

Scott's Latest Milestone

Just a month before his second birthday, Scott has discovered the freedom of walking on his own, thanks to the ingenuity of a family friend who built a walker that is just his size.

Scott has Cornelia de Lange Syndrome, characterized by slow growth which makes him short for his age with four fingers on one hand. To get around, he has crawled for the past year or grasped others' hands for support.

Now he is motivated to play more as he moves more freely, his mother Joanna says.

"The second Scott saw the walker, he loved it and started pushing it around the house," Joanna says. "Having the ability to have some independence is amazing. He is buzzing around our house."

Welder Pat Hobbs started designing the walker in November 2018 and welded it together at Diemo Precision Tooling and Machine Building in Baltimore, north of Cobourg, over the past four months. He worked on it during his breaks and presented it to Scott's family on June 2.



A childhood friend of Scott's father Rob, Pat saw a Facebook post by Joanna about how Scott was frustrated when he couldn't walk on his own.

"I thought maybe I could help them out," Pat says. "I couldn't believe they didn't make anything that small. He's a little guy."

When parts came in for the project, Pat's boss Mark Tierney picked up the bill. His co-worker Kyle McGee helped out and when extra welding was needed, HAI Precision Waterjets did that work for free.

"Everybody just stepped up and made it doable," Pat says. "If I was in that situation, I would want someone to step in. Not enough people pay it forward."

When he came to Five Counties for an appointment on June 4, physiotherapist Jennifer Mai added a supportive seat sling so he can move with more confidence. She had already been working with him on his balance while sitting and his mobility in crawling.

Her colleagues have helped Scott and his family since his first week of life, teaching him how to eat, adapting equipment to his small stature and doing audiovisual therapy since he is hearing impaired. Rather than have him push the walker, Mai taught Scott to rest his arms on the sides and pull it behind him, giving him more control.

"He's a very curious little boy who loves to explore," she says.

"He has just been a rascal," his mother adds with a laugh. "He is so happy to be upright."

Using his new ride, Scott has already run up to the family's recycling bin and starting gleefully ripping paper.

"It's great to see him as a typical two-year-old," Joanna says. "For so long, he hasn't acted his age. Now we are getting an opportunity to see what he's capable of and it's so fun. He's so happy. It's adorable."