



# LIGHT LINE™

A MONTHLY BLOG FROM MIAMI LIGHTHOUSE FOR THE BLIND

Issue 62  
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August 31 is the conclusion of the first year of The Wildflower Foundation matching challenge. There is still time for you to help us provide year-round Music and Tactile Art Programs while having your gift matched one for one!

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## Celebrating Excellence!

Join us in celebrating our outstanding Transition Program and the significant success of two of our remarkable students: Marnel Jean, 18, who won Florida's Able Trust Regional Speech Competition, and Silvio Plata, 15, who recently hit the front pages of the Miami Herald as the winner of the State Braille Challenge.

Marnel, who is both visually and hearing impaired, recently graduated from Dr. Michael M. Krop Senior High School and plans to study music composition and trombone performance at the New World School of the Arts. With a passion for music he sometimes cannot contain, after winning the Regional Able Trust Award for his speech on the importance of higher education, Marnel ran into the music rehearsal room at Miami Lighthouse and played a long celebratory rumble on his trombone to the delight of fellow students and instructors.



*Marnel Jean at The Able Trust  
Regional Speech Competition*

Silvio Plata, is a cancer survivor, a talented pianist and singer, and especially skilled at typing and reading Braille. Participants in the Challenge are tested on reading comprehension, spelling, speed and accuracy, proofreading and charts and graphs. Ilena Plata, Silvio's mother, noted that "Miami Lighthouse was the first door that opened to us when Silvio was 18 months old and he lost both his eyes. Where he is now would not be possible without Miami Lighthouse and all their support."



*Silvio Plata recently won the State Braille Challenge*

Miami Lighthouse is proud of the success of our innovative Transition Program which has been carefully designed to provide confidence and independence to our teen aged members. Marnel and Silvio are two wonderful examples of the program's shining stars. We congratulate them both and wish them, and all of our devoted followers, a Happy Independence Day!

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## **Rotary Club of Miami Honors CEO Jacko with 2019 "Distinguished Citizens Award"**

Miami Lighthouse's President and CEO Virginia Jacko received Rotary Club of Miami's 2019 "Distinguished Citizens Award" at the 103rd Presidential Installation Ceremony for their new President, Norby Rudel. This award acknowledges a special individual for their contributions to the community and Rotary Club of Miami presented a check of \$500 to Miami Lighthouse in CEO Jacko's honor.

Our Miami Lighthouse dates back to the late 1920's when the Miami Rotarians worked with Dolly Gamble, a remarkable blind activist and promoter of Braille literacy, to found the Florida Association of Workers for the Blind which later became Miami Lighthouse for the Blind.

We thank the Rotarians for this honor and wish the best of luck to the new Rotary Club of Miami President Norby Rudel!



*Rotarians Phil Seipp and Noreen Timoney along with Cameron Sisser, V.P. for External Relations, present the "Distinguished Citizens Award" to President and CEO Virginia Jacko*

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## **Our Transition Students Enjoy a Special Sensory Experience during a Hands-On Florida Panthers Hockey Clinic**

Our Transition program for teenage students took part in a hands-on hockey clinic thanks to the Florida Panthers Foundation. The teenagers played hockey at the BB&T Center and participated in a touch tour and career development panel conducted by Doug Plagens, Announcer for the Florida Panthers.

Miami Lighthouse's Transition Program is a year-round program that provides individuals ages 14-22 the opportunity to develop skills to enter the work force or post-secondary education.

Miami Lighthouse and the Florida Panther's Foundation recently joined forces to provide financially disadvantaged Florida students the opportunity to have better vision at no cost. With a \$25,000 Community Champions grant from the Florida Panther's Foundation, Miami Lighthouse's Florida Heiken Children Vision Program has broadened its reach throughout South Florida and serviced more students who are in dire need of eye care.

Thank you again to the Florida Panthers Foundation for providing such an inclusive, fun activity for our students!



*Miami Lighthouse Transition Students with Florida Panthers mascot Viktor E. Rat*

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## In the News:

[TIME, June 26, 2019 - "None of the 2020 Presidential Candidates' Websites Are Fully Accessible to Disabled Voters"](#)

[SunSentinel, June 19, 2019 - "White glove treatment: Teens 'see' antique cars through touch"](#)

[Local 10, June 06, 2019 - "Blind preschoolers help prep father's faces for shaving"](#)

[Read more!](#)

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*Contributed by Joan Spector*

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