## REIMAGINING WHAT'S POSSIBLE THE FUTURE OF VISION SERVICES

Your 2014-2015 Impact Report



## In loving memory of **Donna Esbensen**.

Sr. Vice President, Chief Financial Officer, and Lighthouse Champion for 17 years.

## "One can never consent to creep when one feels an impulse to soar." ~ Helen Keller

November 22, 1944 - January 25, 2016

## LETTER FROM LEADERSHIP

#### Dear Friends,

At Lighthouse, our guiding mission continues to be "Charting a course for living, learning, and earning with vision loss." As we look back at another year of teaching, supporting, employing, and empowering Central Floridians who live with vision loss, the entire Lighthouse family is filled with gratitude and profound respect for the impact you, our donors, have made over the past year in the lives of nearly 600 infants, children, teens, and adults as well as their families.

This past year has been one of tremendous growth for Lighthouse Central Florida and our subsidiary, Lighthouse Works. Through the first-person narratives contained in this Impact Report you will learn, in their own words, what Lighthouse has meant to a small sampling of clients, family members, and staff.

What does it mean when we say that Lighthouse is re-imagining the future of vision services? Well, it means that, over the next few years, we will be strategically positioning ourselves to successfully innovate, enhance, and expand the services we offer to Central Florida's community of blind and visually impaired. Whether it's offering financial literacy education to our teens, who are being prepared to enter the sighted work force, or instituting a revenue generating business line tied to making local companies Section 508 compliant, thereby ensuring that inclusion remains a part of the way they do business. This is of critical importance.

According to Prevent Blindness America, the number of Florida residents with impaired vision, including blindness, could more than double over the next three decades, due in large part to an aging population and increased life expectancy. With the projected increase in the incidence of vision loss among all groups statewide comes the accompanying costs associated with treating eye disorders – an amount estimated to be just shy of \$10 billion. Lighthouse Central Florida and Lighthouse Works are the only local entities best positioned to provide the rehabilitative and training services necessary to offset some of these astronomical costs by preparing individuals living with vison loss to be independent and employable.

Please enjoy this year's Impact Report. It honors your commitment to making our community a great place to live, work, and play for Central Floridians who are blind and visually impaired. This work is made possible by you. While we are proud of our accomplishments to date, there is a great deal more work to be done. Together, we can do so much. Thank you for your ongoing support.

Lee Maschi

Lee Nasehi, President & CEO

Alex Hull.

Alex Hull, Board of Directors Chairman Lighthouse Central Florida

Dan Devine, Board of Directors Chairman Lighthouse Works

# **Reimagining Lark**

The first indication that my vision was failing happened when I was behind the wheel of my vehicle. My depth perception was the first thing to go. I'd be driving along the highway, see a car ahead of me, maintain my speed thinking there was enough distance, and all of a sudden I'd slam on the brakes because the car would be right on top of me! I was constantly misjudging the distance of other motorists and driving became a scary ordeal.

I'm a 70 year old retired software salesman, originally from the Bronx. When I was in my fifties I saw the movie Footloose, with Kevin Bacon, and I began to develop a love for dance.

I had always been very active and athletic when I was in school and while serving in the Air Force. Over the past 20 years, in addition to my career, I learned about Dance Sport and I became an avid ballroom Latin dancer. I retired at the age of 68 and expected to live out my Golden Years—but they weren't very golden, at 69 I became legally blind.

About a year ago an MRI revealed that there was a large tumor growing on the inside of my forehead that was impacting my optic nerves and causing my vision loss. I had to undergo major surgery to remove the tumor but the damage was already done.

My friend Debbie told me about Lighthouse. The very first day of my Independent Living Skills class at Lighthouse was something of an epiphany for me. The uplifting environment I encountered on

day one really changed my attitude and this accelerated my recuperation.

I was completely ignorant of the sort of tools and devices that are available in the marketplace for individuals living with vision loss. Things like bill readers to keep your money organized and bar code readers for labels on cans and other food stuffs that I could no longer read.

"The uplifting environment I encountered on day one really changed my attitude and this accelerated my recuperation."

