

Lyme Disease Association Announces LymeAid4Kids Fund with Support of NY Times Bestselling Author Amy Tan

Jackson, October 27, 2003—The Lyme Disease Association (LDA), a national non-profit organization dedicated to Lyme disease education, prevention, research, and patient support announced today the creation of LymeAid4Kids, a fund administered through the LDA and designed to be used by families with no insurance who need to have their children properly evaluated for possible Lyme disease.

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Children without Insurance will Benefit

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Internationally acclaimed author Amy Tan, whose books *The Joy Luck Club*, *The Kitchen God's Wife*, and *The Hundred Secret Senses* have appeared on the New York Times Bestseller List, will support the fund through the proceeds from the speaking tour for her new book *The Opposite of Fate: A Book of Musings*, which reveals her own bout with Lyme disease in the final chapter. "We consider the creation of this formal fund, the first of its kind for Lyme disease, a beginning," said LDA president Pat Smith, "and we hope that others will follow Ms. Tan's lead with generous donations to the fund."

Lyme, the most prevalent vector-borne disease in this country, often strikes children, who may lose years of school and their childhood due to its debilitating manifestations. Risky behavior may be as simple as petting the dog, playing outside, and even having a live Christmas tree. It is estimated that 10-15% of those who are diagnosed with Lyme go on to develop chronic disease, which may lodge in the central nervous system. Early diagnosis and appropriate treatment may prevent the development of chronic disease, one main reason for creation of this fund.

The fund will be administered by the LDA through individual treating physicians nationwide who agree to participate, and will provide up to \$1,000 per child for evaluation including the visit, testing, and perhaps beginning treatment. "As the fund grows, the amount per child could increase to provide further services," says Ms. Smith, whose own daughter missed four years of school due to chronic Lyme disease. "Right now, we need to address getting children properly diagnosed as early as possible."

The LDA has funded a number of research projects coast to coast and with its Connecticut affiliate, Time for Lyme, is partnering with Columbia University to open an endowed chronic Lyme disease research center to be housed at Columbia, the first of its kind in the world. Studies from Columbia have highlighted cognitive deficits in children, causing them to develop learning disabilities, which fluctuate with the disease. One Columbia study funded by LDA, showed an increase in IQ of 22 points in a child with Lyme disease after treatment for the disease.

The LDA expects to have details of the LymeAid4Kids fund available for physicians and families on its website by the end of this year. www.LymeDiseaseAssociation.org. Tax deductible donations earmarked for the fund can be made payable to: Lyme Disease Association, Inc. and sent to: LDA P.O. Box 1438 Jackson, NJ 08527. Please note LymeAid4Kids on

your check memo or letter.