Page 1

Next Steps official newsletter of Safe Toddles Inc. March 2023 Issue 2

Green shamrock icon and Safe Toddles logo purple circle with white capital T with black dot just above it

Shop now, what’s new, news, projects

Three pictures of Damian – 4 year old Hispanic boy using his belt cane outside – independently walking on the side walk in two and the third photo he is practicing walking down a short flight of stairs with his mom behind him.

Highlight

Age 4 Years Damian – Walking Independently with belt cane

Damian was born blind due to optic nerve hypoplasia. Before using a belt cane, he only walked independently when he was inside. In order to walk inside he needed to keep his hand on a wall. Outside he relied on an adult to hold his hand.

Prior to the belt cane, he had push toys, but had not been able to use a long cane. His O&M specialist recommended that Damian start using the belt cane in order to walk more independently with safety.

His parents received a free belt cane by participating a trial and providing videos and feedback on its use. His parents say he is a fast learner. The videos show that his belt cane set him free to wander and learn. When he wears his belt cane he no longer holds onto a wall or a hand to walk independently. He improves his ability to use his belt cane with every step.

Link <http://safetoddles.org/obtaincane>

Page 2

Safe Toddles logo

What’s New?

Green shamrock icon

Welcome to our Newest Board Member

Headshot of Sylvia Stinson Perez

Chief Program Officer at American Foundation for the Blind | Speaker, Writer, Trainer | former Director of OIB-TAC and VSP National Research & Training Center on Blindness/Low Vision | former CEO of a nonprofit Lighthouse

Page 3

Safe Toddles logo

Custom Lengths

Green shamrock icon

Older, Taller Children Who are Blind or Mobility Visually Impaired Benefit from Belt Canes Too

Picture of a 7-year-old Caucasian girl exiting a building through a sliding glass door wearing her belt cane.

Judith

7 years old with CVI

Before using the belt cane, Judith had begun to walk independently at age 5 with supervision but was very unsteady. With the belt cane, she walked more steadily and improved her balance wearing her belt cane. Her O&M reported, "She did amazing! This was her first time using it. PT and OT noticed a difference in her right away. She was so much more talkative when walking too."

Brayden update

He is walking independently after 5 months of continuous belt cane use!

Brayden is blind due to Peters Anomaly. He began his belt cane journey at age 5 completely dependent on walls and people to walk. To watch his first independent steps and a summary of his story click on the watch link below! this is why early introduction to the belt cane matters. The earlier the better!

<https://www.tiktok.com/@safetoddles/video/7205428323785297198?lang=en>

picture of Brayden walking independently in the middle of the hallway at school wearing his belt cane –

for more information: 845-244-6600| 1491 Route 52, Suite 44, Fishkill, NY 12590

Page 4

Yellow partial circle

Safe Toddles logo, Soterix Medical logo black words blue wavelength icon

Three Icons two yellow flowers on green stems framing the bottom of the circle

Participate in our Belt Cane Trial!

Green shamrock

Free Belt Cane (a $200 Value) to Keep, plus a $50 gift card!

Trial the new mobility tool Sign up: safetoddles.org/requestfreecane

More information: 845-244-6600 or [info@safetoddles.org](mailto:info@safetoddles.org)

Picture of 21 month old boy who is blind walking down a short flight of stairs wearing his belt cane, one hand on the wall, the other on his belt cane,

21 months age appropriate walk down stairs TikTok @nanaofvinny

Safe Toddles and Soterix Medical are requesting you and your child (blind or visually impaired aged 12 to 60 months) trial the

pediatric smart belt cane for one minute and video it. For contributing to this research project you will receive

Free Belt Cane (a $200 Value) to Keep Plus $50 gift card!

Page 5

Video Story

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jjDBO_O6bBM&ab_channel=SafeToddles>

Lara - Age 7 Legally Blind

Lara is a hero - she was living and walking the best she could given the tools she was provided. Then she received the belt cane at age 7 and it has provided her with immediate improvement. Yet, anyone can see that at age 7, Lara does not walk with a relaxed, rhythmic gait or minimum of conscient effort like a most sighted 7-year-old girls. Like Brayden, with more time using the belt cane her independent walking and safety should continue to improve. This video's message is we have got to get the belt cane into the lives of toddlers before their first step, around 12 months of age.

Page 6

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March Awareness Days

Women’s history month

Safe Your Vision Month

March 8 International women’s day

March 12 Daylight Saving Time

Donate a Belt Cane on St. Patrick’s Day

We hit the road!!!

March 17-18

Safe Toddles and Soterix Medical conduct Smart Belt Cane research trials with teachers, families and students from the Early Learning Center at Maryland School for the Blind Nottingham, MD

March 23-24

Safe Toddles presents research on blind toddler walking and Belt Canes to blindness professionals at Georgia AER Conference Tybee Island, GA

March 26 - 28

Safe Toddles shares cutting-edge belt design improvements and research outcomes at VisionServe Alliance CEO Summit Austin, TX

safetoddles.org/donate

Page 7

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For essential Safe Toddles updates