Since going to Lighthouse I've gotten back the confidence to enter the social world again. And I'm back to my ballroom dancing–I'm even competing again! I'm on a roll, I'm on my way, and Lighthouse and its donors deserve a tremendous amount of credit for that.



# **Reimagining Liam**

Three months after my son Liam was born, his doctor noticed that something was wrong. He was sent for test after test in three different hospitals as doctors tried to figure out a diagnosis to explain his odd collection of symptoms. With each new theory, my dreams for Liam's future swung radically back and forth.

Ultimately, Liam was diagnosed with a condition called Septo-Optic Dysplasia. His optic nerves are too small to function and his pituitary gland does not produce hormones. In short, he cannot see and will be on medication for the rest of his life.

"I have seen firsthand the tireless dedication of every person who works with Lighthouse. I have been deeply touched and inspired by the sense of family Lighthouse holds so dear."

Through the internet, I got in touch with Lighthouse Central Florida. Within a week of contacting them, Lighthouse had assessed Liam's vision and set him up to receive therapy every week at no charge. Liam's mentor from Lighthouse has been with him for two and a half years and has helped him to walk, talk, jump, play catch, and sing songs – all of which he was never expected to do.



Last winter I took 300 students from the middle school where I teach, blindfolded them, and set them loose in a field. We set up stations for the kids to complete a task (like throwing a water balloon or finding their own shoes mixed into a big pile) with either no vision or partial vision goggles. Those kids were challenged to experience the world in a completely different way. They made Braille cards and bookmarks and were stunned when our guest speaker, who is blind, could read them. Our field day was an opportunity for authentic learning. It was one small gesture of appreciation I could do to raise awareness of the issues that Lighthouse tackles on a daily basis.

# **Reimagining Mikayla**

am a 19 year old college freshman who lives with vision loss. My eye condition is known as nystagmus, which is characterized by an uncontrollable movement of the eyes. I also have astigmatism and myopia (nearsightedness), but I have never let my vision loss dictate my ability.

I consider myself to be a product of the wonderful programming that happens every day at Lighthouse Central Florida. I first joined the Lighthouse family when I was just eight and enrolled in their school-age children's program, known as Can Too! Unfortunately funding for this program ended shortly after it began and my parents had to find another place for me to learn. But, I returned when I was 13 and joined the Transition program for teens. This was a truly transformative experience because it took young people like myself and provided us with the skills and experiences we needed to successfully transition from high school to post-secondary activities like college, vocational school or employment.

{ "The Transition program at Lighthouse definitely gave me the confidence to know that I can be successful."

This past December I completed my first semester at the University of Florida. Moving away to go to college has been a really big change in my life. It is a completely new environment and I have had to do things that I have never done on my own. Now that the first semester is over I am really glad that I came because I have been able to prove to myself that I can be successful and independent on my own.

There were a lot of things about college that I expected such as having to live by myself and get around on my own. However, there were also some things that I didn't expect, for example, you do have to make an effort to go out and meet new people and make new friends. I also realized that time management is really important if I want to be successful.

The Transition program at Lighthouse definitely gave me the confidence to know that I can be successful. I learned essential skills such as being able to figure out and ride public transportation, which I depend on daily, and to advocate for myself. We were always told not to be afraid to ask for help, which is something I usually do not like to do, however, I realized that if I don't ask I will not achieve my goals as a successful student.

As a student with low vision, one of the most difficult challenges was learning how to get around the campus. UF has a very large campus and it was very overwhelming at first. Gradually I found my way, using skills I learned in Transition such as identifying key landmarks and central places around the campus so I could figure out where I am.

I would tell a Transition student going to college not to give up and know that even though it can be overwhelming at first, you will get used to it and figure it out. I would also tell them that it is important to get involved in activities around campus so that you can make friends and get connected to people within the school.



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# **Reimagining Sharon**

hen I first moved to Central Florida I heard about Lighthouse through a friend who had been a beneficiary of their services. I remember her telling me a bit about what they offered and how I could access their services by contacting the state's Division of Blind Services (DBS).

I have been blind since I was a young child living in my native Jamaica. Over my lifetime I had accessed all the services that I thought I'd need to successfully navigate my way in the sighted world, so Lighthouse didn't seem like much of a priority for me at that point.

