

Message From the President

A message I'll never tire of conveying is that MDA has just completed another exceptional year.

Although this annual report only covers nine months of 2007 (due to MDA's switch from a March to April fiscal year to a calendar year), this short time period still was long enough to post remarkable achievements.

As you'll read on these pages, MDA's [research](#) efforts are successfully revealing the mysterious inner workings of many [diseases](#) in our program. Meanwhile, MDA's Translational Research program is pushing the pace at which the most promising discoveries and strategies can be brought to [clinical trials](#).

As research marched forward in 2007, so too did MDA's health care and [services](#) programs. In just nine months, MDA opened a new ALS center for research and clinical care, provided unforgettable [summer camp](#) experiences to kids across the country, published up-to-the-minute information on research and life with muscle disease, sponsored community programs highlighting the outstanding contributions made by people with muscle-wasting diseases — and much more.

Of course, as champions for those with devastating, incurable, life-shortening muscle diseases, MDA always has sustained an undercurrent of advocacy in everything it has done. But now that undercurrent has been turned into a tidal wave.

An important new MDA program established a strong foothold in 2007. Read in this report's pages how [MDA's Advocacy Department](#)

is taking positive action to protect and improve the quality of life for people with any of the more than 40 diseases under our umbrella.

In Washington, MDA's Advocacy program is focusing on urging legislation of importance to those with neuromuscular diseases. At the same time, MDA advocacy is occurring through our school disability awareness programs; through our [Telethon](#); and through the words of our volunteer national [spokespeople](#), ranging from third-grader [Abbey Umali](#) to prominent figures in business, music and television.

One of MDA's biggest strengths always has been its ability to combine vast grassroots support with an efficient centralized organization. In 2007, the Association accomplished this once again thanks to top-notch volunteer leaders and national sponsors, a skilled and committed field staff, and the tireless work of a veritable army of volunteers in cities and towns across the country.

One last area of advocacy deserves most prominent mention — our best-known advocacy effort, performed by our most diligent advocate, [Jerry Lewis](#). With our number-one volunteer at the helm, we remain committed and on course to accomplish the job we set out to do.




Gerald C. Weinberg