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From the Pittsburgh Business Times:

<http://www.bizjournals.com/pittsburgh/news/2017/05/04/mom-develops-safety-sleeper-for-special-needs.html>

Focus: Manufacturing

Mom develops Safety Sleeper for special needs

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When Rose Morris' son Abram was 2, she couldn't keep him in his crib.

The boy, who is on the autism spectrum, found creative ways to get out of a crib tent, and Pack 'n Plays were no challenge for him.

Traveling was a nightmare as the crib tent wasn't portable, and as Abram aged, Morris grew concerned about what would happen once he needed to move into a regular-sized bed. She also worried for his safety.

"Abram was giving me a run for my money," she recalled. "One time he crawled out of the crib tent, put another hole in it and got back in as if to say, 'I own you, I control this.' I duct-taped this bed because I didn't know what else to do. I was so scared."

Some friends in Texas helped her out by developing an enclosed bed that was portable and felt like a tent or fort. It worked. Suddenly, Abram was happy about going in his bed and wasn't getting out in the middle of the night.

As the years passed, the bed, dubbed the Safety Sleeper, grew with Abram. He was able to zip it up when he wanted and have some control over how enclosed he was at night. The family was able to go on vacations with it, and, today, Abram, now 12, decides himself whether he wants the Safety Sleeper up or down.

"For parents with autistic kids, bodies need time to catch up with cognitive ability," Morris said. "They are not on the same typical structure. I saw that with Abram, and we gave him time with the Safety Sleeper so he could catch up with learning how to be a typical sleeper. Now, he stays in bed. We gave him that ability."

It was from this success with Abram that Morris decided to found a company to help other moms with special needs kids.

"I thought, 'there must be other people that could use this. We can't be the only ones,'" Morris said. "I found a couple of moms groups and special needs groups that really needed these beds."

Since founding Abram's Bed LLC/The Safety Sleeper in 2009, Morris estimates she's sold about 1,500 beds in 12 countries. The company employs seven full-time and two part-time and was named National Exporter of the Year by the U.S. Small Business Administration.

Courtney Frist, who lives in the North Hills, saw a huge difference in her daughter Ellie when she started using the Safety Sleeper. Ellie has Smith-Magenis Syndrome, a rare genetic disorder that causes developmental and emotional delays, with head banging and sleep disturbances common symptoms.

"When she was a year and a half, she started having temper tantrums and banging her chin," Frist recalled. "She started climbing out of her crib, and we kept her to the room, but she would be really mad and she would destroy the room. We had the room emptied except for a mattress, but she was still throwing herself against walls. We saw no ability in her future to travel to see relatives.



ABRAMS BED LLC

The Safety Sleeper is designed to help keep special needs kids and adults safe at night.

"[But then we] got the bed, went on vacation and had a wonderful time. At bedtime, we can do anything and know she's safe in there. It immediately calms her. ... She's 5 and a half now, she sleeps well and she is doing really well in kindergarten. I don't think she'd be doing so well without the Sleeper. It's just her safe place."

CLOSER LOOK

Abram's Bed LLC/The Safety Sleeper

Based: North Hills

Number of employees: Nine

Top officer: Rose Morris, founder and president

Product: The Safety Sleeper, a tent-like enclosure that serves as a bed for children and adults with special needs

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