



LIGHT LINE™

A MONTHLY BLOG FROM MIAMI LIGHTHOUSE FOR THE BLIND

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Miami Lighthouse welcomes 2016. Make it a happy and healthy one!

Lots of excitement here at Miami Lighthouse as we welcome 2016 and begin our 85th Anniversary Celebration year. Yes, we have much to celebrate, thanks to our generous and caring donors and our faithful volunteers, all whom have been instrumental in making Miami Lighthouse the outstanding organization it is today. As we begin the New Year we continue to strive for excellence and expand our services by introducing a pre-kindergarten for blind three- and four-year old children and other innovative services.

Before 2015 ends, I would like to share with you additional exciting news from the federal government. Last week, President Obama signed the Protecting Americans from Tax Hikes (PATH) Act of 2015, which allows eligible individuals to make tax-free contributions from IRA accounts - up to \$100,000 - to charitable organizations. People age 70 ½ and older can take advantage of this opportunity by transferring funds directly from their IRA to the charitable organization by December 31, 2015. Miami Lighthouse provides numerous opportunities to invest in quality programs that provide high impact to the more than 14,000 individuals we serve each year. Your gift now will improve someone's life forever. To make a transfer from your IRA to Miami Lighthouse, contact your IRA plan administrator. Please note that some financial organizations have deadlines of one week or more so contacting them well before December 31, 2015 is advised to make the contribution for the 2015 tax year. Should you have any questions, or wish to make a contribution directly using a credit card, please call Heidy Farinas at 786-362-7510.

Virginia A. Jacko
President & CEO

Florida Blue Foundation Selects Miami Lighthouse For The Blind To Bring Low Vision Services To Underserved Seniors Affected By Age-Related Eye Disease

Florida Blue Foundation has announced that Miami Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired (MLB) has been awarded a three-year grant for the purpose of implementing the project "Bringing Low Vision Assessments to Underserved Populations and Training Professionals to Work with Seniors Affected by Age-Related Eye Disease." Miami Lighthouse works in concert with Florida International University and the Alliance for Aging, according to Virginia Jacko, President and CEO of Miami Lighthouse.

As funded by the Florida Blue Foundation, the project is expected to greatly improve the quality of life and level of independence of low vision, low-income seniors by providing direct service which is expected to result in reduced overall medical costs. During years one and two of the project, Miami Lighthouse will track patient and project data on low vision exams/occupational therapy services and insurance information. In the third year the information will be compared with equivalent services in Chicago and in New York to determine whether billing codes are adequate. A toolkit will be developed to replicate the training throughout Florida.

Florida Blue Foundation enables healthy communities by making grants, building coalitions and rewarding best practices. More than three million people in Florida have received direct health services as a result of grants made to nonprofit organizations since the Foundation's founding in 2001. Florida Blue Foundation is a trade name of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida Foundation, Inc., an independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

For more information about the Foundation, please visit www.bluefoundationfl.com or contact Toni Woods at 904-905-3153, Toni.Woods@floridablue.com. Florida Blue and the Florida Blue Foundation are on Facebook and Twitter.

Miami Herald's Wish Book

In this weekend's Miami Herald Wish Book "Blind 1-year-old boy needs toys he can hear, feel," Brandon Boyd Jr. reminds us to be grateful this holiday season and his mother Shamiska Miller reinforces what Miami Lighthouse teaches-it's possible to see without sight™:

"Him (Brandon) not being able to see won't stop him from doing a lot of things," Miller said, holding her son in her lap in the living room of the small Brownsville home she shares with her mother and six siblings. "I don't feel that because he's blind he should be told you can't do this or you can't do that. I treat him like I would any other baby."

To read Brandon's story click here <http://www.miamiherald.com/living/wish-book/article49337020.html>.

Collaborating with Academe

Congratulations to Miami Lighthouse Occupational and Low Vision Therapist, Raquel Van Der Biest, who was recently appointed to the Florida International University Occupational Therapy Advisory Committee. As a committee member, Ms. Van Der Biest will help determine educational priorities and give advice and input to FIU's new curriculum for the Professional Master of Science in Occupational Therapy. The committee term is for two years.

Contributed by Joan Spector

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