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I had just moved from New York with a degree in forensic psychology and three children—what I really needed was a job. Finding work as a psychologist however meant returning to school for an advanced degree. This wasn't an option. I couldn't put it off any longer.

After a few false starts, I was able to secure a position with the Orlando Police Department working within their Communications Department. It was extremely fulfilling to be able to contribute my skills and earn a wage for my family. After about two years, and at the height of the economic recession, I was laid off. It was 2009 and my third child was just eight months old. We couldn't continue to rely on unemployment insurance. It was then I sought out Lighthouse and explored their Vocational Rehabilitation offerings. I enrolled in their Ability to Market class and also received some refresher courses on Access Technology, which helped me to stay up-to-date with my computer skills.

"I really value the climate of inclusion that's fostered at Lighthouse. It has given me the opportunities I've needed to perform to the best of my ability."

In 2010, with the new skills I had just acquired, I interviewed for a position with Lighthouse Works, the brand new subsidiary company created to provide jobs to the visually impaired and generate revenue for Lighthouse programs. I was hired as a Customer Care Professional in their call center.

Now, more than five years later I am the call center supervisor and senior trainer at Lighthouse Works. My recent appointment to head an organization-wide staff committee has really given me a true sense of self-actualization.

The committee is known as the Employee Practice Implementation Committee (EPIC) and its focus is on skill development and upward mobility for employees who are blind or visually impaired. I really value the climate of inclusion that's fostered at Lighthouse. It has given me the opportunities I've needed to perform to the best of my ability. Maturity has taught me to look at many things differently. I don't see blindness, I see people. That's really the most important thing to me.

# **REIMAGINING MASON**

y son Mason's eye condition was first diagnosed when he was about 6 weeks old. When he was born, our pediatrician suggested that we go to an ophthalmologist to have his eyes checked as a precaution. Mason was given the diagnosis of bi-lateral coloboma. We were told his was the most severe type, affecting every layer of both of his eyes.

We were devastated when we learned that he may not be able to see at all! We were not prepared for this type of diagnosis. As time passed we now know that Mason does have some vision and he is able to accommodate extremely well for his loss.

Lighthouse has helped Mason adapt and grow to become a very confident boy and has been just as important to us, as parents, to help build our confidence and teach us how we can help.

After we got home from the appointment we immediately starting searching online for support. Lighthouse Central Florida was the first place that came up, so we sent an email detailing what we had just found out about Mason and requesting information about support for Mason as a child, and us as a family. They called us the next day. Lighthouse offered the exact services we knew Mason needed. The goal to tailor services to his specific needs was great.

Lighthouse has helped Mason adapt and grow to become a very confident boy and has been just as important to us, as parents, to help build our confidence and teach us how we can help.



Mason is now in second grade, in a mainstream classroom. He has learned to be a dual reader, he can read text, but can read quicker with braille, so that is what we are focusing on in school. Outside of school, Mason is a very creative, active, and social 8-year old boy. He loves play dates with his friends, playing outdoors, drawing, Transformers, Minecraft, and roller coasters. And, with his imagination he can have fun with pretty much anything.

We are very excited about Lighthouse's new 'school-age' children's program. This crucial program will help support Mason with his continued need for braille strength, which is really important to us right now. Lighthouse has a way of teaching independent life skills that is so important to learn at this age. They have the specific tools and different approaches to teaching that we may have never thought of.

We recently traveled to the state Capitol to remind legislators just how important funding 'school-age' children's programs are to families like ours. Mason loved this trip and was a rockstar! He was so excited to go to the meetings and wanted to talk as much as possible. We have to constantly advocate, because if our elected officials do not hear the personal stories about how important this program is, then it's easy for it to fall through the cracks.

# LIGHTHOUSE WORKS

## Lighthouse Works Business Center Bigger, Better...and Open for Business!

ere's a reality that not too many people think about, but should: According to Prevent Blindness America, the number of Florida residents with impaired vision, including blindness, could more than double over the next three decades. According to the American Foundation for the Blind, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that in November 2015, 70 percent of the 2.2 million working-age adults in the U.S. who are completely blind or partially sighted were unemployed or not in the labor force.

