

Lighthouse

for the Visually Impaired & Blind

BRINGING FOCUS TO UNCLEAR TIMES

Martin Speaks for the
First Time about the
Pandemic

Accessing Services
During COVID-19

On the Road with
Lighthouse Programs

Other Agency
Updates
& Changes



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About the cover:

Ali is working on a light table in the Babies' Room at the NPR LVIB. Translucent objects placed on the table are highly visible, which assists with developing residual vision and skills such as color identification, while causing less eye strain. Our kids also enjoy working at the table because it's lots of fun. Photo courtesy of Jonathan Fister.

Photo inside cover:

Abigail in the kitchen, in her home, working with accessible ABC blocks —these blocks are special as they have raised tactile letters and Braille.



Abigail recognizes several letters by touch. Each day, she is excited to go to school to find out what she can learn today.

Read about Abigail's journey on Page 8.

BIG ANNOUNCEMENT!

A major change is happening at LVIB in 2020-2021.

Read about it on Page 13.

MARTIN UNLEASHED

You may remember me from the last issue of the LVIB magazine. My name is Martin, and, "woof," have I had a wild year! Everything started off as usual. I was helping out in classes for people who are visually impaired and blind at LVIB's facilities in New Port Richey and Brooksville. I always greeted new clients and helped them feel at ease in unfamiliar surroundings. Then I observed them learning how to adapt to their vision loss as our instructors taught them new skills to improve their lives. They were learning how to pour liquids without spilling any, how to work safely around the kitchen, how to use magnification to its greatest effect, how to use smartphones, and so much more. They literally learned hundreds of different ways to do things.

Then somewhere around March and April, vision rehabilitation as we knew it came to a grinding halt. Covid-19 came on the scene in an attempt to stop our efforts to carry out our mission to Educate, Empower and Employ people who are visually impaired and blind.

My life immediately changed. My belly rub count dropped like a rock. All the staff and clients who had pampered me were absent. I am a social butterfly and I started feeling depressed because I always want to help, and now I wasn't with those who needed me. Nobody was asking for my autograph. And worst of all, I gained 15 pounds sitting around the house, watching all the dog (and cat) food commercials on TV.

But, never fear, Martin is near! As you are about to read in this magazine, Covid-19 failed to stop me and the team from doing our jobs. At first, we wondered how we were going to teach people when they would no longer be coming into the facilities for classes. That was sort of like trying to teach me to fetch a stick at midnight with no stick!!! Well, instead of howling at the moon,



In this photo, I'm relaxing with the children. It's okay for them to play with me when I'm not working. The photo below is of my human, Heather, who has been with me for many years.

the team and I put our heads together to figure this out.

Let's just say, we all became experts on Zoom meetings. We started mailing items to our clients that we would discuss when we next zoomed them. It was sort of like being there even if we weren't. And, there was a lot more talking going on. My master grew this thing on the side of her head. She calls it a cell phone. I think she is able to take it off at bedtime (not sure). Before I knew it, we were seeing just as many people as we were before Covid got in our way. We were just not doing it face-to-face. I'll be the first to admit, I was skeptical about how it was all going to work, but our team wouldn't quit and we started to experience the sweet taste of success.

I shouldn't have doubted our team's ability to overcome the Covid obstacle, because once they figured it out, there was no holding them back!!! But I still miss the belly rubs. Woof!!!

DEAR READER,

Martin is correct. The LVIB Team knew they had some major obstacles to overcome, but once they got their creative juices flowing and started

thinking in new and different ways, solutions and techniques began to emerge and we were back at work. The LVIB crew are dedicated and talented people doing what they love, helping people who are visually impaired and blind deal effectively with vision loss and assisting them to live productive and happy lives. The pandemic, like vision loss, is just another obstacle to realizing independence, and our team is prepared to do whatever it takes to guide our clients around each obstacle with great care and determination.

Heather Tuck, Social Worker & Youth Programs Coordinator ■



LIGHTHOUSE CALLING! CLIENT TRAINING & SUPPORT

Janet Morgan – Independent Living Skills Instructor

In March, we woke up one day and realized the world had changed drastically. “Working from Home,” “Video Conferences,” “Tele-health,” “Virtual Meetings,” “Zoom,” and “Teams”—and we had to respond to these changes quickly. It was my job to make sure the older blind clients weren’t left behind as the world suddenly had to rely on operating “virtually.”

A large percentage of the clients I serve are over the age of 70. Many do not have cell phones and, for those that do, they do not have smartphones. They don’t use computers and don’t have internet access. Many still have their trusty landline and big button phones. They aren’t interested in technology. They are often fairly new to vision loss. We needed to find a way to keep them connected to the Lighthouse. Leaving this vulnerable population behind wasn’t an option. There had to be a way...

At first it was “snail mail” – we sent envelopes full of materials to our clients with instructions on how to use writing guides, independent living catalogs, and our resource list. This was not effective—remember, these clients are visually impaired, so reading printed material wasn’t always possible. The clients weren’t interested in conference calls either; they wanted to wait for our regular classes to resume.

