

# President's Blog



LDA LymeLiteracy

Pat Smith, President, Lyme Disease Association, Inc.

## Saluting Jean F. Galbreath & Harford Cty. Lyme Disease Support Group, Inc.



*r the rights of children to be treated***LDA Lyme Literacy: From the Desk of the LDA President**

The Lyme Disease Association, Inc. (LDA) would like to thank Mrs. Jean F. Galbreath, President of the all-volunteer Harford County Lyme Disease Support Group, Inc., for her dedication

and hard work over the past two decades. The HCLDSG was organized by Jean in 1995 and incorporated in 1997. Over time the group has filled a void in education in the area of Harford County, Maryland, a state which ranks 8th in case numbers in the last official CDC reported numbers from 2015.

The Group hosted many activities over the 22 years to raise awareness and even funds for the Lyme Disease Association's Lyme Aid 4 Kids fund for families who are financially unable to have their child diagnosed or begin treatment for Lyme disease. They set up tables with education materials and sold mums and homemade baked goods at local events to raise the funds.

I went to Maryland to testify against a dangerous bill for patient and physicians alike in the Maryland Senate in 2008. Jean and the group led the State effort to defeat the bill, which never made it out of the Senate Committee, fortunately for patients. It would have mandated that the Maryland Department of Health disseminate the latest consensus guidelines to physicians in Maryland—undoubtedly, the IDSA treatment Guidelines which do not recommend any long term antibiotic treatment or alternative treatments for Lyme disease. [Click here for history of the bill's defeat – scroll to Maryland](#)

Over time, the LDA has supplied the Group with its materials for free, the LymeR Primer, the ABCs of Lyme Disease, and Tick Identification Card, which they then handed out throughout the area at events, teaching people about Lyme disease symptoms and prevention practices. In 2015, the LDA awarded the Harford County group its *Dr. Lis Heininger Memorial Education Grant* to be used to support its educational programs. The grant is in memory of a late advocate and LDA Chapter Chair from Corning New York, Dr. Heininger, who devoted her life to raising Lyme awareness through tremendous physical hardship that plagued her before she succumbed to her illness. LDA awards the grant to those individuals/organizations who strive in extreme

circumstances to help others avoid acquiring Lyme disease. [Click here](#) for more information about Dr. Heininger and the grant

In the words of Jean upon receipt of the award, "We are excited to expand our advocating and educational role in the community and throughout Maryland." Expand they did. An example of that expansion was a Touch A Truck program held in Street, Maryland, which drew over 1,000 people who were offered information on Lyme and tick-borne diseases by the support group members.

Over the years, I was fortunate to have had the opportunity to meet Jean at several Lyme events and her kindness, humanity, humility, and devotion to eradicating Lyme disease were readily apparent. I feel fortunate to know her and to have been inspired by what she has accomplished under difficult circumstances. We will continue cheering for Jean in the near future. Together, we have helped many people learn about this terrible disease and what it can do to bodies and minds. We have made some headway state by state with people like Jean leading the effort and being a beacon for all to see and follow. Thank you, Jean and Harford County Lyme Disease Support Group, Inc. Know that your work has not gone unnoticed and has touched many people's lives.