For the past 40 years Lighthouse Central Florida has been providing education and rehabilitative services to our neighbors in the tri-county region who are blind or visually impaired. We are the critical service provider offering these individuals the opportunity to learn skills necessary for independent living. Lighthouse effectively works to reduce the economic burden associated with the direct and indirect costs of vision loss.

In 2011, Lighthouse Works was launched and housed at the agency's administrative offices in Lake Eola Heights. Founded upon a social enterprise business model, Lighthouse Works was incorporated as a revenue generating subsidiary company which exists to advance the "earning" component of the Lighthouse mission.



In 2015, with the help of community development block grants from the City of Orlando and Orange County, along with generous private contributions, Lighthouse was able to secure a larger, more appropriate building in the SODO section of Orlando to house the new Lighthouse Works Business Center, where it runs commercial customer contact center, 4Sight360, and its award winning supply chain division. The grand opening and ribbon cutting ceremony was held this past October.

CENTRAL FLOR

"Lighthouse Works began as a vision to establish a company with a powerful double-bottom line: 1) create competitive employment opportunities for the many working-age blind and visually impaired adults throughout Central Florida; and 2) drive real business, for real customers, and generate re-deployable net cash reserves to support and grow Lighthouse's critical, vision specific services in Orange, Osceola and Seminole counties," said Dan Devine, local entrepreneur, who serves as Chairman of the board at Lighthouse Works.

This past fiscal year, its third full year of operations, Lighthouse Works helped cover significant overhead expenses for Lighthouse Central Florida and employed 42 individuals who are blind and visually impaired in its business lines. Our BHAG (big, hairy, audacious, goal) is to become, within the next five years, the largest employer of individuals who are visually impaired in the Southeast. Though an alarming percentage of blind or partially-sighted people are not in the labor force, they have one of the highest rates of post-secondary education attainment among all disabled groups.

Championing the mission of "Living, learning and earning with vision loss," Lighthouse Central Florida and its subsidiary, Lighthouse Works, have worked tirelessly to help create competitive employment opportunities for people who are blind and visually impaired.

# **EVENTS**

### Sight & Sole WalkFest

Lighthouse's 26th Sight & Sole WalkFest made a big splash in 2015! Held at Cranes Roost Park, in Altamonte Springs, the event took on a decidedly festive theme as the WalkFest combined awareness-building with family entertainment, live music, a craft beer garden, tapas style-food samplings from local food vendors, and even a blindfolded wine and cheese pairing. The result was a fun-filled afternoon spent in support of and in solidarity with Central Florida's community of blind and visually impaired. Thanks to our Presenting Sponsor Central Florida Retina!



In what's turning out to be one of our more popular annual fundraising events, the SPREE Pop-Up Consignment Store was abuzz with excitement and fantastic deals last year during the weekend of April 17-19th. The three day event is organized by the all-volunteer Women with a Vision committee, with the purpose of selling gently used, high-end, designer clothing items and accessories at a 'pop-up' consignment store in Winter Park. All proceeds from SPREE went to support the crucial services provided by Lighthouse's Early Intervention program.

### Dining in the Dark

In July Lighthouse Central Florida partnered with Second Harvest Food Bank for a second consecutive year, to present Dining in the Dark. Held at Second Harvest's beautiful Orlando facility, the event offered a unique, immersive experience into a world of smell, taste, sound and texture in total darkness! The ever-popular Orlando Police Deptartment's volunteer SWAT team members participated as food servers outfitted in night vision goggles. Several SWAT team members also agreed to record video clips that promoted the event and were shared on social media. Lighthouse and Second Harvest received an unprecedented amount of media coverage in the run up to the event. Lighthouse and Second Harvest will partner again in 2016 for this one of a kind dining experience.

#### **Emerging Vision Luncheon**

SUNTRUST

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EMERGING

xtember 22, 201 - 1:00 p.m. Lighthouse capped off its event season in September with the Emerging Vision luncheon, held at the First Baptist Church of Orlando. The one heur event was themed, 'Lives Empowered'. The event brought together clients, friends and community investors to celebrate the important solutions being fulfilled for Central Florida's blind and visually impaired infants, children, teens and adults. Those in attendance heard compelling testimony regarding the power and importance of community-based solutions like Lighthouse. The afternoon featured a check presentation by SunTrust Bank in the amount of \$10,000.

