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Staff Member's Daughter Shares Special Moments with Actor Patrick Stewart

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Dawn Garrigus (front) with her mom, Kristy (left) and dad, Danny (right).

Danny Garrigus, an investigator for Georgia Southern University's Office of Public Safety, says he has always been a fan of Sir Patrick Stewart, most popular for his roles in "Star Trek: The Next Generation," but it wasn't until recently that he gained a newfound respect for the actor. In an encounter made possible by the Make-a-Wish Foundation, Stewart took time from his appearance at Atlanta's Dragon Con event to meet Garrigus' 11-year-old daughter Dawn.

She has mitochondrial disease, an inherited chronic illness that can be present at birth or can develop later in life. It causes debilitating physical, developmental and mental disabilities. About one in 2,000 people has the disease, which is progressive and there is no cure.

"Her face just lit up when she found out she was going to meet Patrick," Garrigus said.

"He was sitting at the table, and he got up and put his hands on her shoulders. They sat down and talked for what we figured, at the most, would be about a minute or two;

however, he sat there and talked to her one-on-one for 15 to 20 minutes. It was amazing."

Dawn told Patrick she was honored to meet him, to which he quickly replied, "No, I'm honored to meet you."

After taking several photos, Patrick autographed Dawn's action figures, and then they talked about her favorite characters on "Star Trek" and shared a few laughs. The photos have gone viral, and the Garrigus family says the experience is one they'll never forget.

Read more about Dawn's experience in the Statesboro Herald's feature story titled "A Statesboro Girl's Wish Comes True."