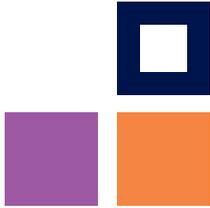
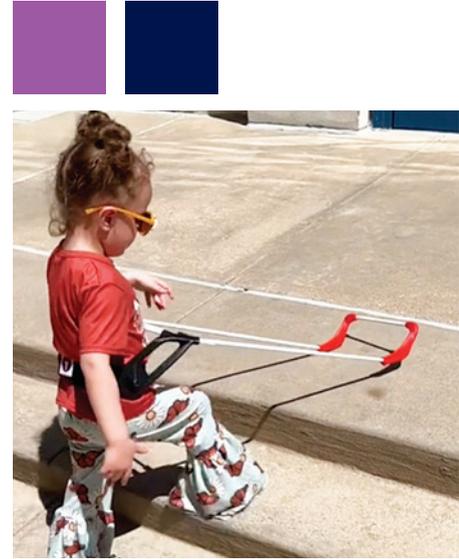




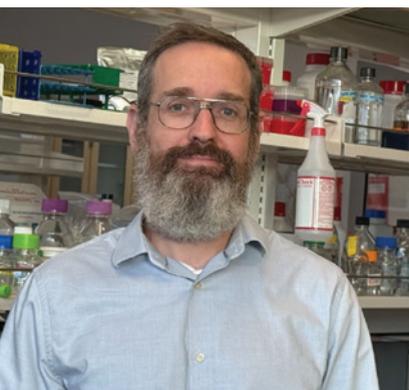
Safe Toddlers



Extending independence to the children and families who need it most

2025  
IMPACT REPORT

# LETTER From the Chairman



Dear Friends and Supporters,

I could not be more proud of what our organization has accomplished. What began with a vision that the status quo for blind and visually impaired children was not good enough– that safety and mobility were non-negotiable. Starting from an initial prototype of The Pediatric Belt Cane and initial human trials, we have developed into an organization reaching hundreds of children across every state and internationally. Today, Safe Toddles remains the only organization committed to the manufacture, clinical validation, and distribution of Pediatric Belt Canes – with the mission to ensure every blind and visually impaired child receives this medically necessary device.

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Safe Toddles has succeeded in ways that many once believed were impossible. The Pediatric Belt Cane has challenged centuries of assumptions about what young children with blindness can achieve. It has transformed early mobility by enabling children to explore their world safely, confidently, and independently — years earlier than anyone expected.

What makes our progress even more extraordinary is that our clinical research outcomes have been so compelling that the Pediatric Belt Cane has achieved another breakthrough: insurance coverage. This is a milestone the field of early childhood blindness once considered beyond reach. Yet, through rigorous science, steadfast commitment, and unwavering belief in the potential of every child, Safe Toddles has made it a reality.

In 2025, our focus sharpened on strengthening what matters most: continued innovation in design and manufacturing, expanding our educational curriculum, and deepening our outreach to families and professionals. These efforts have positioned Safe Toddles for an incredible 2026 — one where we will continue to scale impact, broaden access, and deepen the support that children and families deserve.

None of this would be possible without the generosity of our donors, the partnership of our foundations, and the dedication of our community. Your support has fueled innovation, enabled research, and helped build a future where mobility and independence are not limited by vision.

As we look ahead, we invite you to continue this journey with us — by staying connected to our work, sharing our mission with others, and, if you are able, considering an investment in Safe Toddles that helps ensure every child with a mobility visual impairment or blindness has the opportunity to walk, explore, and thrive.

Together, we can sustain this progress, strengthen systems, and above all else extend independence to the children and families who need it most. Thank you for believing in this mission and for standing with Safe Toddles as we continue to transform what is possible for blind and visually impaired children.

With gratitude,  
**Professor Marom Bikson**  
*Chairman of the Board*  
Safe Toddles, Inc.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# 2025: Growth, Innovation, and a Turning Point for Early Mobility



*(Left) Charna is learning that the Belt Cane is a mobility tool and her mini-stroller is a fun toy. (Center) 3-year-old Charna gets orientation assistance from her older sister; her Belt Cane mobility tool is for confidence in her next step. (Right) 1-year-old Ford gains balance, protection and information through Belt Cane frame.*



Inside this Impact Report for 2025, we share the fruits of our labors made possible through the generosity of **Philanthropists like Joy and Boysie Bollinger** (at left) **and others who believe in our unique mission**. The result of their support is found in the pages that follow. We were able to significantly improve marketing which led to greater global awareness that the Belt Cane balance advantage is a walking solution for blind kids. Support enabling our research, led to insurance coverage (in addition to IDEA funds). The Bollingers, a diverse mix of individual donors, foundation grants, corporate partners, and Pediatric Belt Cane sales enabled us to strengthen core operations and expand our impact while also distributing over 300 Belt Canes worldwide.

This year corporate partners who supported Safe Toddles' general operations were **Foresight Augmented Reality** and **Hear2There, Ovintiv**, and **Stephen E. Ambrose Historical Tours**. Foundational support for general operations was provided by the **Sarah K. de Coizart Article TENTH Perpetual Charitable Trust**, the **William G. and Helen C. Hoffman Foundation**, and the **Frank J. Antun Foundation**, helping ensure organizational stability during a period of transition.

Designated funding from **Nicholas B. Ottaway** and the **Delta Gamma Foundation** supported the development of Safe Toddles' innovative Blind Baby Safe Mobility Curriculum, expanding education and best practices for families and professionals.