# MEANINGFUL METRICS

## 563 Total Clients Served





## 23,930 Hours of Training





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# MAJOR DONORS

## Individuals

### \$10,000 and above

Anonymous<sup>\*</sup> Jackie and Dan Devine<sup>\*</sup> Paula and H.L. Eidel<sup>\*</sup> Kathy Hutchings

### \$5,000 - \$9,999

Ernest O. Houseman<sup>\*</sup> Dupree and Alex Hull<sup>\*</sup> Sally and Thomas Moore Dr. Preston and Christine Richmond<sup>\*</sup>

### \$1,000 - \$4,999

Stanley Barriga Annmarie and James Campisi<sup>\*\*</sup> Patricia Devine Rhonda and John Diaz William Dillard Janet Donahue Dr. Susan Driscoll Carol Droessler Dr. Chris and Donna Esbensen<sup>\*\*</sup> Dr. Konrad and Pamela Filutowski Susan Finnegan David Fuller Tommy Gibbs Sarah Hall\* Paul Jessen Phyllis and David Klock\* Harriet Lake Thomas Langmann Dr. John and Katie Lehr Mari and James Moye Lee and Mehrdad Nasehi Dennis Nolte<sup>\*</sup> Stacy O'Brien Meg and Paul Prewitt\* Dr. Dan and Carla Priehs Lois M. Robertson JoEllen and Thomas Ross Pam Ryan\* Dr. Sy Saliba\* Marian and Stephen Salley Sarah and James E. L. Seay Valerie and James Shapiro David Sherard Camilo Soto Sarah and David Stahl Cynthia and Jacob Story Stacy Sullivan Louise and D. Arthur Yergey Richard Wertsching<sup>\*</sup>

### \$500 - \$999

Karen and Bob J. Baker Polly M. Brandon

Patricia T. Carey Hannan Michael Cassidy Travis Chanev Cynthia and Andrew DeWitt Jane and Phil Easterling Peggy English Margo and Steven Hamel John E. Knight Jo-Ann Lamar Barbara Larkin Steven Liga Adlyn Lugo Rex V. McPherson II Sally A. Milton Pamela and Frederick Moses Toni Nelson Marina Nice Dustin Owen Cola Pinholster Donna Sacca-Law Dr. Saad Shaikh James Shinholser M. Jan Walker Erika Wesley Sara and Brian Woodard Dr. Bob Yip

#### **Bequests** Estate of Bertha Nolte

☆ Visionary Captial Campaign Contributer

## Corporate, Civic, Church

### \$10,000 and above

Bailes Family Foundation, Inc.<sup>\*</sup> Ophthalmic Partners of Florida SunTrust Bank SunTrust Foundation<sup>\*</sup> Trisons Foundation<sup>\*</sup>

#### **\$5,000 - \$9,999** ABC Fine Wines & Spirits

### \$1,000 - \$4,999

ACME Cleaners, Inc. Aggressive Appliances Ameriprise Financial, Inc. Averett Warmus Durkee BankUnited The Benevity Community Impact Fund Community Education And Resource Affiliation. Inc. Consulate Health Care Fleming Agency HIS Capital Group, LLC Inwood Consulting Engineers Regions Bank **Regions Financial** Tamara Knight Photography Wells Fargo Government & Community Relations Winter Park Health Foundation

### \$500 - \$999

Bichler & Kelley, P.A.<sup>★</sup> Bright Start Pediatrics Builders Club, Odyssey Middle School Herba Family Chiropractic JK2 Holmes Constructors LLC Knights of Columbus 5618 Massey Services, Inc. St. Mary Magdalen Catholic Church Westcor Land Title Insurance Company The Winter Garden Lion's Club Foundation Woman's Club of Winter Park, Inc.

