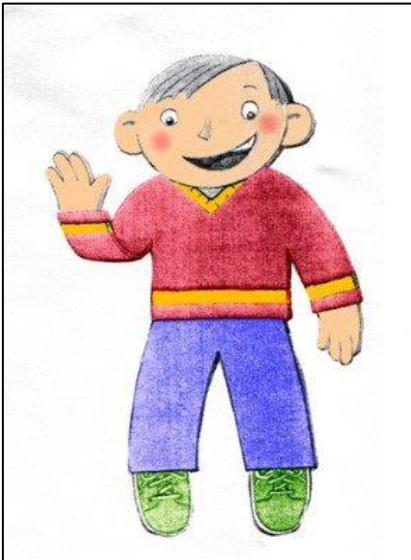


## The Flat Charlie Project

By Minnie Lambert

A book that my son, Andrew, and his class recently read has inspired me to kick off a very unique fundraising project to benefit the CHARGE Syndrome Foundation. Andrew's class read a book titled *Flat Stanley*. There is a project that goes along with the book that takes Flat Stanley on a journey. Students begin by reading the book and becoming acquainted with the story. Then they make paper "Flat Stanleys" and keep a journal for a few days, documenting the places and activities in which Flat Stanley is involved. The Flat Stanley and the journal are then mailed to other people who are asked to treat the figure as a visiting guest and add to his journal, then return them both after a period of time.



Now on to OUR project. With the help of many of you, I am hoping to launch The Flat Charlie Project. You may ask, "Who is Flat Charlie?" Flat Charlie is a little guy who is trying to get to the 11th International CHARGE Syndrome Conference in Scottsdale, Arizona, in July 2013 and is wanting to visit lots of families affected by CHARGE along the way! However, he needs your help. He is in search of host families that will take care of him and add a missing piece to him. Each family will also have to raise money to help send Flat Charlie on to his next destination as he CHARGEs around the world on his way to the 11th International CHARGE Syndrome Conference in Arizona.

The project will work as follows: Flat Charlie will be nothing more than a blank little paper boy that will leave our home first. Andrew and I will add a very special piece to him to help him on his journey. When he arrives at your home, it will be your family's responsibility to add a missing piece to him. It is important to get the children involved as much as possible. This is a way for Flat Charlie to belong to all the children. Be as creative as you want, but keep in mind each family will have to pay postage for his travels, so we need to keep him as light as possible.

The amount of time that you keep Flat Charlie will depend on how many families we can get involved. He will arrive with a list of his host families and a map of his journey. You will cross your family's name off of the list, mark your spot on the map, and send Flat Charlie and the map to his next destination. I hope to give each family as much time with him as possible. I will try to group

certain places together to cut down on travel time. The last leg of Flat Charlie's journey will send him back to my family, and we will be responsible for getting him to Arizona in 2013.

It will also be each family's responsibility to raise funds to "pay" for their leg of Flat Charlie's journey. We ask that each family try to raise at least \$100. How you raise that money is up to you. You can take up donations from others who want to sponsor your family as a host family, have a bake sale...the possibilities are endless. You can also begin raising money at anytime—not just while you have Flat Charlie.



A fundraising team has been set up with the CHARGE Syndrome Foundation called Team Flat Charlie. To become a member of Team Flat Charlie:

1. Go the CHARGE Syndrome Foundation's website (<http://www.chargesyndrome.org>).
2. Click on the "Click Here for CHARGE IT FOR CHARGE" link on the right-hand side of the homepage.
3. Click on the ">>more" link in the "Team Rank" box on the right-hand side of the page.
4. Click on the "Team Flat Charlie" link.
5. Then click on "Join Our Team."
6. Fill out the form.

The Foundation limits 50 members per team, but we will create as many teams as we need. We will all be individual members of the same team. All host families will have to join the team to be able to send their donations in to count toward the team's goal.

I have also made a group page on Facebook called ""The Flat Charlie Project" (<http://www.facebook.com/groups/300145663351626/>). You can go to this page and upload pictures of your family with Flat Charlie, make posts of what your family is doing with him, and let the next family know that he is on the way. Let's keep everyone informed as to what Flat Charlie is doing!

The goal of this project is to get the kids and their families involved in a fun exercise to help support the CHARGE Syndrome Foundation. The project is expected to launch in February, and the final destination will bring him back to our family in May 2013. He will be presented to the Foundation from all of the families involved at the 11th International CHARGE Syndrome

Conference in Scottsdale in July, along with a grand total of how much money he has collected along his journey. If you have any questions or concerns about the Project, you can reach me on my Facebook page (<http://www.facebook.com/minnieleel>).

I am excited to launch this project, and I hope that you will want to join my family in helping Flat Charlie reach the 11th International CHARGE Syndrome Conference in Arizona in 2013! Sign up and let's see just how we can all work together as one to help Flat Charlie CHARGE his way to Arizona!!!



Charlie's journey began in South Carolina this January with Minnie's son, Andrew. He then made his first trip to Michigan with Brayden Case and his family, then on to the Bowers family, and then on to Dr. Donna Martin, chair of the Scientific Advisory Board for the Foundation. He has had quite a stay in

Michigan before he heads out to his next location. He has been to speech therapy, early intervention, physiotherapy, the circus, and even met up with Dr. Tim Hartshorne on the slopes of Challenge Mountain, just to name a few things. His next stops include England, Canada, Australia, and many other areas of the U.S. before he reaches his final destination at the 11th International CHARGE Syndrome Conference in Scottsdale, Arizona, in July 2013, where he will be presented to the Foundation from all of the families involved, along with a grand total of how much money he has collected along his journey.

To read more about Flat Charlie's whereabouts, see pictures, and get updates, visit

<http://www.facebook.com/groups/300145663351626/>.

