

Santa Cruz company launches educational software about asthma

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SANTA CRUZ -- A traumatic experience led a Santa Cruz company to develop educational software for people suffering from asthma.

When Gali Rosen's 10-year-old son, Luki, was diagnosed with asthma, the family received an information overload at the clinic. The Rosens were told how to prevent future attacks, what to do in the event of an attack and how to care for and use Luki's inhaler. They left the doctor with a confidence that quietly and quickly faded from their minds.

The software comes as an interactive computer program with short videos and explanations about asthma. It includes how to use and care for inhalers and how to prevent asthma attacks.

"(Luki) didn't have an asthma attack for two or three months. When he did we realized we had forgotten everything," Rosen said. They were totally unprepared.

Luki, now 14, made a recovery and is in good health, but the experience made Rosen wonder if other families had similar experiences. She set to work on developing new educational software to help families learn and remember important care instructions for their loved ones with asthma.

Rosen is an educational developer for Modus 5, a Santa Cruz company that creates educational multimedia software centered around educating patients, families and communities about chronic conditions.

The programs provide brief and comprehensive educational modules about living with and treating chronic conditions such as sleep apnea, diabetes and obesity.

Rosen said that it took a year to compile all the information to create a comprehensive program. She said she received a lot of help from Dr. Casey Schirmer, a Santa Cruz-based pediatrician. Rosen said Schirmer shows the program to all his patients.

Rosen, who immigrated to the U.S. from Israel in 1997, is also a lecturer of Hebrew at the UC Santa Cruz. Her husband, Jacob Rosen, is a professor of computer engineering and is involved with Modus 5, too.

Modus 5, established in 2000, works with the Palo Alto Medical Foundation to collect accurate and up-to-date information and put it into short videos, each less than one minute long. The asthma program costs \$50 and contains eight modules, including one for teachers. It is available in English or Spanish at modusfive.com.

Rosen is hopeful that it will help people become better prepared for asthma attacks and help teach people how to prevent them.

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