Additional support from **The FS Foundation, Soterix Medical, Inc,** and **The Gibney Family Foundation** advanced our Belt Cane research and development, enabling manufacturing improvements, ergonomic enhancements, and preparation for future product iterations. In 2025, in partnership with Soterix Medical, Inc. and the FS Foundation, Safe Toddles fully transitioned from 3D-printed components to durable, injection-molded plastic parts in its Pediatric Belt Canes, significantly improving consistency, longevity, and readiness for broader clinical and educational use.

This year's highlights included a look back at white cane history with West Point Cadet Claire Schleck's amazing presentation to the Cogan Ophthalmic History Society, entitled *Revisiting the Role of the White Cane for Congenitally Blind Children*. This event was attended by Ophthalmologists and led to an invitation to submit a chapter on the Revised History of the Long Cane, due to be published in 2026.

Safe Toddles research was once again awarded a "Best Oral Presentation" — this time by the VISION 2025 conference judges in Florence Italy.

Safe Toddles research was once again awarded a "Best Oral Presentation" this time by the VISION 2025 conference judges in Florence Italy.

Safe Toddlers houses the largest video collection of blind children’s motor skills, boasting hundreds of hours of footage of several thousand children. Dr. Grace Ambrose-Zaken and Pediatric Ophthalmologist General Robert Enzenauer with Medical Device engineer and distinguished Professor Marom Bikson, medical residents Paul Chong and Andrew Brown, engineering doctoral student Catarina Ferraz, and our high school intern Ishani Bakshi (recently accepted to Princeton) have been conducting ground-breaking research demonstrating that children with an MVI/B significantly increased both their physical activity and gait, pace and posture when wearing the Pediatric Belt Cane.

Our success has reshaped how pediatric mobility devices are understood, prescribed, and integrated into daily life.

## 2025 - Pivotal Turning Point for Safe Toddlers.

In June, it became clear that raising enough philanthropic support to fully subsidize mobility devices for all families would become increasingly difficult. To ensure organizational sustainability—and to keep this vital work moving forward on behalf of the most vulnerable population,

MVI/B babies—Safe Toddlers made the difficult but necessary decision to transition away from fully subsidizing devices, in the short term.

At the same time, the broader service and funding landscape has begun to align with Safe Toddlers’ long-standing advocacy. Physical therapists, children’s hospitals, and other practitioners increasingly secured funding for the Pediatric Belt Cane through insurance reimbursement. These efforts complemented a growing number of Early Intervention Professionals (Orientation and Mobility specialists and Teachers of Learners with Visual Impairments) purchasing this Assistive Mobility Device through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

With ongoing support from its user community, Safe Toddlers has grown into this evolving landscape. Our nonprofit organization remains deeply committed to providing one-on-one and group guidance to families and professionals seeking to ensure MVI/B babies have access to safe, all-day mobility through easy-to-use, developmentally appropriate mobility tools, while continuing to lead a broader shift in how early mobility for children with an MVI/B is understood and supported.



*Left: Phoebe, age 7, wearing a Belt Cane she walks independently in school hallways.*

*Right: 1-year-old Marcu is blind, that's why touch feedback (holding on to a cabinet or wearing a Belt Cane) is critical to his balance.*

# Vision Statement

Safe Toddles is working to change the narrative about MVI/B walking: from hesitation and delay to confidence and continuous movement. Our vision is a future in which MVI/B babies are expected to move independently throughout their day, safely and naturally, supported by wearable white canes designed for their bodies, environments, and lives. With sustained partnership and investment, we are building a world where early mobility is recognized as essential and MVI/B children grow up feeling balanced, protected and informed as they make their way through the world.

## Safe Toddles Evolution & Pipeline

### Where We Started

- Introduced an innovative wearable mobility device for toddlers with mobility visual impairment or blindness
- Challenged long-standing assumptions about when and how MVI/B children “should” begin using mobility tools

### What We Know Now

- Research and real-world use confirm that mobility tools are medically and educationally necessary for children who cannot use vision to avoid collisions
- Early, continuous access supports safer movement, confidence, and development

### Where We Are Today

- Ongoing ergonomic redesign of Belt Canes for older children, informed by clinicians, engineers, and users
- Growing adoption through insurance, IDEA funding, hospitals, and therapy settings

### What's Next

- Expansion of mobility tool design into MVI/B sport and recreation
- Tools that support movement not only for safety, but for play, fitness, and participation
- Continued collaboration with families and professionals to ensure designs grow with the child

### The Long-Term Goal

- Make wearable mobility tools a natural, everyday part of MVI/B childhood—from first steps through active, independent lives.



## STRENGTHENING EVERY STEP

# Transitioning to Injection-Molded Pediatric Belt Cane Parts

In 2025, Safe Toddles reached a critical manufacturing milestone that will shape the future of early mobility for blind and visually impaired children: the successful transition from 3D-printed plastic parts to durable injection-molded components for our Pediatric Belt Canes.

This achievement was made possible through the generous support of the FS Foundation and the expert collaboration of our medical device engineering partners at Soterix Medical. Together, we modernized our production process to ensure greater strength, safety, reliability, and scalability so more children can walk, explore, and learn with confidence.

### Why This Transition Mattered

For years, 3D printing allowed Safe Toddles to innovate quickly and customize parts for individual children. However, as demand grew nationwide and globally, limitations became clear. Some 3D-printed parts varied in strength and durability and, in extreme conditions such as hot cars, could soften or melt posing challenges for families who rely on the Pediatric Belt Cane for daily use.

