



Second Sense
Beyond vision loss

Because of you... Kendrick learns new routes, pg 1

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Maggie and Nicole get cooking, pg 4

Summer 2022

Perspectives

Kendrick Goes Back to School



Kendrick uses his white cane to navigate the sidewalks in his neighborhood.

"Siobhan makes things so relatable. I never feel embarrassed for going in the wrong direction. She is so easy going and knowledgeable."

~ Kendrick

Kendrick first worked with Siobhan, one of our mobility instructors, last fall.

He learned basic cane skills, outdoor travel, and using public transit.

And, he learned how to use sounds, both in the environment and sound he makes with his cane. These sounds can help Kendrick determine his location and provide clues about his surroundings.

Read the full story on our website at second-sense.org/about/client-stories/kendricks-story/.

We encourage our clients to contact us if they ever need additional training. With mobility, this can be if they have a decline in vision, if they move, or if they need to navigate a new location.

Kendrick called because he was making a career change.

Losing your vision is often a traumatic and life-changing event. For Kendrick, traumatic is an understatement.

So, he is pursuing a Masters degree in clinical mental health counseling with the goal of helping people who have experienced trauma. Like he has.

His first step is to take the classes he needs to fill the prerequisites for a Masters program.

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Walking out their door. Jotting down a phone number. Sending an email.

Taurus Takes His Training out of the Classroom

Taurus graduated from college with a degree in audio engineering.

He worked in production — acting as a producer, artist and engineer — in both music recording and podcasts.

Taurus also taught classes on using audio production software.

It was teaching these classes that lead Taurus to a new career.

One of Taurus's students was a musician. He had fallen into a depression and tried to take his own life. He didn't die when he shot himself in the head, but he

did lose his sight.

He decided he wanted to get back into recording. This time as a blind man.

This student was never a computer guy, and now he was in a room filled with young guys who grew up using all sorts of technology. They had a comfort level with the equipment that he did not.

Taurus saw his student was struggling. So Taurus sat down and talked with him. Taurus worked with him, showing him that he could do the work.

“It was like a complete 180° from Monday to Wednesday. Pretty soon this student was helping the young guys in the class.”

“That is what got me interested in becoming a Certified Vision Rehabilitation Therapist (CVRT). **I saw the impact that I could have.**”

To earn his certification, Taurus completed a Masters program and is now finishing his internship — performing 300 hours of instruction to clients, supervised by a current CVRT.

He has been working with Cody Froeter, CVRT at Second Sense since August.

“The clients that stand out the most for me are the ones that show their desperation. Desperation just to be



“I went blind at 12. I went on as if nothing changed. I kept riding my bike. I wrestled and ran track. I have great listening skills and a vivid imagination. I believe that helps me fill in the blanks.”

~ Taurus

independent. These are the clients that will use the skills for years to come.”

Reena called with a question about JAWS speech software. She got very emotional, saying, “When I can't do something for myself, when I just have to sit and wait for help, I feel like I am wasting away.”

“Helping someone like that reinforces how important this job is. How life-changing this training can be.” ●

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Kendrick

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Kendrick is attending Prairie State College to take these classes. So, he contacted Siobhan to see if she could work with him to get acclimated to the campus.

They focused on navigation from the main entrance to Kendrick's classrooms and the fitness center. "Siobhan quickly noticed that there was a disability elevator," Kendrick said. "Something the disability office didn't mention. It is much more convenient — located right near the main entrance.

"We only had time for 4-5 sessions before classes started for me to garner the information I needed."

And, it was enough. "I had no trouble finding my classes," Kendrick explained. "**Recently, I decided to navigate somewhere on my own.** I wanted to get from my classroom to the fitness center for a Pilates class."

Kendrick had been to the fitness center before. He took kickboxing classes earlier. But, now he was starting at a different location.

"I started off in the wrong direction. **I suddenly found myself in an open space. I immediately heard Siobhan's voice in my head, 'You need to get to a wall to find out where you're at.'**"

"Once I found the wall, my cane hit something that sounded familiar. Then I remembered it was the lockers along a wall.

"I also remembered that in our last lesson, Siobhan taught me a route from the elevator to the fitness center. And, I knew how to get to the elevator from the lockers."

Kendrick was able to combine the echolocation skills he learned previously with the route and landmark lessons he learned specific to this new location to reach his destination.

This is our goal for all our clients. Learn the skills. Use and build on the skills. Add life experiences. And explore.

This is what your generous support allows. Lifelong learning to live full, active and independent lives. ●



October 15th is White Cane Awareness Day

Learning to use a white cane requires repetition. To learn the skill and to build the confidence in your ability to venture out, cross streets, or travel somewhere new.

**15
hours**

Clients who are first learning to use a cane need an average of 15 hours of training to travel safely and independently.

61%

Most clients (61%) are new to cane travel. Some just want to navigate their home environment. They may only need 5 hours of training, Others are eager to learn to travel on public transit. They may need up to 30 hours of training.

In the last four years we trained
212
adults to travel with a cane.

40% Many clients return for additional training:

- to gain more advanced skills
- to learn a new route
- to refresh skills after a decline in vision

figures are for 2019-2022

Maggie and Nicole Take Cooking Lessons



Maggie and Nicole made scrambled eggs in their first group lesson. Learning a simple dish allows them to focus on the safe cooking skills they are learning.

Maggie’s goal is to “cook more complex crock pot recipes. That way I can take my time making dinner during the day. Then when my boyfriend gets home we will have a prepared meal and I can relax to enjoy it.”

So for one lesson, Nicole brought along her crock pot. She and Maggie then each made buffalo chicken dip independently, while learning together.

Nicole’s goal is to gain more confidence and independence in her cooking — without having to constantly ask her husband for help.

Maggie and Nicole have the same eye condition, Leber’s Hereditary Optic Neuropathy. They are close in age and live just a few miles apart. They have also become friends.

Nicole has received some training from Second Sense in the past two years — both mobility training and technology instruction. But, Maggie is new to our services.

When Nicole heard that Maggie is taking at-home cooking classes with Cody and Taurus, she asked if she could join in.

For Taurus, this was the first time he was leading a group cooking lesson. **“Teaching a group requires some unique considerations. I want to keep both participants engaged.”**

Maggie and Nicole have different levels of cooking experience.

“Cody and Taurus have both given me so many great tips, like a less messy way to crack eggs, ways to cut safely and tools that make me more confident using the stove.”

Nicole shared that she just made jambalaya completely independently and “it turned out great!”

Your support allows our training staff to stay flexible and respond to client requests, like this joint training. This flexibility often makes the training more enjoyable and encourages deeper learning. ●

“Everyone is laughing the whole time. We are learning all the skills and enjoying ourselves. We all share so much, both frustrations and goals. There is never a dull moment.”

~ Maggie