



### Step by step

David Dubats is laser-focused on one driving—or rather, walking—goal. He hates that thousands of victims of traumatic brain injuries, strokes, and spinal chord damage are routinely thrust into wheelchairs, then sent on

their way with the message that they will never walk again. Dubats knows otherwise.

Twenty years ago, back when he was a software designer for NASA, Dubats' mother developed a form of cancer that affected her ability to walk. Dubats began studying wheelchairs, walkers, and the like. He concluded there was tremendous room for improvement. More significantly, he discovered that people lacking the ability to use their lower limbs had virtually no technologies available that inspired hope for walking again.

Thanks to Dubats, now they do!

Dubats' Eugene-based company, Second Step, Inc., manufactures something called the Gait Harness System. Dozens of care centers, hospitals, rehab facilities, and clinics across the United States use it as their preferred approach for training the non-ambulatory to walk. Its effectiveness is rooted in neuroplasticity: rebuilding neural pathways from the lower extremities to the brain. Remarkably, the GHS is restoring dreams of mobility to people who have been institutionalized for months, years, sometimes even decades.

"There's no greater success," says Dubats with obvious pride, "than when I watch somebody walk for the first time in 10, 15 years. It's beyond words when I get to witness them in the Gait Harness System, taking their first steps with their family there to experience the joy."

Second Step's next step, says Dubats, will be promoting much wider use of the GHS outside clinical settings. "We're on our way there," he says with characteristic optimism. "I see home use becoming the primary use. I see the time when people will no longer be sent from clinics with the message they'll never walk again. In most cases, they can walk again if given the opportunity." [secondstepinc.com](http://secondstepinc.com) ■