

What a Success! Highlights From ITP Conference 2008

The Platelet Disorder Support Association's ITP Conference 2008 was a resounding success with 254 attendees, one of the best turnouts to date.

The conference was held June 20-22, 2008 at the beautiful Westin Lombard Yorktown Center, about 20 minutes outside of Chicago. Kicking off the weekend was a patient mixer. New this year were two dinner seminars, which were filled to near capacity.

Programs included "Important Tips for Managing ITP" and "New Treatments for ITP" offered by ITP researchers, clinicians and physicians, geared to enhance understanding of ITP and how to cope with the disease. Saturday afternoon's speaker, Dr. Robert DeMaria, had the audience literally on their feet with his use of visual aids and props while giving tips on fighting fatigue. The basics of healthy eating with Meredith McCarty and stress reduction with Chris Smith were also part of the line-up. A number of ITP patients and parents of children with ITP shared emotional stories of their journey with ITP. The weekend's sessions ended with a panel discussion on the future of healthcare.

At an early morning breakfast workshop for facilitators of local support groups and those interested in starting a local support group, ideas were shared on how to find a meeting site, chose a speaker, meeting topics, advertising, public relations and building membership. Based on the feedback, expect more - groups to be popping up in the near future.

On Saturday night, PDSA's 10th anniversary party included an elaborate assortment of desserts, chocolate fountain, and anniversary cake. Comedian Rocky LaPorte had the audience in stitches - proving laughter is the best medicine! A tribute to PDSA Founder Joan Young included congratulatory letters from President George W. Bush and First Lady Laura Bush, Maryland Senators Ben Cardin and Barbara Mikulski, and Maryland Congressman Chris Van Hollen. But the highlight was a proclamation sent from the Lombard Village President declaring June 21, 2008 as "Joan Young Day".

Feedback from conference attendees was overwhelmingly positive, and we are looking forward to ITP Conference 2009. DVD/CD sets from this year's conference are now available on our [Web site here](#). Photos from the conference can be [found here](#).

PDSA thanks Amgen, GlaxoSmithKline and Baxter Healthcare for supporting our conference.

About ITP

ITP, immune (idiopathic) thrombocytopenic purpura, is an autoimmune disease. In autoimmune diseases, the body mounts an immune attack toward one or more seemingly normal organ systems. In ITP, platelets are the target. They are marked as foreign by the immune system and eliminated in the spleen and sometimes, the liver. In addition to increased platelet destruction, some people with ITP also have impaired platelet production. Without a sufficient number of platelets, a person with ITP is subject to spontaneous bleeding or bruising.

About PDSA

The Platelet Disorder Support Association is dedicated to enhancing the lives of people with immune thrombocytopenic purpura (ITP) and other platelet disorders through education, advocacy and research. For more information, please contact us at 1-87-PLATELET or visit our Web site at www.pdsa.org.

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