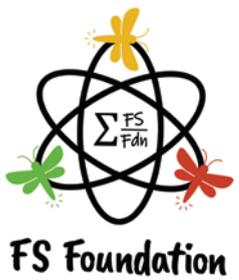
Injection molding solved these problems. The new parts are uniform, significantly stronger, and heat resistant, ensuring consistent performance in real-world environments. This upgrade directly improves safety, longevity, and caregiver confidence without compromising the custom fit each child needs.

### A Major Production Leap

In 2025, Safe Toddles received its first large shipment of injection-molded parts: enough to fabricate 1,000 Pediatric Belt Canes. This delivery marked the completion of a months-long engineering and manufacturing process and positioned Safe Toddles to meet increasing demand across all 50 U.S. states and 46 countries.

With injection molded parts, the Pediatric Belt Cane remains a custom-made medical device. Each cane frame is still hand-crafted, and each structured belt is hand sewn at Safe Toddles' headquarters in Fishkill, New York. This hybrid approach of precision manufacturing combined with skilled craftsmanship ensures every device fits the child safely and correctly.

**Thank you to the FS Foundation and Soterix Medical for helping make this milestone possible.**



## EXPANDING ACCESS NATIONWIDE

# Safe Toddles Partners with National Seating & Mobility

In 2025, Safe Toddles reached a major milestone by entering into a partnership with National Seating & Mobility (NSM), the largest Durable Medical Equipment (DME) supplier in the United States. This partnership represents a significant step forward in Safe Toddles' ability to deliver Pediatric Belt Canes to children with a mobility visual impairment or blindness (MVI/B), equitably, efficiently, and at scale.

Through NSM, the Pediatric Belt Cane can now be processed and covered by most insurance plans, removing one of the most persistent barriers families face when seeking medically necessary mobility equipment. For many families, insurance coverage is the difference between delayed access and timely intervention during a critical window of development.

Through NSM, the Pediatric Belt Cane can now be processed and covered by most insurance plans ...

## Why This Partnership Matters

The Pediatric Belt Cane serves a previously untapped pediatric mobility market, MVI/B toddlers and young children who can physically move but cannot visually avoid obstacles. Historically, available devices have not met their needs. Gait trainers, push toys, rectangular canes, and traditional long white canes were never designed to support early, independent walking for children with an MVI/B.

As a result, too many MVI/B children acquire preventable walking and moving delays.

The Pediatric Belt Cane fills this long-standing gap. Designed to be worn at the waist, it allows the cane to consistently lead the body, protecting the child from collisions while supporting a natural gait during activities of daily living. Published research now documents significant improvements in walking outcomes for children who wear the Pediatric Belt Cane—establishing it as both clinically effective and medically necessary.

### A Scalable Path to Growth

Partnering with NSM strengthens Safe Toddles' infrastructure at a pivotal moment of growth. As demand increases nationally, working with an established DME provider ensures:

- Reliable insurance processing and reimbursement
- Streamlined distribution across all 50 states
- Greater awareness among clinicians and care teams

This partnership also enables Safe Toddles to focus resources on continued innovation, training, and research, while ensuring families receive timely access to the device.

At the same time, Safe Toddles remains open to partnerships with additional DME providers that serve specific regions or populations. Expanding the network of DME partners will further strengthen access and reduce geographic disparities in care.

### A Turning Point for Pediatric Blind Mobility

This partnership marks a turning point, not only for Safe Toddles, but for the field of pediatric mobility. For the first time, a device designed specifically to address walking delays in children with MVI/B is positioned within the mainstream medical equipment system.

By combining evidence-based design with national insurance coverage, Safe Toddles and National Seating & Mobility are helping ensure that blind children no longer have to wait to walk independently. Together, we are building a future where early mobility is recognized, supported, and accessible, right when it matters most.



LET'S GET *moving*

## EXPANDING ACCESS THROUGH ERGONOMIC INNOVATION

# The Big Kid Belt Cane Project

With support from The Gibney Family Foundation, Safe Toddlers launched a targeted research and development project to improve the Big Kid Belt Cane. The goal of this project is to ensure that older children with a mobility visual impairment or blindness (MVI/B) have access to mobility tools that fit their bodies, support independence, and withstand real-world use.

### Big Kid Belt Cane Improvements

Safe Toddlers' standard Pediatric Belt Cane has demonstrated measurable gains in walking, safety, and confidence for children with a mobility visual impairment or blindness. Even when worn with a snug fit, MVI/B children including those with a motor and/or intellectual impairment consistently showed improved gait patterns, increased willingness to ambulate, and greater independence, affirming the effectiveness of the core design.

Clinical observation and caregiver feedback has revealed an important opportunity for refinement. While the Pediatric Belt Cane continued to support positive mobility outcomes, many older children need a roomier, more adjustable fit that better accommodates changes in body size, strength, and movement patterns. Observers noted that increased space and flexibility could further enhance comfort, endurance, and long-term use without compromising safety or performance.

This project also recognizes the unique needs of high school women, whose bodies experience hormonal changes that result in monthly fluctuations in waist measurements compared to prepubescent girls. These changes can affect fit and comfort over short periods of time, underscoring the importance of greater adjustability in belt length and structure to ensure consistent, reliable mobility support.

The Big Kid Belt Cane project builds directly on the proven success of the Pediatric Belt Cane, extending its benefits through thoughtful ergonomic enhancements that honor MVI/B children's growth, development, and individuality.

