

The original documents are located in Box 1, folder “11/21/74 - Muscular Dystrophy” of the Betty Ford White House Papers, 1973-1977 at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

MRS. FORD

EVENT: Greet 1974 Muscular Dystrophy Association of America National Poster Child

DATE: Thursday, November 21, 1974

TIME: 11:00 a.m.

PLACE: Map Room

SEQUENCE:

11:00 a.m. When your 6 guests have assembled in the Map Room, Susan Porter will give you a call and escort you into the Map Room to greet your guests:

-Michael Newsome
Poster Child, age 7

-Mrs. Judy Newsome
Mike's mother, Campbellsville, Kentucky

-Mr. and Mrs. Henry Watts
President, Muscular Dystrophy Association of America

-Mr. John Sellman
Regional Director, MDAA

-Mr. Ron Schenkenberger
National Director of Community Services, MDAA

At the conclusion of the photo session, the press will leave giving you an opportunity to have a cup of tea/coffee with your guests.

11:20 a.m. In order to designate the time for your leaving, at 11:20 Susan Porter will enter with "Betty Ford" pens for you to give to each person as you leave as a memento of their visit with you.

Return to family quarters. Your guests will be given a special tour of the White House.

NOTE: -Open press coverage and White House photographer
-Refreshments will be served



BACKGROUND:

The Muscular Dystrophy Association of America was first founded because a small group of parents whose youngsters had dystrophy refused to accept "medical fatalism" with the conviction that there is no incurable disease, only diseases for which a cure had not been yet found.

The MDAA is a voluntary National Health agency with an all-out effort to conquer neuromuscular diseases affecting thousands of American men, women, and children. There is no single disease called muscular dystrophy, but a whole group of muscle-destroying dystrophies which vary in hereditary pattern, age of onset, initial muscles attacked, and rate of progression.




Led by National Chairman Jerry Lewis, who has held that position for 24 years, MDAA is now the fastest-growing of the 12 largest national voluntary health agencies and ranks 3rd (behind only the American Cancer Society and the American Heart Association) in dollars expended for research.

MDAA depends almost entirely on public contributions, and is one of the 18 national voluntary health agencies accredited by the National Health Council. It is also one of the 13 national health agencies approved by the U.S. Civil Service Commission to participate in the government's Combined Federal Campaign.

The MDAA national solicitation for funds are held throughout November and December. The special kick-off for the local Washington area campaign will be Sunday, November 24th.

You are Honorary Chairman of the Muscular Dystrophy Association of America.


susan porter
November 19, 1974

MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY ASSOCIATIONS OF AMERICA, INC.

810 SEVENTH AVENUE, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10019

FACT SHEET

MDAA's NATIONAL POSTER CHILD

MICHAEL SHANE NEWSOME

BORN: October 1, 1966 (8 years old)
FATHER: Gobel Newsome
MOTHER: Judy Newsome
BROTHERS: Gobel Jr., 6

11 Philip, 5 (afflicted by Duchenne form of muscular dystrophy; wheelchair-bound, he has never walked).

MEDICAL HISTORY:

Mike was diagnosed at age one at MDAA's Louisville (Ky.) clinic as having the Duchenne form of muscular dystrophy. This type of dystrophy is the most severe and the most prevalent of the dystrophies, appearing usually in the very early years of life. Symptoms such as a waddling gait, an inability to rise from the floor, and difficulty in climbing stairs indicate the progressive weakening of the child's major muscle groups.

Mike presently gets around well on his own without the use of a wheelchair or braces.

HOME TOWN:

After having lived all their lives in Louisville, the Newsomes moved in August 1974 to a farm on Star Route, Campbellsville, Ky., 90 minutes from Louisville. They felt that country air and farm life would be healthful and fun for the children.

SCHOOL:

Mike is in Patricia Thomas' third-grade class in the nearby Buffalo, Ky. Elementary School. One of the school's major assets is the fact that it is built all on one level, with no stairs. Mike is popular with his classmates, and enjoys all his scholastic subjects. Drawing is his favorite activity.



PARENTS'
OCCUPATIONS:

Gobel Newsome is a machinist and a member of the United Steelworkers of America Local 6828. Judy Newsome, formerly a member of the Tobacco Works International Union Local 185, had to leave work to care for her family and their new farm. She is now a full-time housewife.

FAMILY
ACTIVITIES:

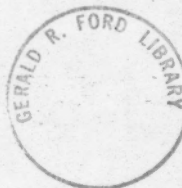
Mike's favorite outing was always a trip to the zoo, but now that he's living on a farm, he has animals of his own. The family has flocks of chickens, a bull, and a new mutt named Snoopy. Mike also maintains a giant tank of angel-fish.

MIKE:

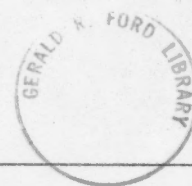
Mike, who loves to draw, has been known to decorate the walls of his house with original animal pictures. Because he wanted his own art gallery, he also glued pictures of football stars on an entire wall. Mrs. Newsome, however, has put her foot down against further unsupervised decorating efforts.

Mike has made several trips, to many parts of the country, since being named National Poster Child. He especially enjoyed his first trip to New York City, where he fell in love with a horse named Smokie during a hansom cab ride through Central Park. At Miami's Seaquarium, Mike became enamored of Salty the Seal and Flipper, as well as the killer whales.

Since becoming National Poster Child, Mike has twice appeared on the Labor Day Telethon Against Muscular Dystrophy in Las Vegas with his good friend Jerry Lewis.



FACT SHEET
Mrs. Ford's Office



Event Greet 1974 National Muscular Dystrophy Poster Child
 Group Muscular Dystrophy Associations of America, Inc.
 DATE/TIME Thursday, November 21, 1974 11:00 a.m.
 Contact Mr. John Sellman Phone 296-1672
 Number of guests: Total 7 Women Men Children 1
 Place Map Room
 Principals involved Mrs. Ford
 Participation by Principal Greet & Photo (Receiving line)
 Remarks required No
 Background The national campaign on behalf of the Muscular Dystrophy Association is held in November & December; the DC area kick-off is Nov. 24th. Mrs. Ford is national Honorary Chairman & will greet the national poster child.

REQUIREMENTS

Social: Guest list Mr. Sellman to S. Porter
 Invitations Programs Menus
 Refreshments Yes (Coffee, tea, Juice for the 7 yr. old, cookies)
 Entertainment
 Decorations/flowers Yes, normal for Map Room
 Music
 Social Aides
 Dress Coat check Yes.
 Other Tour officer stand-by for W.H. tour afterwards.

Press: Reporters Yes
 Photographers Yes
 TV Crews Yes
 White House Photographers Yes Color Mono.
 Other

Technical Support: Microphones No PA Other Rooms
 Recording No
 Lights
 Transportation One car. NOTE: Enter via S.W. Gate
 Parking South Drive
 Housing
 Other (Risers, stage, platforms)

Project Co-ordinator Susan Porter Phone x2850

Site diagrams should be attached if technical support is heavy.