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Win Win Relationship for the Lookouts and Chattanoogaans with Brain Condition

The Chattanooga Hydrocephalus Association Community Network and the Chattanooga Lookouts have built a winning team over the last three years, raising much needed awareness for a brain condition that has no cure.

Chattanooga, Tennessee, July 27, 2017: Three years ago a mother tweeted Miss Tennessee 2013, Shelby Thompson when her 5-year-old daughter, Ema, was recovering from her 9th brain surgery. Chara McLaughen did not expect to receive a response. A relationship started between the two on social media that local Chattanoogaans followed, including Rich Mozingo, President of the Chattanooga Lookouts. Mozingo learned about the hardship of a life with hydrocephalus for the patients and families of the condition. He also realized that there was a considerable number of individuals living with the condition around the Chattanooga metropolitan area, and he had no idea.

“I realized that there was an opportunity for the team to do something really impactful for a group of people living with a neurological condition that has no cure,” stated Lookouts President Rich Mozingo. “It was a unique opportunity to give back to this community and help raise much needed awareness about a relatively unheard of condition.”

In the summer of 2014, the Lookouts contacted McLaughen and offered to host their annual WALK to End Hydrocephalus at AT&T Field. They were already committed to another site but hosted their most successful kickoff event for that year’s WALK at the ballpark. In 2015 the Chattanooga WALK to End Hydrocephalus officially moved to AT&T Field where the team continues to donate use of the park for the annual event. As the team got to know Ema, Chara’s now 8-year-old daughter, who has had 12 brain surgeries to manage her hydrocephalus, as well as the other individuals living with hydrocephalus in the area, the Lookouts have committed to helping raise awareness and

support the local community in raising funds that support research into better treatments, prevention, and a cure for the condition as well as the educational, support, and advocacy initiatives of the Hydrocephalus Association.

“Without the support of the Lookouts, our patients would still be suffering quietly. The Lookouts have helped us raise the profile of hydrocephalus within our community, reach more families that feel alone and need support and friendship, and raise more than \$100,000 over the last three years,” shared McLaughen, who has chaired the Chattanooga WALK to End Hydrocephalus for the last seven years and is the leader of the local Community Network, providing support to families and hosting educational and family fun events.

This is a win-win relationship now for both sides. Through this partnership, the Chattanooga Hydrocephalus Community has been able to gain new sponsors, funding and participants as a result of exposure through the ball club. The Lookouts have been able to recruit a new loyal fan base not only through the hydrocephalus community, but also through fans spurred to support the team they have seen commit to an at-risk group in their community. In 2015, the team hosted the first Hydrocephalus Awareness Night and guest Hayley Lewis, Miss Tennessee 2014, served as the Hydrocephalus Ambassador with young Ema. They two threw out the first pitch and then Lewis sang during the 7th inning stretch. They have continued to participate in a Hydrocephalus Awareness Night at the ballpark with Strike Out Hydrocephalus in 2016. This June, the Hydrocephalus Community Network teamed up with the Lookouts for their Star Wars Night. With cross-promotions and an auction of jerseys worn during the game, the stadium was sold out. The Chattanooga Hydrocephalus Community Network sold over 500 tickets and 400+ hydrocephalus and Lookouts branded t-shirts, making over \$6000 in sales.

“At the end of the day, it feels great to watch this community grow. We have also learned so much from them about the condition. We are glad that we can help get exposure for hydrocephalus so that one day these individuals can lead a life free of some of the challenges of the condition,” shared Mazingo. The relationship with the Lookouts has helped the Chattanooga Hydrocephalus community attract organizations who also want to help out including EPB, who hosts billboards and cable spots for the condition, the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, and a local City Councilwoman.

On July 28, 2017, the Lookouts will host their first Strikeout Hydrocephalus Play Day at AT&T Field. The day will include skill clinics with the players teaching the participants how to throw, bat, and field. The event is open to individuals living with hydrocephalus of all ages and physical abilities. It is the highlight of a relationship that has grown from support by the team's front office to meaningful interactions between the players and the community impacted by this challenging condition.

“When you or your child lives with a condition where the only treatment is brain surgery, and you never know when you're going to have to rush in for an emergency brain surgery...where you live with daily pain and have your friendships and family life impacted, these moments with the Lookouts allow our community to just have fun. The players inspire our community members,” stated McLaughen. “But, you know what? I think we inspire them, too.”

About Hydrocephalus

Hydrocephalus is a chronic, life-threatening condition that can only be treated surgically. The predominant treatment is the insertion of a small tube, called a shunt, into the brain to drain excess cerebrospinal fluid. Shunts save lives but frequently malfunction, become infected, or blocked. It is not uncommon for a person with hydrocephalus to have ten or more shunt-related brain surgeries during the course of their lifetime and some individuals have more than 100 surgical procedures. Each surgical procedure brings the risk of unknown long-term cognitive and health effects.

About the Hydrocephalus Association

Founded in 1983 by the parents of children with hydrocephalus, the Hydrocephalus Association is the nation's largest and most widely respected organization dedicated to hydrocephalus. More than 60 percent of HA's funding comes from individual donations, and approximately 35 percent comes from foundation and corporate grants. The Hydrocephalus Association's mission is to promote a cure for hydrocephalus and improve the lives of those affected by the condition. For more information, visit the Hydrocephalus Association #NoMoreBrainSurgeries website at <http://nomorebrainsurgeries.org> or call (888) 598-3789.