



### In This Issue

[How Miami's Blind Handled Hurricane Irma](#)

[Able Trust recognizes Miami Lighthouse leadership](#)

[Miami-Dade Beacon Council visits Miami Lighthouse](#)

[VISIT WEBSITE](#)

## How Miami's Blind Handled Hurricane Irma



Photo by blind fields / Flickr

Hurricane Irma ravaged South Florida and in its path left many without power. Imagine being blind and living alone during a natural disaster. Miami Lighthouse for the Blind opened its doors to many of our blind and visually impaired seniors who had no food, power or air-conditioning. In the wake of Hurricane Irma Miami Lighthouse became a sanctuary for the blind.

This week Isabella Gomes, a reporter for the Miami New Times, wrote an informative article entitled "How Miami's Blind Handled Hurricane Irma." Click [here](#) to read the article and find out how Miami Lighthouse was a sanctuary for the blind and visually impaired after Hurricane Irma.

## Able Trust recognizes Miami Lighthouse leadership.

Yes, we're proud! Proud that the Able Trust named our President & CEO, Virginia Jacko, as the winner of this year's prestigious "Dr. George L. Spelios Leadership Award." This highly competitive award recognizes outstanding leadership and advocacy efforts of an executive director or president of a Florida non-profit disability organization.



"Helping our most vulnerable populations be independent has been the Miami Lighthouse's mission since 1931," says CEO Jacko. "With today's technology, the blind and visually impaired are no longer confined to making brooms and caning chairs. Here at the Lighthouse they learn to use computers with special screen-reading software and become empowered to lead productive, confident and independent lives."

The "Spelios Award" highlights programs that lead to employment for the disabled, with mention of the Lighthouse's innovative High School Tech Program that saw 18 teenagers working in competitive internships this past summer, and five of our high school students off to college with STEM majors as a result of their Lighthouse training. The program is partially funded by the Division of Blind Services and The Able Trust.

The award also recognized the outstanding success of our Adult Music Program that has helped our adult musicians be hired for numerous paid performances. The Miami Lighthouse Band, composed of highly professional blind and visually impaired instrumentalists and vocalists, can be commissioned for private and corporate events for reasonable fees.

If you think you may have internship opportunities for some of our students or need excellent musicians for your next event, please contact Chief Program Officer Carol Brady-Simmons at 786-362-7480. Click [here](#) for a video of some of our musicians' recent performances.

Our Solutions Center is proud to offer the only portable video magnifier that is compatible with iPad, Android, PC and MAC computers. It will magnify near and far and will actually translate text to speech with OCR so you can listen to it read aloud through your computer's speakers. Lightweight, sturdy and very portable, the new version has a powerful wireless camera for distance viewing that provides magnification up to 40x in full HD with integrated capture function. John is particularly enthusiastic about this piece of equipment because he believes it is perfect for today's active senior.

Another fascinating new product offers a system of tactile drawing tools that are designed to bring learning, creativity and fun to the user's fingertips. For the first time, blind users will be able to create, edit and share tactile drawings like their sighted peers.

In addition, the new Phoenix Braille Embosser is actually a ninth generation of Braille embossing technology, and offers the user, also for the first time, the capability of embossing PRN files that contain instructions for the printer as well as other important controls.

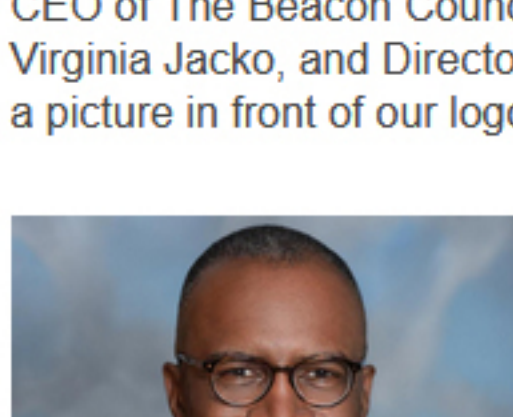
Visit our Low Vision Solutions Center or call 786-362-7489 for more information on these exciting new products or call 786-362-7479 to schedule a low vision functional assessment.

With the completion of our new Lighthouse Learning Center for Children™ this August, our Vision Solutions Center will very shortly be moving back to its spacious main floor location, and access will be available directly from our new parking garage.

## Miami-Dade Beacon Council visits Miami Lighthouse



CEO of The Beacon Council Michael A. Finney, CEO of Miami Lighthouse Virginia Jacko, and Director of External Relations Cameron Sisser pose for a picture in front of our logo.



Newly appointed President & CEO of The Beacon Council Michael A. Finney toured Miami Lighthouse for the Blind's facility on September 19th. Mr. Finney visited the new Lighthouse Learning Center for Children™ Pre-Kindergarten, the Music Program and our Electronic Information Accessibility Department.

Mr. Finney learned what services Miami Lighthouse can offer members of the Beacon Council, such as, website consultation that will assist them in achieving maximum compliance with Section 508 and WCAG standards and best practices.

We thank President & CEO of the Beacon Council Michael A. Finney for spending time at Miami Lighthouse.

*Contributed by Joan Spector*

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