



## Autism & Wandering: The Road to Prevention

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# What We've Learned

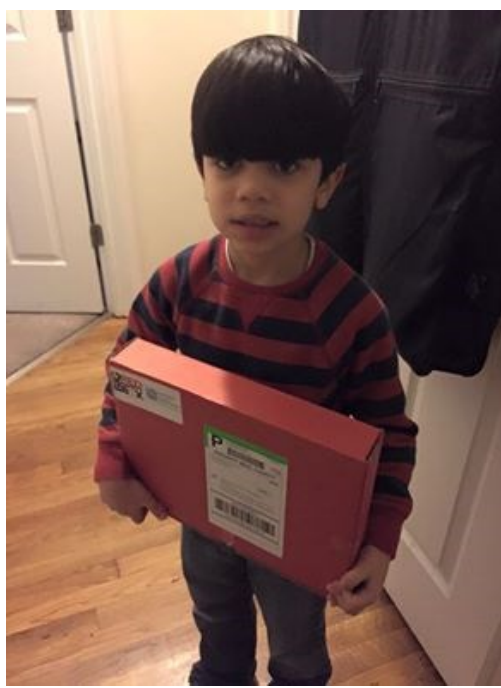
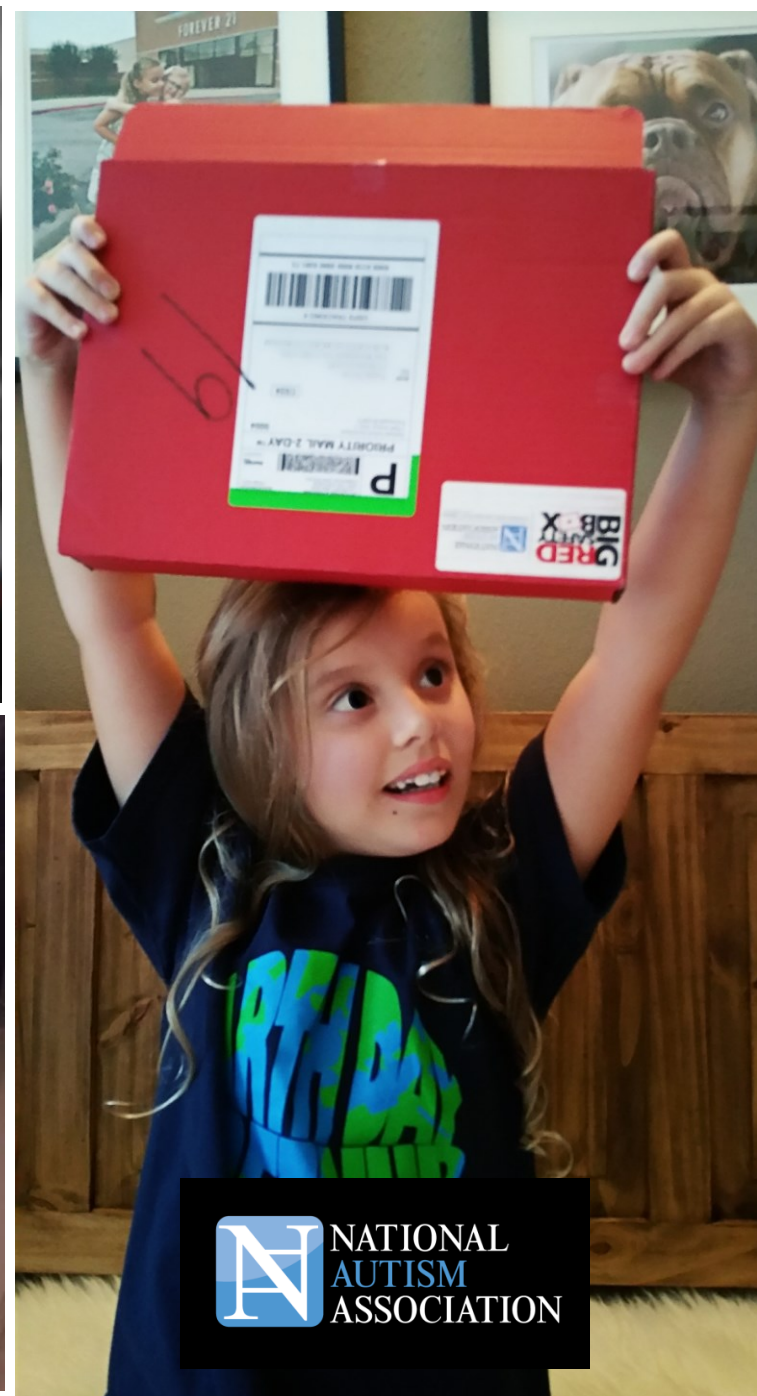
## NAA 5-Year Data Collection

Wandering Incidents 2011 – 2015

- Cases involving children age 9 & under ended in death 44% of the time
- Cases involving children age 13 & under ended in death 31% of the time
- 2015 was the deadliest year on record since 2009. Fatal outcomes nearly doubled from the previous year
- Our children die quickly (drowning, hit by vehicles)
- Prevention is key

*PREVENTION SAVES LIVES*

*"I really believe the door chimes in the Big Red Safety Box saved my son's life when he bolted from the house and onto a busy street a few years ago. Because of that door chime I was alerted and able to get to him just in time." -Kelly R.*





## NAA Big Red Safety Box Program Launched in 2011 23,000 Boxes Shipped to Date



*It single handedly put an end to Avery's elopement issues at home. And it kept him safe when he was struggling.*  
Nicole H.

*I got one a couple years ago and we use the alarms and stop signs daily.*  
Edward L.

*Door alarms meant I could finally sleep.*  
Anne Marie H.

*My son's RoadID tag on his shoe from the Big Red Safety Box just brought him home safely after he wandered. I have never been more grateful.*

# What We've Learned

- Construction headphones can pose secondary safety risks and may impede language development
- We need to develop discrete technology that is customizable to the wearer (See Kickstarter campaign: HERE Buds)
- Must not impair hearing or compromise safety



## What We've Learned

- Wandering/Elopement is a non-verbal form of communication: “I want, I need, I don’t want...”
- In many cases, we believe that an Acute Stress Response and loss of control is involved: “I NEED to get out of here RIGHT NOW!”
- Auditory Hypersensitivity is painful and can trigger Fight or Flight/Acute Stress Response

*“He understands he is not supposed to wander or run off, but during times of acute stress, he may not understand these rules, his surroundings, or how to stay safe.” - Lori McIlwain, NAA Co-Founder*

# What We Need

- Development of effective, safe technology in the short-term – Who can help with this?
- Research on the link between seizures and auditory triggers
- Research on Fight or Flight: What's happening on a biological level?
- Let's think out of the box: Sympathetic nervous system, TRPV1 protein affecting Fight or Flight?
- Effective treatment of Acute Stress Response could be the ultimate wandering prevention strategy



## Conclusions

- There is compelling evidence between AH and Elopement that should be used to help develop prevention strategies and technology
- 42% of children respond to AH by trying to run, and 33% of elopers overall are trying to escape an anxious situation, indicating an Acute Stress Response
- Acute Stress Response in ASD may go far beyond the elopement issue; contributing to some of the most potentially dangerous symptoms of ASD including Seizures, Emotional Dysregulation, Lack of Impulse Control, Aggression, Self-Injury, Depression and Suicidality
- Acute Stress Response may be one of the most important areas of research to increase safety and improve quality of life for individuals with ASD today





***Thank You!***

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