



# *A Day to Remember*

SEPTEMBER 21, 2018



The Bulldog CHARGE Syndrome Research Laboratory's Day to Remember began long before September 21, 2018. With the longing to gather families who have children with CHARGE Syndrome for months now, the CHARGE Foundation's call for a Day to Remember was the final push Dr. Kasee Stratton, head of the Research Laboratory, needed. She enlisted the help of the Bulldog CHARGE Syndrome Research Lab members from Mississippi State University and they began to develop the acts of kindness they wanted to be involved in on September 21st, as well as put together a family gathering for those in the state.

The Bulldog CHARGE Syndrome Research Lab decided their main act of the day would be to raise awareness while being kind. The members bought 1,000 lollipops and placed a sticker with a fact about CHARGE syndrome and how to access further information about CHARGE on to each lollipop. The members then walked around Mississippi State University's campus and handed the lollipops out all day long. Throughout the day, the lollipops sparked numerous conversations with students on campus and the lab members were able to raise awareness for those with CHARGE to future doctors, physical therapists, occupational therapists, and others who are studying at Mississippi State with hopes they will better serve the CHARGE community as they go out into the work force. Before long, members of the lab were joined by Mississippi State University's ACCESS students, an inclusive transition program for individuals with intellectual disabilities. The Lab also tweeted facts about CHARGE Syndrome and their personal testimonies and research being done. One of the laboratory members stated she really enjoyed being able to raise awareness for something that means so much to her and

she especially loved when someone would take time out of their busy day to discover more about CHARGE Syndrome by exploring the Twitter account or having a conversation with a lab member.

After a long, hot, but exciting day of handing out lollipops, members of the Bulldog CHARGE Syndrome Research Laboratory made their way to the Hilton Garden Inn in Starkville, Mississippi. Here, they welcomed seven of the nine families who have children with CHARGE Syndrome from the state of Mississippi as well as their grandparents, aunts, uncles, and family friends. There was a total of fifty people in attendance. The night, which began with Dr. Kasee Stratton's opening remarks on all the resources available to families in the state, went off effortlessly. Families as well as the laboratory members were then able to gather and share a meal together. During this time, the ballroom buzzed as parents shared their stories with one another and spoke to the research laboratory members on topics they felt needed to be researched more. For nearly all of the families in attendance, it was the first time meeting another family in the CHARGE community. After dinner, members from the Bulldog CHARGE Lab began playing with the children to allow the adults more time to engage in fellowship. Everyone in attendance could feel the positive energy! Many of the families expressed how important events like these are. We were so honored to host the gathering and express a heartfelt thank you to the Mississippi Council on Developmental Disabilities for their sponsorship of the event. We look forward to this annual event and are kicking off plans for next year.

Overall, the Bulldog CHARGE Research Laboratory was able to take part in the CHARGE Foundation's Day to Remember by raising awareness and bringing families together. Through all the acts of kindness engaged in and posted on social media, members of the lab sincerely hope that those we have lost too soon in the CHARGE community have been remembered in an honorable way. You have moved us personally and professionally, you are loved, and you are remembered.