### **Ergonomic Handle Design and Durability**

Working with mechanical engineers Lucca Goldberg and Michael McLean, Safe Toddles is developing and testing new handle designs using CAD modeling and real-world trials. Evaluation benchmarks include:

- Fewer than 5% returns or replacements in the first year
- Usability feedback from prototype testing
- Long-term user satisfaction measured through interviews, emails, videos, and return rates

### **Expanding Access to Underserved Children**

Sales and outreach data will be used to track growth in the number of children served within the Big Kid size range, with particular attention to children with additional physical or intellectual disabilities, a group historically underserved by mobility tools.

### **Measuring Mobility and Independence Outcomes**

Prioritizing functional outcomes for children and families, video analysis and caregiver interviews will assess changes in safety, independent mobility, and skill acquisition, including:

- Improved obstacle detection and fall prevention
- Increased willingness to ambulate and engage in physical activity
- Enhanced confidence and consistency in daily mobility

The goal is to demonstrate improved mobility skills with regular use of the Big Kid Belt Cane. Caregiver surveys will also assess changes in quality of life and caregiver burden before and after implementation.

### **Project Timeline**

#### **October 2025–January 2026:**

Research and outreach to families and professionals to identify size ranges and collect measurements for older children seeking Belt Canes

#### **January–March 2026:**

Engineering phase begins, with Goldberg and McLean overseeing handle design, belt length adjustments, and component placement templates

#### **Spring–Summer 2026:**

Construction, assembly, and testing of new handles and belt designs, continuing until production-ready.

This project reflects Safe Toddles' commitment to meeting children where they are developmentally, ensuring that growth does not become a barrier to independence. With The Gibney Family Foundation's support, Safe Toddles is strengthening the pathway from early mobility to lifelong confidence—one carefully designed step at a time.



# Blind Baby Safe Mobility

Every Day Activities Wearing a Pediatric Belt Cane  
Grace Ambrose-Zaken, Ed.D., COMS



**Training the people who change lives.**

*Caregivers and professionals engage with the Blind Baby Safe Mobility Curriculum online.*

## Launching the Blind Baby Safe Mobility Curriculum

### A Two-Year Partnership Driving Early Independence

In 2025, Safe Toddles reached a pivotal milestone with the launch of the **Blind Baby Safe Mobility Curriculum**, a comprehensive, evidence-based online training program designed to ensure blind and visually impaired toddlers can move safely, confidently, and independently wearing a Pediatric Belt Cane.

This achievement reflects two years of sustained investment (2024–2025) from two extraordinary partners: the Nicholas B. Ottaway Foundation, with a total investment of \$25,000, and the Delta Gamma Foundation, with \$16,000 in Service for Sight funding. Together, these funders supported curriculum development, instructional design, professional certification infrastructure, and the launch of Safe Toddles' digital learning platform, now live at: [safetoddles.podia.com](https://safetoddles.podia.com)

## A Phased Curriculum Launch

The Blind Baby Safe Mobility Curriculum delivers eight instructional units in carefully phased releases to ensure quality, accessibility, and incorporation of user feedback. Four units are currently available, with the remaining four covering residential mobility, community environments, recreation and leisure, and social and gross motor play, scheduled for release in 2026.

### To ensure broad access, Safe Toddles offers two foundational units at no cost:

- Assessment and Evaluation of Children with a Visual Impairment
- Introducing the Child to the Pediatric Belt Cane

### Two additional advanced units are available now for nominal fees, supporting sustainability while remaining accessible to families and professionals:

- Teaching Children with an MVI/B Motor Skills Wearing a Pediatric Belt Cane
- Orientation & Mobility for Children with an MVI/B and Additional Disabilities Using the Pediatric Belt Cane



### Early independence begins with safe movement.

*A blind toddler explores a store confidently while wearing a Pediatric Belt Cane.*



### **Real children. Real outcomes.**

*Curriculum videos feature authentic demonstrations by toddlers with MVI/B learning mobility skills.*

## **Building a Global Curriculum**

With support from the Nicholas B. Ottaway Foundation and the Delta Gamma Foundation support, Safe Toddles developed and refined the core Blind Baby Safe Mobility Program using data-driven instructional design. The curriculum currently includes 84 Chapters, 60 edited instructional videos, and more than 100 unedited demonstration clips featuring real children with a mobility visual impairment or blindness (MVI/B) engaging in activities of daily living wearing their Pediatric Belt Canes. The BBSM Curriculum has become the most-viewed playlist on the Safe Toddles YouTube channel, accounting for 60% of all views, with subscribers across the United States, United Kingdom, Germany, Canada, India, and Australia. Expanding Access and Professional Pathways

These resources have directly benefited hundreds of toddlers and young children with visual impairments, as more than 300 caregivers, educators, and rehabilitation professionals have already accessed these expanded training materials. Platform improvements now support structured learning, progress tracking, and knowledge assessments, ensuring learners understand safe mobility practices before applying them with children. Key curriculum elements are aligned with ACVREP standards, establishing the foundation for the BBSM CEU offerings coming later this year.

## A Shared Vision, Realized

The combined two-year support of the Nicholas B. Ottaway Foundation and the Delta Gamma Foundation transformed research and practice into a scalable educational system that balances immediate access with long-term growth. With four units live and four more launching in 2026, Safe Toddles is steadily expanding a global training ecosystem that empowers caregivers and professionals to support blind toddlers from their very first steps.



