



## VESTIBULAR DISORDER ASSOCIATION (VEDA) AMBASSADOR, ALEX SHADDOCK, TAKES HIS STEPS-2-BALANCE

**Press release: 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2019.** The Vestibular Disorder Association (VeDA) today announced their annual call to all those living with a vestibular condition, to challenge themselves in taking a step forward on their journey back to balance.

From May 19-25, 2019, VeDA is asking vestibular patients across the country to set a personal balance-related goal and to self-organize an activity to achieve it. While many vestibular patients are restricted in their everyday mobility, we also know that many forms of exercise or movement can help patients improve their balance. So regardless of where a patient is on their personal road to recovery, we hope anyone can find an opportunity to take a “step” forward and participate in Steps-2-Balance.

Alex Shaddock is this year’s Steps-2-Balance Ambassador. He is an inspirational 15-year-old who was diagnosed with persistent postural perceptual dizziness (PPPD) just 8 months ago. This is part of his story:

“I was an active sophomore, going to school, playing soccer and hanging out with my friends. Then, one day, I wasn’t. I fell in the shower, and the vertigo was so bad I couldn’t get up. I managed to crawl out of the shower before I started vomiting. My family had no idea what was going on.

The last eight months have felt like a constant roller coaster, literally. I have had good days and bad days, some days I couldn’t even get out of bed. With the support of my family, friends and therapists, I am improving every day and taking big steps to get my back balance back.

My parents refuse to let it consume me and try to keep things light and easy. I set myself goals so I can continue to improve and my physical therapy sessions are where I feel like I get the most help. I have a blended school schedule where I take my core classes online and then go to my Architecture and Spanish classes on campus.



If I could give any advice at all, it would be to never give up. Don't let your illness keep you from living your life. Get out and see your friends and family, do things you love and focus on getting better."

### **HOW DOES STEPS-2-BALANCE WEEK WORK?**

We encourage all vestibular patients to:

- Identify a personal balance-related goal or challenge
- Self-organize an activity
- Register their personal activity on the Vestibular.org website
- Invite others to join in the activity and to support VeDA
- Document and share the Steps-2-Balance experience via email and/or social media

### **WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?**

Anyone with a vestibular condition, ideally inviting their friends, family, and/or co-workers to join them in participating in their chosen activity. Healthcare professionals are encouraged to organize a Steps-2-Balance pop-up event at their office, hospital, or within their community and invite their vestibular patients to come participate. VeDA ambassadors, board members, staff, and supporters will be joining in as well.

### **WHERE DOES IT TAKE PLACE?**

The challenge can take place anywhere. It could be within the home, at work, or somewhere in the community (health office, park, community center, etc.).

### **WHY DOES THIS INITIATIVE HELP?**

On the road to recovery from vestibular illness, it's important to continue to challenge ourselves, and to gain a sense of accomplishment with the progress we make—even the small steps matter. And when we all takes steps forward together, albeit in our own homes or neighborhoods, we grow our sense of shared community—that we're not alone on this journey to regain balance. Steps-2-Balance also helps those around us better understand challenges with balance and gain empathy along the way. VeDa hopes that Step-2-Balance will continue to grow their community of support.



If you would like to find out more about VeDA or the Steps-2-Balance week please contact:

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About VeDA: The Vestibular Disorders Association (VeDA) is the leading international organization people turn to for help with vestibular (inner ear and brain) disorders. They are an authoritative resource, publishing information that is clear, reliable, and scientifically objective. VeDA supports people with vestibular disorders by connecting them to health care specialists and support networks. VEDA promotes awareness for vestibular disorders through testimony and advocacy.

VESTIBULAR DISORDERS ASSOCIATION