

CALDA'S LYME ACTION PROGRAM 2009
"Empowering the Grassroots"

On Thursday, October 22nd, the *California Lyme Disease Association* (CALDA) held their 2nd annual *Lyme Action Program*, a workshop for all Lyme patient advocates, activists, support group leaders, patients and their friends and family members. Speakers included CALDA's Chief Executive Officer Lorraine Johnson; CALDA President and Founder Phyllis Mervine; *Lyme Disease Association* President Pat Smith, Family therapist Sandy Berenbaum, LCSW,BCD; co-chair of *Ridgefield Lyme Disease Task Force* Karen Gaudian; and *Time for Lyme's* Co-President Diane Blanchard. Topics ranged from federal and state legislation and addressing Lyme as a social movement to understanding the special needs of children with Lyme disease, particularly in educational settings.



**Lyme Disease Association President Pat Smith and
Time for Lyme's Co-President Diane Blanchard present
during CALDA's LYME ACTION PROGRAM October 22, 2009.**

Additional presentations were given by a panel of Lyme activists from across the country. Doug Fearn of the *Lyme Disease Association of Southeastern Pennsylvania*; Jennifer Reid from *Ridgefield Lyme Disease Task Force* in Connecticut; Dorothy Leland of the *California Lyme Disease Association*; Diane Blanchard from *Time for Lyme*; and Liz Schmitz of the *Georgia Lyme Disease Association* each shared ideas on various projects they have been working on.



**CALDA President Phyllis Mervine with Georgia Lyme's Liz Schmitz.
We finally meet in person after almost 20 years of emailing!**

The exchange of information, ideas and concerns helped tremendously to strengthen ties and foster a cooperative and supportive atmosphere among the Lyme disease activists who attended from across the country. To meet so many hardworking, caring volunteers who are all seriously committed to working for better recognition and understanding of Lyme and tick-borne diseases, *and* who take the time to reach out to help others, was encouraging. There were so many great suggestions. Everyone there was willing to help each other. We walked away with a renewed sense of determination and a feeling of empowerment from the support we all felt from one another.

None of us can battle this disease alone. These activists understand the importance of standing together across this country and how, ***united, we can make a difference.***

Thanks for a great workshop, CALDA! We look forward to it again next year.