### **Mobility at home, at play, and in the community.**

*Pediatric Belt Cane instruction supports everyday environments and routines.*

## BOARD LEADERSHIP

# Advancing the National Conversation on Mobility

**“Access to the right mobility tools changes developmental outcomes.”**

— Dr. Mary Beth Calhoon

In October 2025, Safe Toddles Board Member Dr. Marybeth Calhoon represented the Pediatric Belt Cane during *White Cane Conversations: A Virtual Event Celebrating Independence, Innovation & Inclusion*, hosted by disability advocate and author Kristin Smedley.

The virtual event convened leading voices from the blind and low vision community to examine how mobility tools—from the long white cane to emerging innovations—support independence, confidence, and inclusion across the lifespan. Dr. Calhoon’s participation centered on a critical and often overlooked need: safe, independent mobility for blind children in the earliest years of walking.

Drawing on her background in education and disability advocacy, Dr. Calhoon highlighted how the Pediatric Belt Cane addresses a long-standing gap in pediatric mobility by providing a medically necessary device designed specifically for toddlers and young children who cannot visually avoid obstacles. Her remarks reinforced Safe Toddles’ core belief that children with a mobility visual impairment or blindness should not be asked to wait years to begin independent movement.

Hosted by Kristin Smedley of Thriving Blind, the discussion emphasized that independence is built through access to the right tools at the right time—not through one-size-fits-all solutions. The inclusion of the Pediatric Belt Cane alongside adult mobility innovations underscored the importance of continuity in mobility supports from early childhood through adulthood.



### **Watch the White Cane Conversations replay:**

<https://mkt.kristinsmedley.com/canereplay>

*Dr. Calhoon’s participation reflects Safe Toddles’ commitment to leadership beyond service delivery—helping shape national dialogue, elevate pediatric mobility, and ensure blind children are fully represented in conversations about independence.*

## West Point Cadet Brings Pediatric Belt Cane History to the National Stage



In 2025, U.S. Military Academy Cadet Mary Claire Schleck, of West Point, delivered a presentation to the Cogan Ophthalmological History Society, placing the Pediatric Belt Cane within the long arc of white cane history. Her work, distilled more than two centuries of mobility history into a precise 15-minute presentation titled “Revisiting the Role of the White Cane for Congenitally Blind Children.” Co-authored with Dr. Robert Enzenauer, and Dr. Grace Ambrose-Zaken, it underscores the device’s significance in advancing early mobility and has led to a book chapter for an upcoming book entitled *The History of the Retina* by Christopher T. Leffler, M.D.

Safe Toddles extends deep gratitude to Dr. Enzenauer for his mentorship, encouraging emerging scholars, including the West Point cadets who are on Safe Toddles Research and Publications Committee.

For Safe Toddles, this moment represents more than an academic milestone. It reflects the maturation of a field, the power of interdisciplinary collaboration, and growing recognition that early mobility is essential—not optional. To see the Pediatric Belt Cane examined with historical rigor before one of the nation’s most respected ophthalmological societies affirms its place in the evolving story of independent travel for blind children.



**The full presentation is available here:**  
[youtube.com/watch?v=Ygmo8e3KbQY](https://youtube.com/watch?v=Ygmo8e3KbQY)

# Ensuring Long-Term Access to Medically Necessary Mobility Tools

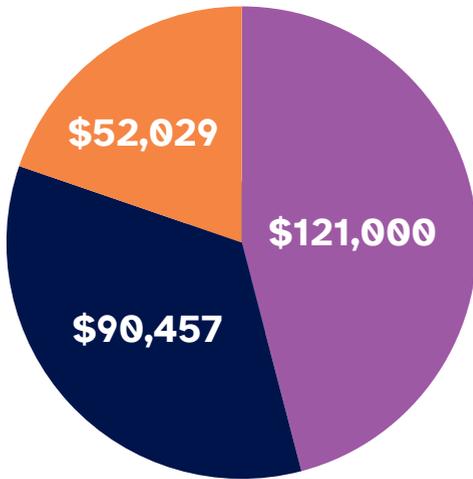
Since our formation, Safe Toddlers has been dedicated to improving early mobility outcomes for toddlers with a mobility visual impairment or blindness (MVI/B). After our initial research, development and testing of the innovative Pediatric Belt Cane, we became a nonprofit organization in 2018. With the support of donors and funders, we have provided 2630 belt canes to families free of charge or at reduced cost, while continuing to test, refine, and bring this medically necessary mobility device to a broader market.

With the support of donors and funders, we have provided 2630 belt canes to families free of charge or at reduced cost ...

With growing demand, improved manufacturing and quality, and increased client support, we recognized that this subsidy-based model alone was not sustainable in the long-term. Keeping our commitment to responsible stewardship, equitable access, and lasting impact for blind children and their families, Safe Toddlers is focused on securing insurance reimbursement for the Pediatric Belt Cane and supporting educational facilities in accessing federal education funding. As a result, we paused broad-based free and reduced Belt Canes, while prioritizing consistent, long-term access for families.

## **This shift positions Safe Toddlers to:**

- Ensure access to Pediatric Belt Canes for children
- with a mobility visual impairment or blindness
- Invest in innovation, durability, and manufacturing improvements, expanding usability and fit for wider age ranges, including children, teens, young adults with visual, cognitive and other disabilities
- Expand professional training and education for families, caregivers, and service providers
- Strengthen the long term sustainability of both the organization and the mobility tools relied upon by people with blindness.