The younger generation was using Zoom with great success. They were video chatting and participating in groups with ease. However, our older clients had trouble adapting to the world of Zoom. If that was our only option, we would have lost many clients because of the technology gap.

When we all realized this “new normal” would be here to stay for many months, I called each client to explain how Lighthouse services were changing to virtual only. Many of our clients were sad, isolated, and very lonely. They missed



Lighthouse Instructor Janet has embraced Uberconference as it makes it so easy to connect to clients and to provide LVIB’s Independent Living Skills Program (IL).

us just as much as we missed them! A few agreed to try “virtual learning” if the technology was easy to use.

Then, we discovered Uberconference, a video chat platform similar to Zoom with the ability to CALL OUT to our clients! No complicated call-in codes, no internet required, no computer needed. A simple landline will ring the old-fashioned way and invite you to join a meeting just by pressing “1.” It worked! A few minor technical difficulties were experienced initially, but it worked!! We were able to have clients back “in class” via the good old-fashioned telephone!

Yes, it was hard not to be face-to-face and be able to show, or feel, examples but we could talk and they could listen. We could answer questions, ask questions, and take turns responding. We could get to know each other without seeing each other (how appropriate, right?). Although definitely different, it was working!

I worked with another instructor as a team. We found it much more effective for one to teach and one to take notes



Our first class—whom we fondly referred to as our “guinea pigs”—offered rave reviews as the eight weeks came to an end. About four weeks into the “virtual class,” we were encouraged enough that we started another Independent Living Skills Class on a different day!

“2020-2021 ANNUAL LIGHTHOUSE MAGAZINE” is a publication of the Lighthouse for the Visually Impaired and Blind, Inc. It is used to raise awareness about blindness and Lighthouse services, increase support, and recognize our donors.

To learn more, please contact the Lighthouse or visit www.lvib.org.

To unsubscribe from Lighthouse mailings, please contact Patricia Porter at (727) 815-0303 or pporter@lvib.org.

and moderate. We would switch off half way through class so the clients could hear different teaching styles. We discovered that we needed to “call on” our clients to keep participation going. Within a short period of time, everyone was comfortable with the phone conference setting. The clients were learning—from the instructors and from each other! They were empathizing with their peers and sharing their feelings about vision loss. They were polite to each other and patient when anyone had a technical difficulty. If someone was absent, all were concerned!

Our first class—whom we fondly referred to as our “guinea pigs”—offered rave reviews as the eight weeks came to an end. About four weeks into the “virtual class,” we were encouraged enough that we started another Independent Living Skills Class on a different day! Running two classes simultaneously was challenging—and successful!

We said good-bye to our first “guinea pigs” with the promise that a new version of an Independent Living Skills Class was in the works.

To date, we have completed several eight-week Adjustment to Blindness/ Independent Living Skills Classes, and we are now also providing a new Condensed Independent Living Skills Class!

The older clients, (the ones who live alone, the ones who are new to vision loss, the ones who don't use technology) are thriving in our virtual classes simply by answering their telephone and “pressing '1' to join the conference.” They know they are part of a community of peers struggling with the same issues—be it Covid-19 fears, isolation, or blindness. We all feel better when we are “alone together” and when we have the tools to take each challenge in stride. ■



ON THE CURB FOR THE KIDS

Linda Laffey – Children’s Program & Access Technology Instructor

It came on swiftly.

Everything changed.

What was once routine became unpredictable and inspiring.

The children could no longer be taught in a conventional classroom setting.

They missed us, and we missed them.

What were we going to do?

We put our heads together, and knew there was only one answer.

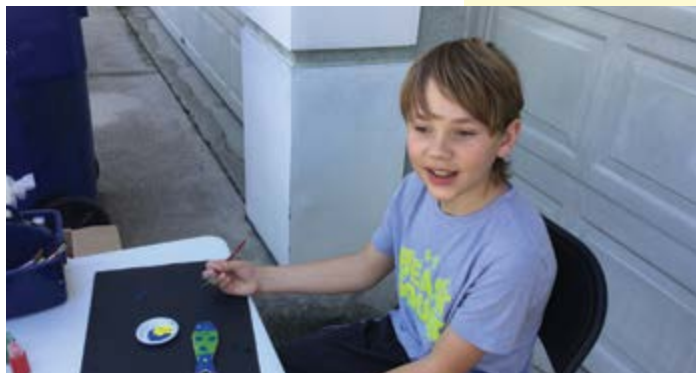
Take our program on the road and offer it outside.

With the help of many staff and community members, we packed a Lighthouse Van with tables, chairs, and supplies, so each child could be taught the daily living skills needed. We also brought along some goodies and fun recreational activities. Then we taught—with masks, sanitizer, and social distancing, outside each of our children’s homes.

As I have the pleasure of being the instructor who is working on this new concept with the children, I am so pleased to see how well-received our curbside visits have become—not only for the children, but also for their siblings, who are invited to participate. It is reassuring to our clients and their families to know that LVIB services are continuing.