### **In-Kind**

Anthony's Coal Fired Pizza Bagel King Catered Fit Chapman Studios Constellation Brands Florida Distributing Company Hawkers Asian Street Fare La Femme Du Fromage Pearson's Catering Yum Yum Cupcake Truck

## Grants

A Friends' Foundation Trust The Able Trust The Bond Foundation The Chatlos Foundation<sup>\*</sup> The Chesley G. Magruder Foundation City of Altamonte Springs City of Orlando CDBG City of Orlando CRP The Commonweal Foundation The Community Foundation for the National Capital Region Dr. Harry J. Heeb Foundation Edward E. Haddock Jr. Family Foundation Elinor and TW Miller Foundation Harry P. Leu Foundation The John R. Gurtler and Ruth W. Gurtler Foundation Joseph G. Markoly Foundation Margaret McCartney & R. Parks Williams Charitable Foundation The Martin Andersen-Gracia Andersen Foundation Orange County CDBG Seminole County CDBG The Walt Disney Company Foundation Walt Disney World Resort Wells Fargo Foundation West Orange Committee of 101

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## SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL DATA

<b>REVENUE AND OTHER SUPPOR</b>	т 2014-15	2013 -14	Assets	2014 - 15	2013-14
Florida Department of Education	\$ 1,989,246	1,924,114	Current Assets:		
Local government grants	80,717	94,400	Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 1,441,545	468,550
Foundations	196,500	314,200	Investments	1,469,518	1,597,216
United Way	163,124	116,970	Accounts receivable	447,487	96,088
United Way - Designations	31,484	27,711	Grant and other receivables	197,648	196,353
Contributions	181,421	466,456	Pledges receivable	21,948	35,792
Capital Campaign	262,169	-	Prepaid expenses	-	542
Fund raising	176,899	83,827	Inventory	503,256	13,422
Client fees and contracts	6,657	22,951	Total Current Assets	4,081,402	2,407,963
Lighthouse Works product and service sal	es 6,672,338	1,741,331			
Investment income	(52,262)	129,766	Other Assets:		
Loss on disposal of assets	(15, 021)	-	Land, building and equipment (net)	3,964,700	3,046,831
Total Revenues & Other Support	9,693,272	4,921,726	Unamortized Costs	28,738	77,544
-			Pledges receivable	17,246	29,284
EXPENSES			Deposits	19,437	19,485
Program Services:			Total Assets	8,111,523	5,581,107
Adult and Family Services	1,292,305	1,293,460			
Children and Family Services	890,606	982,338	Current Liabilities:		
Employment Services	165,783	2,045,967	Accounts payable	871,790	79,176
Lighthouse Works!, Inc.	6,135,011	-	Accrued expenses	290,213	230,455
Total Program Services	8,483,705	4,321,765	Deferred revenue	27,929	-
			Current maturities of long term debt	127,731	27,150
Supporting Services:			Total Current Liabilities	1,317,663	336,781
Management and general	134,441	171,960			
Fund raising	472,074	426,416	Long Term Liabilities	2,394,518	1,448,036
Total Supporting Services	606,515	598,376	Total Liabilities	3,712,181	1,784,817
Total Expenses	9,090,220	4,920,141			
			Net Assets:		
Change in Net assets	603,052	1,585	Unrestricted	4,399,342	3,796,290
Beginning Net Assets	3,796,290	3,794,705	Restricted	-	-
Ending Net Assets	<b>\$</b> 4,399,342	3,796,290	Total Net Assets	4 <b>,</b> 399,342	3,796,290
20			Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$ 8,111,523	5,581,107



## Lighthouse Central Florida

Alex Hull - Chairman David Stahl - Vice-Chair Paul C. Prewitt - Secretary Nancy L. Urbach - Treasurer Steve Alexander Steve Beres Patricia Devine Katrina Guensch Thomas M. Langmann John Lehr, M.D. Jeff K. McFadden Preston Richmond, M.D. JoEllen Ross Sy Saliba, Ph.D. Erika Wesley





## Lighthouse Works!

Dan Devine - Chairman Andrew McCarthy - Vice Chair Ed Buck - Secretary Nancy L. Urbach - Treasurer Terry McCoy Hope Paul C. Prewitt JoEllen Ross Richard Wertsching



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