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February 2023 | Issue No. 1

Next Steps

Official newsletter of Safe Toddles.

Free Belt Cane Projects

Smart Belt and Smart mobility app Soterix Medical, Inc.

Left Column

Funded by the US Department of Education, Soterix Medical Inc. has partnered with Safe Toddles, Inc. to develop a smart pediatric belt cane and Smart Mobility App. The project will test the Smart Belt’s ability to collect motion tracking and use machine learning to assess mobility skills of toddlers who are blind or mobility visually impaired. The Smart Mobility app is being designed to interpret the motion tracking data to suggest lessons from the Safe Toddles’ belt cane curriculum.

Agencies can apply to be a group testing site

Financial compensation will be provided.

Current and new users with children ages 12-54 months are also welcome to participate.

Right Column

To begin: Safetoddles.org/obtaincane

Participants will receive one free standard belt cane per child who is blind or mobility visually impaired and $50 gift.

Picture of Soterix Medical motion logger on the back of a belt cane belt being worn by a child.

Caption reads Motion logger on belt cane

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Free Belt Cane

Easy to Sign Up

Pediatric belt cane outcomes, Northern Illinois university

Left column.

Funded by the Lavelle Fund for the Blind, Northern Illinois University has partnered with Safe Toddles to evaluate the outcomes of wearing a pediatric belt cane. Participants who complete the entire 12-week study receive free pediatric belt canes for the child participant until they outgrown it.

New Users Only (age 14-60 months)

Child is blind or mobility visually impaired

Independently ambulatory or has the potential to walk independently

To begin: Safetoddles.org/obtaincane

New Users Can Do Both Studies!

​Join the Northern Illinois study first and then also join the Soterix Study!

Graphic of a heart-shaped box of chocolates

Right Column

Participants will receive free pediatric belt canes for the child participant until they outgrown it.

Picture of 21-month old boy who is blind walking independently down a flight of stairs wearing his belt cane.

Caption reads Vinny walks down the stairs

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Our New Board Members

Left Column

Constance Engelstad

Constance is President and owner of The Shaman Group, Inc., an human resources and organizational development consulting firm. She retired from her position as senior vice president, Administration at the Lighthouse for the Blind, Inc. She has provided services to the American Foundation for the Blind, Inc., National Industries for the Blind, and contributor to the book "Mission-Driven Organization".

Brent Weichers

Brent has extensive experience with the Toyota Production System and Danaher and a Lean and Six Sigma Sensei. A Master Black Belt in Toyota Production System, he is a change management expert with a keen ability to lead teams to achieve measurable and sustainable results. His specialties include leading Kaizen activities, develop and train Lean principles to all levels of an organization.

Cheryl Roe

Cheryl is a Social Enterprise Strategist, Leander, and a Disruptor. She has 25 years' nonprofit experience. She retired from her role as President for InterConnection, based in Seattle, WA. She was responsible for directing strategies that supported bottom lines and expanded program development and future growth. Her strengths are leadership and management skills.

June Allison

June is a mother of 6 children, one of whom has Cortical Visual Impairment and used the pediatric belt cane before transitioning to using his long cane. She is an Extended Content Special Education teacher. June is a graduate student at North Carolina Central University in Special Education for the Visually Impaired and Orientation and Mobility.

Right column

head shots of Constance Engelstad, Brent Weichers, Cheryl Roe and June Allison

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February

Awareness Days

Black History Month

Low Vision Awareness Month

February 1

National Freedom Day

White Cane Week

1st week of February

February 14

National Donor Day

Donate a belt cane

February 17

Random Act of Kindness Day

February 22

Chosen Family Day

February 28

Rare Disease Day

safetoddles.org/donatetoday

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Upcoming

On-line Webinar

The Science Behind Blind Toddlers Walking Well & Beyond Arm’s Reach” Safe Toddles Webinar Thursday, February 16th – 4 pm ET

Left Column

Hosted by Dr. Ambrose-Zaken, this webinar demonstrates the observable difference between achievement and non-achievement of Year One (12-24 months) essential motor milestone performance measures in learners born blind or mobility visually impaired.

She will define explain the ages at which each of the four methods of achieving balance for independent walking develop and how they correlate to current delayed motor milestones in learners born blind or mobility visually impaired.

The webinar share research on the importance of vision in one-year-olds to achieve balance for independent walking by 18 months.

To Register - double click below

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZIpceuqqzgjGtJXnmKI0yV6Hs2eSNl_dFlV?mc_cid=e80510ddd4&mc_eid=c3bea802f4>

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Don't Give Up!

Phoenix's Belt Cane Story

<https://www.tiktok.com/@safetoddles/video/7182808309517487406?lang=en>