So, with a whole lot of smiles and a heart full of joy, I am happy to tell you that the benefit of our training is evident and that we will continue visiting the children in this way. So, be sure to listen for the laughter—it may be one of the children or it might be you when a Lighthouse Van visits a curb near you. ■

Photos: Reagan & Kennedy (above) and Connor (bottom-left), in their respective driveways, were among the first children to receive curbside services. We included a pre-covid photo so you can meet Linda. In the bottom-right photo, she is teaching access technology skills to Aaron.





Maryassa and Tasia wear protective masks in order to participate in Lighthouse's Intensive Summer Program for teens and young adults up to age 22.

CONNECTING DURING COVID

Niki Kissell – Program Director

In March, when the Lighthouse made the difficult decision to suspend in-person classes, one-on-one training, and all in-person group activities, our first concern was to make sure our clients were safe and getting their needs met. Team members started by reaching out to clients. We made phone calls, particularly to those who lived alone, to make sure they were able to get groceries and other necessities. Many of the people we called had their basics covered but we found ways to assist with helping several people meet their emerging and changing needs. It was during this initial outreach that we learned the real need was for clients to stay connected during this time of isolation.

We began by providing regular wellness calls to many of our clients in all the counties we serve. Wellness calls connected people who are feeling lonely, stressed, or depressed with Lighthouse staff who provided the caring support needed. Sometimes we were able to help people with filling out online forms or provide other practical assistance, but many times we provided emotional support by listening to

what was going on in their lives—hopes, fears, frustrations, and even joys.

Meanwhile, we put tools in place to be able to provide instruction by phone and online in various formats. We discovered some benefits of using these tools for remote connection. Our instructors developed ways to conduct group classes on some of the topics related to independent living, as well as our support groups and book club, via conference calls. These conference calls gave clients an opportunity to meet with each other on an ongoing basis and to develop a form of regular support.

Then, in order to provide even more opportunities to learn and make contact with other people who are visually impaired, Lighthouse started providing what we call “Hot Topic” classes. These were one-time classes that people attended by conference call, with a variety of topics to choose from each month. Some examples of our “Hot Topics” included using Zoom and other video conferencing platforms, information about voting access, shopping online and delivery services, and even making a face mask. Even though these calls focused on

providing information, people also used “Hot Topics” as an important point of connection.

All of these modified programs and new services will continue throughout the pandemic, and some will continue long after. We have found the connections made during this time of Corona to be so valuable that, even when it is safe to return to in-person services at the Lighthouse, we plan to continue having some groups available in a conference call format. This will allow those who have medical conditions or those who live at a considerable distance, to keep in touch with their Lighthouse family. If you haven't already, we invite you to reach out to the Lighthouse and help our connections grow. ■

“We have found the connections made during this time to be so valuable that, even when it is safe to return to in-person services at LVIB, we plan to continue having some groups available in these modified formats.

ACCESS TECHNOLOGY— AN ESSENTIAL SURVIVAL TOOL

Doug Schalk – Access Technology Instructor

It has been said that access technology levels the playing field for people who are visually impaired. This has never been truer than now. Covid-19 has changed much in the world in which we live and technology is now at the forefront. This means, especially to those of us who are visually impaired and blind, that we depend on access technology more than ever. Thankfully, much of what I teach can be taught over the phone. But, one thing that is different—the subjects I teach have multiplied. It used to be that I kept pretty much to computers and smartphones. Now, I give more attention to other smart devices like Amazon and Google smart speakers because they not only tell you the weather and play your music, they can also quickly and without much training, get you the information you need to better understand what’s going on in the world and with regard to Covid-19.

Additionally, since we are home more than before, we want our technology to do more things around the house, like keep us warm, cool us off, and turn things on and off. That being said, computers and smartphones are still in the running. My clients need to be computer savvy to be able to Zoom and use services like Amazon and Instacart, because we now rely heavily on technology to communicate and to get the things we need.

My clients have been great through all this hustle and bustle! Although they want very much to come back to the Lighthouse and train face-to-face, they answer my calls every week, and we learn to do great things together. In short, Covid-19 hasn’t stopped us—it has expanded on the skills our clients need to be safe and happy, and I’m proud of the progress my clients have made. ■



Frances in the NPR LVIB Computer Lab with Doug, one of our technology instructors. She is learning how to use her mobile device in order to live more independently.

A NEW WAY TO “NAVIGATE” DURING THE PANDEMIC

Fannie Gasparik – Client Navigator

As navigators/drivers for people who are visually impaired and blind, the challenge of being able to help during the pandemic has stretched our imaginations. We had to make adjustments to some of the things we took for granted, like how we shook hands, how we filled a van with clients, and how we provided human guides. We also had to help in new ways, learn new skills, and change our schedules.

With all of our minds put together as ONE, we have been able to accomplish so many things in these past few months. We have assisted in the curbside children’s program by loading the vans with supplies and bringing visually impaired instructors to the children’s homes. We are filling shopping lists and dropping

food and medication off at our clients’ doors. We are delivering supplies to the teens for their Zoom classes. And during the summer, we safely brought our teens back and forth to the Lighthouse for their summer program. We also came into the office and are here to answer the phones and make wellness calls that let clients know we are here for them, at a time when many are experiencing extreme isolation.