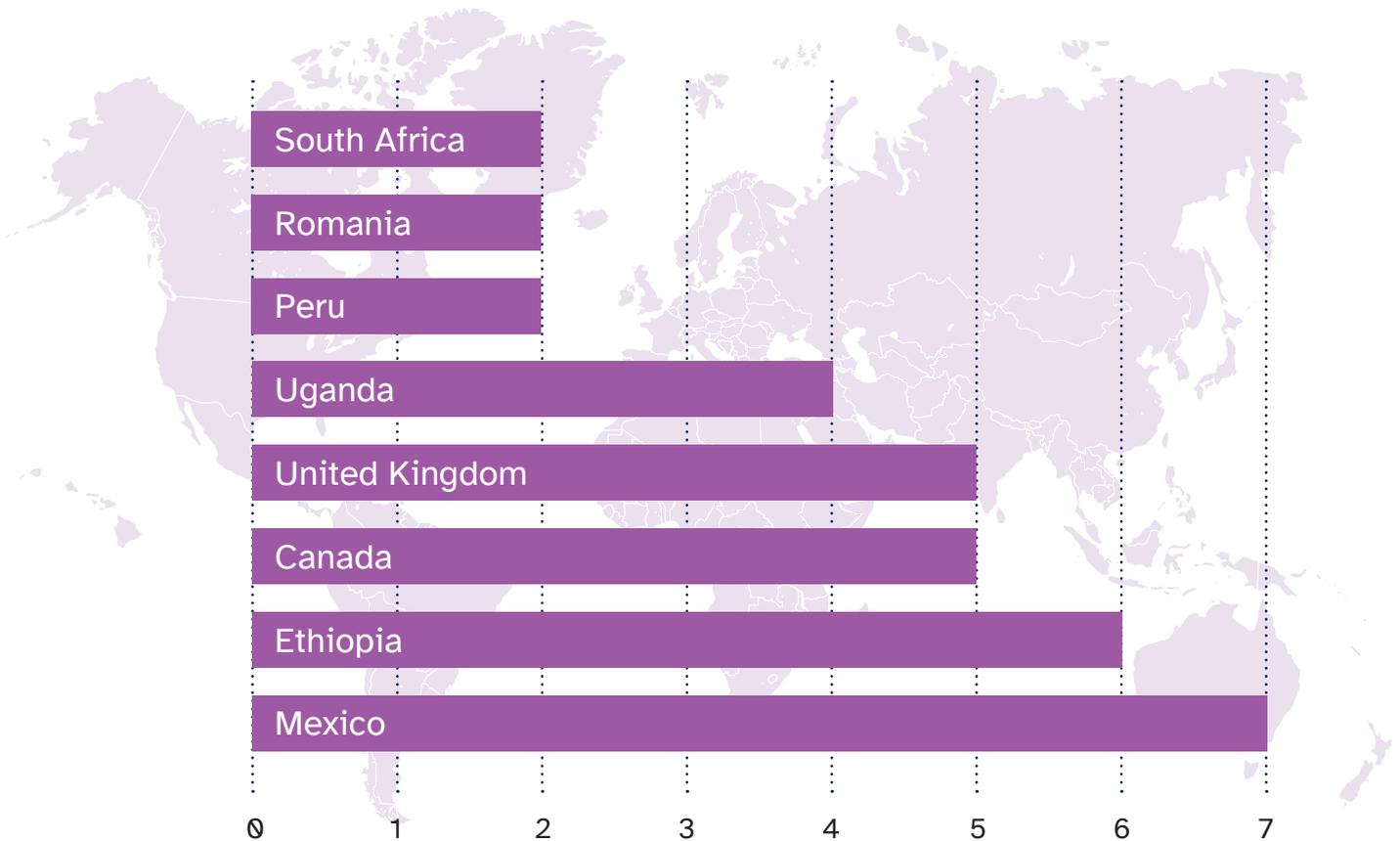
### Safe Toddles 2025 Revenue by Source

- Corporate Donations
- Belt Cane Sales
- Foundation Grants

### 302 Belt Canes shipped in 2025

269 Belt Canes shipped within the US / 33 Belt Canes shipped outside US

### Number of Belt Canes shipped to countries outside the USA in 2025



# Elevating Pediatric Mobility in National Innovation Conversations

In 2025, Safe Toddles' work to advance early mobility for blind and visually impaired children was featured on the Ophthalmology Innovation Summit (OIS) Podcast, where Safe Toddles President and CEO Grace Ambrose-Zaken, Ed.D., spoke with host Rob Rothman about *Creating an Easier-to-Navigate World for Children*.

The episode highlighted the Pediatric Belt Cane. Dr. Ambrose-Zaken discussed the evolution of the device, its advantages over traditional handheld canes, and the importance of early mobility training in supporting confidence, coordination, and freedom.



## Listen to the full OIS Podcast episode:



[https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/ois-podcast-ophthalmology-leading-podcast/id904406267?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/ois-podcast-ophthalmology-leading-podcast/id904406267?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

**"We need empathy and understanding for the visually impaired—especially for children who've been historically underserved."**

— Grace Ambrose-Zaken, Ph.D.

### Why This Conversation Matters

The OIS Podcast expanded Safe Toddles' reach into clinical and innovation communities, enhancing awareness about the unique mobility needs of children with MVI/B and the evidence-based role of the Pediatric Belt Cane. The discussion also illuminated persistent challenges in access, funding, and professional training—reinforcing Safe Toddles' strategic priorities.

By elevating this conversation on a respected ophthalmology platform, Safe Toddles continues to position early mobility as an essential component of vision care and childhood development.

