.

## MDA Honor Roll

The combined efforts of letter carriers who organized and participated in online and in-person events resulted in a grand total of \$1,125,912 raised for MDA.

“There’s no limit to how letter carriers can support MDA,” President Renfroe said. “Anyone can volunteer; anyone can help to organize events; anyone can participate. There’s nothing we can’t do for MDA when we all work together. Our union is proud of what we’ve accomplished to make the lives of people affected by neuromuscular diseases better, and we’re only getting started. Let’s work hard and make 2025 another memorable year!”

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