COVID has changed a lot of things around the Lighthouse, but it has not changed the willingness of our navigators/drivers to help our clients in any way we can. It has not changed the compassion we feel for the Lighthouse Family who include our staff, clients, volunteers, and donors. Please let us know what we can do to help you feel safe. ■

FEARLESS TODDLER DEVELOPS A LOVE OF LITERACY

Becky Barber – Early Intervention Teacher

Abigail arrived three months sooner than she was expected into this world. She has been exceeding expectations ever since. She spent the first several months of her life in a hospital. Through lots of health crises and worry, she persevered, growing stronger every day. Due to her early arrival, she developed retinopathy of prematurity which caused her to lose vision in one eye and damaged the other.

When her family moved into the area the next year, they were happy to discover that early intervention vision services were available through the Lighthouse to help address her vision issues in their home. Abigail's family worked with several other therapy providers in clinical settings.

Soon, with lots of Lighthouse training, she was a fearless toddler and intrepid explorer. She moved around in her familiar surroundings at a typical toddler pace, full speed ahead. She was always interested in trying out new things and was eager to learn. Each week, she would meet the early interventionist at the door, full of joy and curiosity about what activities we would do that day. She especially loved doing big puzzles and

looking through familiar picture books. Her parents fostered an early love of reading by providing her with lots of age appropriate books and most importantly, sitting with her to read them over and over.

Abigail learned to use her fingers to fill in information that her eyes may have missed. For example, because depth perception is a challenge for her, she used one hand to find the spaces on a puzzle and the other for putting in specific pieces. Using touch to identify shapes is an important literacy skill for braille readers. Abigail learned ways to combine touching, listening, smelling, tasting and her residual vision, to help put together the big picture.

Since the start of the pandemic, we have not been able to meet face-to-face, however we still work with Abigail and her family every week to keep her on track. She was able to continue practicing with braille literacy materials such as dual print/braille children's books. She adores good books like Goodnight Moon and has read them dozens of times. Abigail is also a big fan of numbers, so the arrangement of bumps in certain patterns for letters

and words in braille is of interest to her. A favorite learning tool recently provided to Abigail was a set of wooden alphabet tiles with both indented print and raised braille letters. The tiles are smooth and fun to touch. They invite little fingers to feel over and over and connect the dots to the letters they represent. One day, all of this upside down time will be over, but the letters will be there a lifetime.

Abigail recently turned 5 years old and was ready to enter kindergarten on time with her sighted peers. Once again, the world was not quite ready for her. But after a few weeks delay to adapt, she was able to set off into this new adventure with happy anticipation. At her school, Abigail has a regular teacher and she is also working with a teacher for the visually impaired who makes sure the learning materials are accessible to Abigail. Already, she is putting those braille literacy skills she has developed to work. Abigail's mom says that she recognizes several letters by touch as well as her name. Each day, she is excited to go to school to find out what she can learn today. ■

“

At the Lighthouse, Abigail learned to use her fingers to fill in information that her eyes may have missed.



Abigail on the left, with her backpack and lunch bag, is ready for the first day of school. Abigail on the right, is learning to "write" with a Braille embosser.



Kenny is teaching Victoria white cane skills outside of the New Port Richey Lighthouse. He is our Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist.

ORIENTATION AND MOBILITY EXPLAINED

Kenny Ratzlaff – Orientation and Mobility Specialist

How do people who are visually impaired or blind learn to cross intersections, grocery shop, or take the public bus? If you're like many people, you may have wondered about these things once or twice!

That's where O&M services come in.

Orientation and Mobility (O&M) services are primarily directed towards assisting individuals who are blind or visually impaired to achieve independent movement within personal and public settings. O&M specialists provide support with all the things you've been wondering about! They also provide instruction to individuals with vision loss of all ages, including those with multiple disabilities and other health impairments.

What might an early O&M intervention cover? Along with safe and efficient movement, it may also emphasize skills like sensory awareness, concept development, environmental exploration, and more. Orientation and Mobility Specialists provide

instruction in basic skills and protective techniques, white cane travel, use of low vision devices, visual efficiency training, intersection analysis and safe street crossings, use of public transportation, and shopping skills. Adults are also taught to travel safely and efficiently in residential, rural, and urban environments, as needed.

Imagine having to learn or re-learn everything you know about the world! Of course, this year, we've all learned something about having to adapt to big changes. So, I'm sure you can relate, and you're not alone in this experience!

Because of the circumstances in 2020, the Lighthouse has changed how O&M services are offered. When providing services, health and safety is always at the forefront. During the pandemic, keeping clients safe was a major objective, but it was also a major hindrance when providing of all services...especially for O&M. This is because, traditionally, O&M requires close, physical contact as well as working in tight spaces to reflect real life situations.

So, what did we do to provide these services in a time of uncertainty, where physical contact wasn't so easy?

First, the need for safe and efficient travel by people with vision loss has not diminished this year! In response, the staff at the Lighthouse maintained constant contact with clients to determine who required O&M instruction for safety. Several online and phone classes were offered to discuss basic coping and safety skills for first-time clients, as well as to refresh O&M skills for other clients.

Let's look together at two examples of distance learning for O&M.