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### FEATURED ON

OIS Podcast (Nov 2025):

Creating an Easier-to-Navigate World for Children

### HOSTED BY:

Rob Rothman, OIS Podcast

### GUEST:

Grace Ambrose-Zaken, Ph.D.,  
Safe Toddles President & CEO

## MANY CHILDREN. ONE PURPOSE.

# Expanding Mobility for Every Body.

Children with a mobility visual impairment or blindness are not a single population. They arrive with different diagnoses, developmental profiles, family circumstances, and mobility goals. What unites them is the need for early, safe access to movement and tools that meet them where they are.

In 2025, the Pediatric Belt Cane continued to support children across a wide range of abilities and lived experiences. From children with complex medical needs to toddlers just learning to walk, the Belt Cane is helping families replace uncertainty with confidence and possibility.

The following four children reflect the breadth of impact made possible when mobility tools are designed for real lives—not one-size-fits-all assumptions.



**Jazin, Age 6**  
*Cerebral Palsy and  
Visual Impairment*

Living with cerebral palsy and a mobility visual impairment, Jazin (photo at left) had difficulty using a long cane because he needed his hands for balance. At age 3, he began by pairing his Belt cane with his gait trainer and at age 6 he transitioned to using a wheelchair. The Pediatric Belt Cane can be used hands free allowing him to safely explore his environment, detect obstacles, and develop greater body awareness while moving about.

His mother describes his progress as “phenomenal.” The Belt Cane gives Jazin confidence in his ability to detect surface changes in time to locate the clear path, and through this advanced information increase his independence, an outcome not previously achieved when the long cane was his only option.

Jazin’s story demonstrates that mobility tools can pair well together.



Jazin's Journey: How the Pediatric Belt Cane Makes Independence Possible  
[youtube.com/watch?v=hF1qRO0cG1U](https://youtube.com/watch?v=hF1qRO0cG1U)



### **Oaklyn, Age 1**

*Retinopathy of Prematurity (ROP)*

Oaklyn’s father describes the Pediatric Belt Cane as a “game changer” for their family. Diagnosed with retinopathy of prematurity, Oaklyn began using the Belt Cane at just one year old.

Today, she walks alongside her twin sister, side by side rather than behind or apart. Early access to hands-free mobility has allowed Oaklyn to develop walking skills naturally, within her family routines, and on the same timeline as her sibling. Oaklyn’s story underscores the importance of early intervention and age-appropriate design.

▶ [youtube.com/watch?v=I3T83ASmxXk](https://youtube.com/watch?v=I3T83ASmxXk)



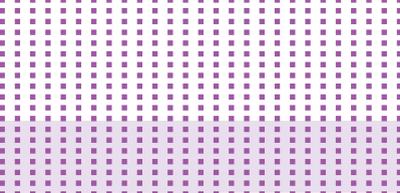
### **Emmatielis (Emma), Age 3**

*Blindness with Multiple Disabilities*

Emma brings joy everywhere she goes—and the Pediatric Belt Cane gives her the security to explore the world on her terms. Blind and living with multiple disabilities, Emma uses the Belt Cane to stand, walk, and move with confidence.

Her mother shares: “She can stand. She can walk. She feels secure. And you can see it in her smile.” Emma’s story reminds us that mobility is not only about distance or speed—it is about confidence, emotional safety, and engagement. When children feel secure, their curiosity and personality shine through.

▶ [youtube.com/watch?v=933EWls8nrE](https://youtube.com/watch?v=933EWls8nrE)



## **Oliver, Age 4**

### *Low Syndrome and Visual Impairment*

At four years old, Oliver's story reflects the long-term impact of early mobility access. Diagnosed with Lowe Syndrome and a mobility visual impairment, Oliver's family doctor said that independent walking might never be possible. He began using the Pediatric Belt Cane one and a half years ago.

The transformation since then has been extraordinary. Oliver now walks with confidence, developing skills that once seemed out of reach. Oliver's story reminds us to challenge outdated assumptions about what children with complex diagnoses can achieve when provided with the right tools.



[youtube.com/watch?v=uxfu0M3bpwY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uxfu0M3bpwY)

## **One Tool. Many Pathways.**

These stories share a common truth: access to safe, early movement changes developmental trajectories.

The Pediatric Belt Cane is not a replacement for therapy, families, or professional guidance. It is a tool that integrates into daily life, supporting children as they walk, explore, learn, and grow in ways that are meaningful to them.

In 2025, Safe Toddles remained committed to serving children across the full spectrum of mobility visual impairment and blindness, ensuring that no child is excluded because their needs are complex, uncommon, or misunderstood.

**Because when mobility is accessible, possibility expands.**

# WHY I JOINED Safe Toddlers' Board



## **Adrienne Rosenfeld**

I serve on this board because I believe in our mission and I believe in your commitment to enhancing the lives of disabled children.



## **Vivien Simpson**

The reason I serve on Safe Toddlers Board is because I believe that every child deserves the ability to safely, confidently, and independently explore and make sense of their surroundings.



## **Michelle Horseman**

The reason I am on the Safe Toddlers Board is because I have seen the sense of safety the Pediatric Belt Cane provides for early intervention aged students at a variety of gross motor levels and with varying exceptionalities.



