

**2 FEBRUARY 2006**

## ORACLE NEWSBRIEFS

# *LAM Patient Inspires Archer*

By MOLLY HOGIN '09

On January 9th, Amy Farber, the cousin of Sarah Rosenblum '08, spoke to the Archer community about living with the rare and fatal disease known as Lymphangioliomyomatosis (LAM).

Many students were touched by the candor of Farber's words.

"I really appreciated her being so informative about the disease, but at the same time being so honest about her personal experiences in her life that most people would be hesitant to talk about," said Stephanie Zimpler '09.

Farber grew up in Brentwood, where she attended Westlake when it was an all girls' school, and then continued on to UC Berkeley and received her PhD from Harvard in Anthropology.

In August of 2004, Farber married her husband, Michael, and was excited to start a family. However, in January of 2005, she began to experience back pains and decided to have her doctor run some tests in order to be sure that she was healthy before becoming pregnant. The doctors noticed a mass on Farber's kidney and cysts forming on her lungs--she was later diagnosed with LAM.

LAM is a fatal lung disease that only affects women during their childbearing years. Most women with LAM are misdiagnosed with Asthma or Bronchitis for many years, until doctors realize that they suffer from something much more serious.

Since being diagnosed, Farber now serves as an activist, helping to spread awareness about LAM and sponsoring a team of scientists in the search for a cure. Currently, there is no cure to stop the disease from progressing. Doctors have little information about the cause of the disease, but they do know that it is accelerated by estrogen. Worldwide it is thought that over 350,000 women have LAM. However, most of those afflicted haven't been accurately diagnosed.

"Few people with rare diseases have the resources that I do. So now, while I am still physically able, I commit myself to finding treatments for those diagnosed with rare diseases like LAM," said Farber at a recent conference sponsored by the National Organization for Rare Disorders.

Many of the girls at Archer were extremely moved by Farber's speech at Archer.

"The fact that she was so brave really touched me. I admired that she was so open to speaking to a large group of girls about her illness and didn't mind answering any questions," said Skye Optican '09.

Farber currently lives in Boston with her husband Michael, who is completing his medical residency. Together they have organized a monthly seminar at Harvard Medical School. Experts from Harvard, MIT, Tufts and Boston University are pooling knowledge to identify potential therapies, share data and determine research priorities. Their hope is to find a cure in the fastest time possible.



**Farber with cousin, Sarah Rosenblum '08**