(1) Human Guide Techniques: It's important that family members, teachers, and significant others know how to properly perform human guide. During these conversational sessions, topics like navigating narrow spaces with a guide and using a cane while walking with a guide were in focus, among many others.

(2) Online Blindness 101—Everything you wanted to know about people who are blind...but were afraid to ask! This session began with a powerful quote: "A reporter asked a prominent blind woman, 'What is it that blind people would want from society?' The woman replied, 'The opportunity to be equal and the right to be different.'"

After a robust discussion on this aspect of blindness, the group learned about types of vision loss, definitions for parts of the eye, and common eye problems. Still, we can't forget basic courtesy, like saying your name and asking who else is in the room when you arrive, or offering to orient instead of automatically helping. White cane laws were also a major focus!

Even though the online sessions filled a much-needed gap, there are many clients that require beginning white cane skills training. So Kenny Ratzlaff, the LVIB O&M Instructor, is back to teaching white cane skills one-on-one, outside, with both participants wearing masks and staying six feet apart to ensure everyone's safety from the virus.

Because the clients and staff at the Lighthouse often have to adapt to new circumstances, we've risen to the challenges that 2020 has brought. We all want to thank you for making that possible for us! ■

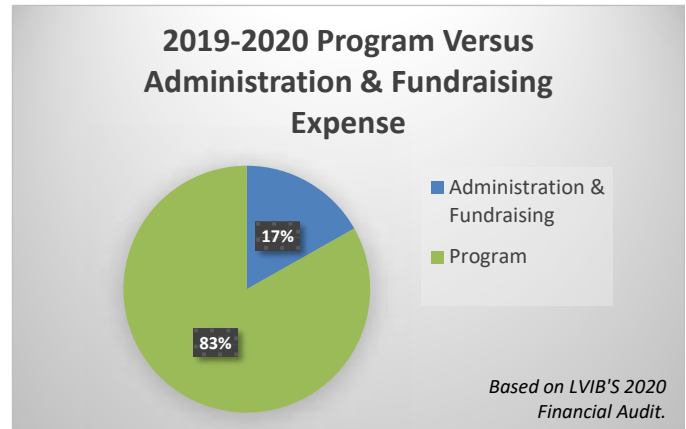
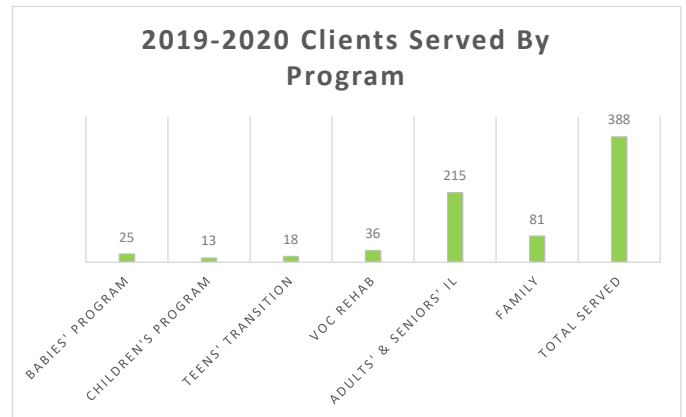
LIGHTHOUSE ANNUAL REPORT

The Lighthouse for the Visually Impaired and Blind is a 501(c)3 non-profit agency that provides Pasco, Hernando, and Citrus residents who are visually impaired with vision rehabilitation that enables them to live more safely and independently. Since 1983, Lighthouse has served tens of thousands of people. In the fiscal year ending June 30, 2020, we served over 300 clients and dozens of their family members. We are proud to state that the number of clients meeting their unique training goals is almost 95%. The charts on the right offer a breakdown of clients served by program in addition to the administration and fundraising percentage for the agency. Going forward, the number of clients is expected to increase as more clients are back to using services since the start of the pandemic.

Lighthouse programs and services are provided and supported by 24 staff members, 7 of whom are visually impaired. Lighthouse is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors who are as follows: EXECUTIVES: President: Jennifer Selk; Past-President: the Honorable Paul Firmani; Treasurer: Terry Haas; President-Elect: Shawn Foster; and Secretary: Matthew Murphy; DIRECTORS: Cami Austin; Kim Bogart; Susan Domingues Mayer; Dr. Jeffrey Hameroff; Captain Wendy Longman; Aaron Lyon; Dr. John Mann; Jamie Mick; Bruce Mills; J. Bruce Pienkos; and the Honorable Joseph Poblick M.P.A. Jamie Mick and J. Bruce Pienkos chair our major fundraising events which are respectively, the Annual Chasco Coronation Ball and Dining in the Dark/Donating in the Light.