## **Harry Kovelman, MD**

I am a Board Member for Safe Toddlers because, as a physician, Chief Medical Officer at Myomo, and father of seven, I have seen firsthand how life-changing the right tool can be for a child. Every pediatric patient deserves the chance to move, explore, and participate in the world with confidence. That's why I am deeply committed to helping bring this remarkable technology—already showing immediate and uplifting results—into the hands of every child living with mobility challenges due to their visual impairment or blindness. Their potential is extraordinary, and they deserve nothing less than every opportunity to reach it.



## **Joy Harris**

I am a Board Member for Safe Toddlers because, as Executive Director of COSB, I'm excited to bring back the latest information on technology that can help our Schools for the Blind. I also appreciate connecting COSB leaders with opportunities to help blind students develop physically, mentally, and holistically.



## **Mary Beth Calhoon**

As a Professor of Special Education/ Learning Disabilities at the University of Miami, creator of Amp-It-Up, and LD Literacy expert, I know how important early walking is to concept, language and social skill development. There are many kids with a visual impairment who also have a learning disability. Therefore, it's important to me that we get this proven and vital walking solution to all blind kids who need it.



## **Nick Mueller**

I serve on the board of Safe Toddlers because I've seen what can happen when a powerful idea takes root. I was there at the beginning of the National World War II Museum, when it was just the vision of two university professors. It's exciting to once again be on the ground floor of a nonprofit with the potential to grow into something transformative—helping deliver a life-changing walking solution to blind children who need it most.

## With Deep Appreciation

Safe Toddles extends sincere thanks to Chris Webb and Dave Furukawa of Foresight Augmented Reality/Hear2There (H2T) for their leadership, generosity, and belief in a more accessible world. Foresight Augmented Reality (FAR) and its spinoff, H2T, are accessibility-focused technology organizations dedicated to empowering people who are blind or visually impaired through human-centered innovation.



FAR and H2T share Safe Toddles' commitment to early access and independence, supporting tools and technologies that help children with a visual impairment or blindness explore their world safely and confidently. Their work focuses on inclusive, location-aware audio solutions that help individuals with disabilities better understand and engage with the spaces around them—promoting confidence, dignity, and independence at every stage of life.



Their support reflects a shared commitment to safety, mobility, and independence, not as privileges, but as rights.

## Leadership Giving

Our 2025 sustaining members contributed \$7,803, that's 15 fully funded Pediatric Belt Canes.

### SUSTAINING LEADERS

Marom Bikson  
Mary Beth Calhoon  
Anne Corn  
Gordon Mueller  
Marlene Nissenblatt  
Adrienne Rosenfeld

### SUSTAINING MEMBERS

#### *Monthly Donors*

Kathleen Weisberg  
Mrs. James Hudson  
Liz Stewart  
Colleen Arnold  
Stephenie Ambrose Tubbs  
Aleah Padgett  
Ronald Staiger  
Sonya Steele

### SUSTAINING FRIENDS

Anthony Kamperschroer  
Harry Kovelman  
Alberto Henriquez  
Jennifer Letowt  
Steven Pawel  
Nicholas Kappes  
Adams Fairacre Farms  
Maggie O'keefe  
George Cruger  
Jarrett Cruger

Constance Durham-Engelstad  
Joan Dulitz  
Vivien Simpson  
Joy Harris  
Ajinkya Dharane  
Michelle Horseman  
Facebook Fundraiser  
PayPal Giving Fund

# Friends of Safe Toddles

Friends of Safe Toddles are a special group of individuals, foundations, and corporations who have committed to annual gifts between \$1,000 and \$9,999. The financial support from this dedicated group enables us to remove all barriers to children with a congenital or early onset mobility visual impairment or blindness obtaining the Pediatric Belt Cane, and to educate their families on how to integrate the Belt Cane into all parts of the child's daily routine

## PROTECTOR

\$5,000 to \$7,500

Grace Ambrose-Zaken  
Alan Franco  
Ovintiv Canada ULC

## SUPPORTER

\$2,500 to \$4,999

Yakir Katz

## FRIEND

\$1,000 to \$2,500

Rose Family Foundation  
Zabrina Delgado\*  
Roxann Mayros\*

\* *Monthly Donors*

# The SafeT Society

The SafeT Society comprises generous individuals, foundations, and corporations who contribute \$10,000 or more to Safe Toddles annually. Their steadfast support ensures transformative measures that guarantee accessibility, independence, and safety for children with a mobility visual impairment or blindness.

## PIONEER

\$50,000 to \$99,999

FS Foundation

## LEADER

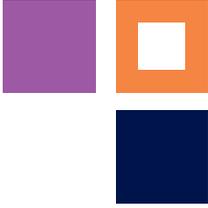
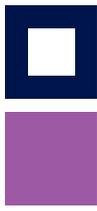
\$25,000 to \$49,999

SBIR Grant  
DeCoizart Trust (Sarah DeCoizart  
Perpetual Charitable Trust)  
William G. & Helen C. Hoffman  
Foundation  
Foresight Augmented Reality  
Hear2There Technologies

## CHAMPION

\$10,000 to \$24,999

Nicholas B. Ottaway  
Foundation  
Delta Gamma Foundation  
Frank J. Antun Foundation  
The Gibney Family Foundation



## Our Partners & Affiliates



Lavelle Fund for the Blind  
Joy and Boysie Bollinger

Sarah K. de Coizart Article TENTH Perpetual Charitable Trust

Stephen Ambrose Historical Tours, Edie Ambrose & Yakir Katz

FS Foundation

Foresight Augmentative Reality & Hear2There / Gary Solomon

Nicholas B. Ottaway Foundation / Frank J. Antun Foundation



St. Jude Children's  
Research Hospital