



Raising Hope for Families with Lyme

Lyme Disease: A Growing Health Crisis

Lyme disease is the fastest growing infectious disease in the world, with at least 300,000 new cases each year in the United States alone.¹ Lyme disease occurs in all states in the U.S.² and is endemic in 63 countries across Asia, Latin America, North Africa and Europe.³ When left untreated, the effects of Lyme disease can be devastating, including cognitive defects, neurological symptoms, memory loss, seizures, severe fatigue, joint pain, Bells Palsy, muscular pain, heart rhythm irregularities, depression, anxiety, psychosis and even death.

Because testing for Lyme disease is often inadequate and inconclusive and symptoms vary widely from patient to patient, those infected with Lyme frequently go undiagnosed for months, even years, while their health mysteriously declines. When finally diagnosed, the patient's journey back to health is arduous and costly. As most insurance companies do not cover the treatment of chronic Lyme disease, families are typically left on their own to battle the disease often incurring enormous medical debt.

Mission

The mission of LymeLight Foundation is to help young people struggling with Lyme disease access and pay for proper medical treatment, and to prevent the long-term effects of Lyme disease through public awareness and education.

History

The LymeLight Foundation was founded in 2011 by two families in California who came face to face with the drastic consequences of Lyme disease when their children were diagnosed after years of mysterious and disabling symptoms. Through their continuing medical struggles and triumphant journey back to health, both families incurred enormous medical expenses.

Grateful for the ability to offer their sick children these lifesaving medical treatments, which were not covered by insurance, LymeLight's founders met many parents during this journey who were forced to decide between feeding and housing their families and treating their Lyme-infected children. The LymeLight Foundation was founded on the belief that this is a choice no parent should have to make.

A Tricky Diagnosis

Lyme disease is spread by ticks carrying bacteria that attack the human body, typically focusing on the joints, central nervous system, internal organs and brain. Despite the prevalence of Lyme disease, only about 10% of those infected are properly diagnosed: the tick is small, often the size of a poppy seed; the tell-tale "bull's-eye rash" occurs in less than half of Lyme cases; and diagnostic methods are often inaccurate or administered too late to be dependable. By the time most Lyme cases are identified, the health of the patient has deteriorated beyond what the recommended 4-6 weeks of antibiotics can fix. For these patients, months and sometimes years of treatment, including hospitalization, IV and oral antibiotics, anti-inflammatories and dietary modifications supervised by an experienced doctor, is required to regain their health.

¹ Center for Disease Control and Prevention, news release, Aug. 19, 2013.

² *Surveillance for Lyme Disease*, Bacon, Kugeler, Mead, Division of Vector-Borne Infectious Diseases, National Center for Zoonotic Vector-Borne and Enteric Diseases, Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Oct. 2008.

³ *Lyme Disease: Global Status*, Berger SA. 2015, 83 pp. Gideon e-book series.



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Helping to Heal the Next Generation

LymeLight Foundation provides medical grants up to \$10,000 to Lyme-infected children and young adults who cannot pay for necessary medications and therapies. Our reasons to focus on helping young people are many: early intervention enhances recovery; children are the most susceptible to contracting Lyme disease and will suffer the longest if left untreated (and have most to gain if properly treated), and because we believe in the hope and promise of the next generation. Through medical grants, LymeLight helps youth who may otherwise lead lives of unfulfilled potential and dependency to forge a path towards health, self-reliance and joy.

Spreading the Word About Lyme Disease

When it comes to fighting Lyme disease, knowledge is power. LymeLight Foundation is dedicated to educating the public on the truth and misconceptions about identifying, contracting and fighting Lyme disease. We host and participate in several Lyme awareness and fundraising events, including Dart for Art, Ryde for Lyme, and the Ticked Off Music Fest. Through our web site, e-newsletters and e-blasts, we communicate to more than 6,500 donors, volunteers and partners nationwide. We make frequent updates to our social media properties, including Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. Active supporters and spokespeople for the LymeLight Foundation include Olympian free skier Angeli Vanlaanen and rising singer/songwriter Kêta.

LymeLight Foundation Goals for 2016

Since our founding in 2011, LymeLight has provided over \$1.6 million in life-changing medical grants to more than 303 children and young adults from 40 states. Still, we are only able to help less than half of those who apply for financial assistance. Our goals for 2016 are as follows:

1. Make full \$10,000 medical grants to a minimum of 75 young people, up 25% from 2015;
2. Increase our presence in Lyme-literate doctors offices by 20% through our "Give Hope, Give Back" campaign to make patients in need aware of LymeLight funding and to attract new donors;
3. Provide every LymeLight applicant, regardless of whether we can provide a medical grant, with literature on Lyme disease treatments and living with Lyme disease;
4. Expand our donor base by 20% through increased community presence, foundation support and donor-hosted fundraising events.

There is No Better Time to Bite Back!

A generous grant from a longstanding LymeLight funder will cover all operating expenses through 2020, meaning **100% of your donation will go directly to support treatment grants and Lyme awareness campaigns**. Please join LymeLight Foundation as we spread awareness about Lyme disease, bring hope and relief to families struggling with the costly ordeal of bringing a child with Lyme back to health, and guide the next generation of young people toward a promising future as contributing members of their families and communities.

For more information about the LymeLight Foundation and Lyme disease in general, please visit <http://www.lymelightfoundation.org>.