CURRENT LIGHTHOUSE PROGRAMS INCLUDE:

- The **Babies' Program** serves clients age 0 through 5. The goal is to maximize the child's abilities, prepare him/her for independence and education, and provide information for the parents/caregiver.
- The **Children's Program** serves clients age 5 through 13. Children learn communication, self-help, self-advocacy, orientation and mobility (O&M), access technology (formerly known as assistive technology), and other skills.
- The **Teens' Transitional Program** serves clients age 14 through 22, with an emphasis on the skills required for transitioning to high school, trade school or college, moving into an apartment or dormitory, or finding and maintaining employment.
- The **Vocational Rehabilitation/Job Readiness Program** works with adults and seniors who are looking for employment or need assistance with maintaining employment.
- The **Adult Program and the Older Blind Program** provides instruction in independent living skills. Services such as vision rehabilitation therapy, O&M, access technology, screen magnification, adjustment to blindness counseling, sun shield assessment, and Braille literacy are offered as required by each client.
- **Client Support Services** have been introduced during the pandemic as a way to make sure our clients' basic needs are met and to keep them safe in their homes and in the community.
- The **Industry Program** provides employment and training for individuals who are visually impaired and blind.
- **Enrichment Programs** are also provided and include Art Class, Book Club, CCTV Lending Program, family counseling, and client support groups (Veterans, technology users, and drop-in). ■



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LVIB MAJOR EVENTS



~ The Chasco Coronation Ball celebrates local philanthropists
for their charitable work in Pasco County ~

Thank you to all our sponsors & donors for your support of the 2020-2021 event,
and thank you to our 2019 King Pithla & Queen Chasco,
Paul Friedlander & Lisa Shippy-Gonzalez, for extending their reign to 2021.

2020-2021 Chasco Coronation Ball Sponsors:

Presenting Sponsor—The Musunuru Family

Royal Bar—Rotary Club of New Port Richey
Court Amusement—The Bank of Tampa
Royal Chariot/Valet—Delzer, Coulter & Bell, P.A.

Regal Table—The Hook Law Group; Kemp, Ruge &
Green Law Group; Rotary Club of West Pasco Sunset
Regency—Terry Hass; Citarella Termite & Pest Mgmt.
Noble—Junior Service League of Greater NPR

For Ball nominees, prize donors, the next event date, and more info,
visit www.lvib.org/events/ball.

FIRST ANNUAL *Donating in the Light*

Thank you to all our sponsors & donors for making this virtual
fundraising event a wonderful success!

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For prize donors,
the next event date,
and more info:
www.lvib.org/events/donating-in-the-light

SUPPORTING WORKERS WHO ARE VISUALLY IMPAIRED AND BLIND

Peter James – Production Manager

Unemployment rates among those who are visually impaired or blind hover at 70%. To impact this disparity, LVIB provides employment opportunities to those affected by vision loss. The organization operates a program that employs blind people, such as Marlys on the far right, to distribute trash can liners and batteries to state government agencies. Many people are surprised to learn that the general public can also purchase these items from LVIB directly. Give us a call at (727) 815-0303 and see if we can help meet your trash can liner or battery needs or visit www.lvib.org/lvib-stores to view the current price list. ■



DAVISON SENSORY GARDEN & PLAYGROUND

Patricia Porter – Grants, Donations & Media

We are very excited to announce the Davison Sensory Garden & Playground at the New Port Richey Lighthouse is almost ready! The Davison Sensory Garden & Playground, made possible by generous donations from Kay Davison, Richard Schwartz, and the Florida Medical Clinic Foundation of Caring, is one of our newest endeavors that will enable LVIB clients to live more independently. Many features have been incorporated into the design which provide unprecedented access to the outdoors for clients of all ages. They will be safe within its enclosure, and learn white cane skills, develop their residual senses, participate in a garden club if desired, relax and listen to gently cascading water, or socialize with other visitors. Youngsters will also learn to play independently and with others, in the playground that includes climbers, musical instruments, shaded areas, and tactile markers—all of which will inspire the freedom to learn and explore because the area is designed to meet their specific accessibility needs! ■



A Lighthouse awaits the delivery of playground equipment (left)—it represents our services which are a beacon of hope to people who are visually impaired and blind. On the right, in February 2019, major donors Richard Schwartz and Kay Davison prepared to break ground for the NPR LVIB Sensory Garden & Playground with LVIB Chairperson Jennifer Selk (middle).

LVIB AGENCY ANNOUNCEMENT —NEW ED STARTS NOVEMBER 2020

Patricia Porter – Grants, Donations & Media

On November 2, 2020, Lighthouse for the Visually Impaired and Blind will have a new Executive Director.

Stefanie Pontlitz will succeed Jonathan Fister, upon his retirement later this year. Pontlitz joins the Lighthouse after serving as Vice President of Development for Youth and Family Alternatives and prior to that, COO of the United Way of Pasco County. Her extensive leadership and fundraising experience will enable the Lighthouse to expand its services to people who are visually impaired.

Pontlitz is a Pasco resident and has held multiple leadership positions in the community, including President of the Association of Fundraising Professionals, President of Leadership Pasco, Founder and President of Business Networking International – Outlook to Success Chapter, President of the Junior Service League, and President of Trinity Rotary, among many others. She was also named Hometown Hero in 2017 by “It’s Your Home Trinity Magazine.”

“I am incredibly excited to join LVIB. I’ve seen the dedication and passion the staff have for their clients, and I look forward to working with them and the Board of Directors. By empowering those with visual impairment and blindness, we provide members of our community with the chance to achieve their goals and live independent lives. This is a mission I am proud to be a part of,” said Pontlitz.

Jonathan Fister, who began with the Lighthouse in February 2019, will be remembered for several reasons—the grand opening of the NPR Lighthouse, overseeing a much-needed Brooksville Lighthouse renovation, and leading LVIB successfully through uncertain times precipitated by COVID-19; and all the while, he lead selflessly, with great skill, conviction, and a wonderful sense of humor.

“On behalf of the Board of Directors, I wish Jonathan all the best in his retirement. Jonathan has committed



the majority of his professional life to advocating for and supporting those who are blind and visually impaired. We were fortunate to have him lead our agency. His contributions are greatly appreciated,” said Jennifer Selk, LVIB Board Chair:

Jonathan leaves us with this: “My time as the LVIB CEO is coming to an end. The last two years were an opportunity for me to meet and work with a team of talented, dedicated people. To the Board of Directors, the staff and our clients, I say thank you. As newcomers to Florida, you made me and my wife Ann feel welcome and appreciated. Because of you, we now feel as if we are part of the fabric of the community. As I ride off into the sunset, I will always look back on my time at LVIB with fondness and love. Stay well my friends. Keep up the good work of educating, empowering, and employing those who are blind and visually impaired.” ■



Christopher Williams – LVIB Director

What do you picture when you think about the Lighthouse?

Maybe our lovable furry mascot comes to mind. Perhaps your heart grows warmer thinking of someone close to you whose life has been transformed. Understandably, you may also think of our wonderful sense of community and inclusivity.

For me, as a board member at the Lighthouse, I think of good stewardship. Never before have I worked with an organization whose leadership is as engaged and invested in the well-being of their organization, despite the challenges.

How can we best put that good stewardship into effect today? With another type of challenge from our out-going CEO and our incoming new ED, to our board and our donors... Jonathan Fister and Stefanie Pontlitz have agreed to generously donate \$200 each to Lighthouse’s general operating fund.

Through this matched giving challenge, we hope that you, if you’re able, and all our board members, will join us in contributing the same \$200 amount, so we can continue to meet the demand for Lighthouse programs and services.

To show my commitment to our mission today, I’ve accepted this challenge from Jonathan and Stefanie and have matched their gift.

How can you join me and accept the challenge too? By donating to the Lighthouse for the Visually Impaired and Blind by December 31, 2020. Donations can be made by check, by phone, and online, at 9130 Ridge Road, New Port Richey, FL 34654-5034, (727) 815-0303, lvib.org. Please indicate that your donation is for our match giving challenge. ■

Low Vision Clinic Services Available at the Lighthouse in Pasco



Dr. Edward J. Huggett, of the Low Vision and Binocular Vision Clinic of FL, is now the resident Optometrist at The Lighthouse of Pasco.

Make your appointment today for your low vision exam.

Call the Lighthouse for more information at
727-815-0303

And visit Dr. Huggett's website at:
www.lowvisionsupport.org



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DONATIONS, GRANTS, & OTHER SUPPORT

Lighthouse programs and services are provided at no cost, thanks to the Florida Division of Blind Services, our donors, and our volunteers. Throughout the year, our donors and volunteers have responded to requests for support by providing funds and gifts-in-kind, attending our fundraisers, and volunteering. In the fiscal year ending June 30, 2020, 73 volunteers provided approximately 2,502 hours of service. Below is a partial list of recent donors and grantors (grant initiatives are in parentheses). Thank you to everyone for helping us meet our mission.

DONORS OF \$200+ SINCE 09/19/2019

100+ Women Who Care in Nature Coast; AmeriKey Locksmith; ABCO Graphics & Commercial Print; Area Agency on Aging of Pasco-Pinellas/Pasco Aging Network (Seniors); Barbara & Donald Baker; Bank of Tampa; Sanford & Victoria Barley; Bayonet Point Hudson Cardiology Associates; Black Diamond Ranch; Gary Blackwell Charitable Foundation; Lauren, Blaire & Landon Borie; BPOE Pinellas Park; Brooksville Country Club at Majestic Oaks; Linda Brown/Publix Store 1282 Shoppes at Avalon; Jerry Campbell/Domino's Pizza; Cason Photography; Kevin & Gigi Citarella/Citarella Termite & Pest Management; Community Foundation of Tampa Bay (Client Support Services); Mike Currie Electric; Kay Davison, Roger Deckard; Delzer, Coulter & Bell, P.A.; Divinity Med Spa; Dobies Funeral Home; Sarah Duncan; Felten Professional Adjustment Team; First United Methodist Church; Jonathan Fister & Ann Peterson; Florida Medical Clinic Foundation of Caring (NPR Playground Equipment); Marilyn & Glenn Gilbert; Gulf Coast Middle School/M. Ames & B. Stewart; Gulf Coast Academy of Science & Technology/N. Morici & J. Steele; Alan & Linda Goodson; Terry & Mary Haas; Ruth Haines; Roseann & Sam Hammock; Harper Family Charitable Foundation (Adults & Seniors); Hernando Computer Club; Melissa Hess Photography/HDM Photography; High Point Lions Club; Holiday Inn Clearwater Beach South Harbourside; Hook Law Group; Hudson-Bayonet Point Lions Foundation; Jennifer Gardens Assisted Living Facility; Jones

& Company CPAs; Junior Service League of Greater NPR; Petra & Joseph Justice; Shah Karma Foundation; Karma Spirits & Cafe; Kemp, Ruge & Green Law Group; Patrick & Dianne Kerr; Lions Club of Zephyrhills; Aaron & Nikki Lyon; David & Lisa Maharajh; Hung & Chi Mai; John & Debbie Mann; Declan P. Mansfield; Rick Matthews Buick GMC; Mid-Florida Community Services; Joseph C. Militello, MD/The Eye Center, Medical & Surgical Eye Care; Morris Tree Service; Nativity Lutheran Church/David & Marie Trompeter Endowment Fund (Seniors); Debbie Oaster; Elinor & Bill Paladine; Pasco County Community Development (Client Support Services & PPE); Mike Fasano/Pasco County Tax Collector; Periodontal Therapy Center; Joanne Perrone Uzzo; Photos by J David; J. Bruce & Maria Pienkos; Pin Chasers Midtown; John & Beth Powanda; PRP Wine International/Francis Wolf; Publix Super Markets Charities; Edward Quigley Jr.; Kenny & Kay Ratzlaff; David Reczek; RESPECT of Florida (Pasco Pickers); Sun Roberts; Rotary Club of Holiday; Rotary Club of New Port Richey; Rotary Club of Seven Springs; Saddlebrook Resort; Antonio & Maria Santo; Richard M. Schulze Family. Fdn/Power of 100; Richard Schwartz; Donald Schwartz; Jay C. Brown/Security Fire Equipment; Seggie Custom Builders; Geraldine & Thomas Seitz; Shapes Fitness for Women WC; Ann Sheeky; Arnold Sherman; Sir Speedy Professional Printing & Mktg Svs; Doris & Ronald Smith; Southern Hills Plantation Golf Club; Suncoast Clinical Research; Sunrise Consulting; Synovus Securities; Vincent Sylvia Titone Foundation; United Way of Hernando County (Adults & Seniors); United Way of Pasco County (Teens, Adults & Seniors); Vanda Pharmaceuticals; Walmart Neighborhood Market #6207 & Walmart Supercenter #1213 (Job Readiness); Christopher Williams; Wendy Longman/Windsong Charters & Boat Rentals; and Tom 'Operaman' Workman.

MEMORIALS

Christine Anzalone, in memory of Louis Anzalone; Raola Bear & Bertha Schalk, in memory of Harold (Max) Bear; Raola Bear, in memory of Ralph & Viola Berrey; Doyle Brown, in memory of Theresa Brown; George



Florida Medical Clinic Foundation of Caring's ED Angela Pottinger presents a check to Jonathan Fister for playground equipment in the Davison Sensory Garden & Playground.

& Ivy Ward, in memory of Janet Carlson; Barbara De Vito, in memory of Merry Casey; Barbara Tadda, in memory of Harry Chuderevicz; C & K Clark Family Foundation, in memory of Ann Clark; Cheryl Herrington, in memory of Ruby Daniels; Ronald J. & Ruth Dean, in memory of Robert L. Dean; Lisa Mullis, in memory of Manetta Erikson; Beverly Pollack, in memory of King Helie; Sally Woodtke, in memory of Bea Kamen; Janet Sellers & Betty Warrick, in memory of Joan Knowles; John McKenna, in memory of Thomas J. McKenna; Florence Quirke, in memory of Kenny Quirke; Bertha Schalk & Raola Bear, in memory of August L. Schalk; & James Riccio, in memory of Sandra Tufel.

YOUR DOLLARS AT WORK— CLIENT TESTIMONIALS

- “I didn't realize how much the training would impact my daily life! Hats off to those who make services possible.”
- “I was taught how to use an app that describes things and I'm 'over the moon'—for the first time, I've been able to 'see' my husband!!”
- “I'm grateful for LH services and appreciate all that staff members did to help me reach my goals.”
- “I appreciate that LVIB went with me to my child's IEP meeting at school.”
- “Thanks for all the help provided in my home. I now use my appliances independently.”
- “LVIB provides amazing services and encouragement to blind folk. They connected me to others who are blind and to books on tape, which have both been a lifesaver for me!” ■

If you would like to help or learn more, please contact the Lighthouse.
We need your support in order to meet the growing need for Lighthouse programs and services.



THANK
YOU FOR
ALL YOUR
SUPPORT,
WHICH
HELPS MAKE
LIGHTHOUSE
SERVICES
POSSIBLE.

Lighthouse for the Visually
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New Port Richey, FL
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Fax (727) 815-0203

Hernando & Citrus Counties

6492 California Street
Brooksville, FL 34604
Phone (352) 754-1132
Fax (352) 754-5118



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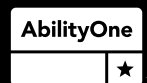


LighthouseVIB



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is an AbilityOne® Authorized Provider, and
is sponsored by the Florida Department of
Education, Division of Blind Services, and the
United Ways of Pasco and Hernando Counties.



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