



LIGHT LINE™

A MONTHLY BLOG FROM MIAMI LIGHTHOUSE FOR THE BLIND

Issue 108
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Miami Lighthouse wins coveted Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce NOVO Award

As we celebrated Cortical Visual Impairment (CVI) month in September it was very fitting that Miami Lighthouse received the coveted Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce Nonprofit Business Innovative Excellence NOVO Award honoring a non-profit with an annual budget of \$2 million plus for our Cortical Visual Impairment (CVI) Collaborative Center. Our CVI Collaborative Center is Florida's first initiative addressing CVI through a collaboration of medical professionals, educators, service providers, researchers, and community partners. We express our gratitude to our collaborative members: University of Miami Bascom Palmer Eye Institute, NSU College of Medicine and College of Optometry, The Brain Institute at Nicklaus Children's Hospital, Miami-Dade County Public Schools, as well as, our initial funders The Children's Trust and the Health Foundation of South Florida for their support of this critical collaborative.

To watch The Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce NOVO Award Finalists video [click here](#).



Left to right: *Claudia Carral, Parent of Miami Lighthouse Academy Student; Cameron Sisser, Senior Vice President Miami Lighthouse; Tania Perez, Associate Director of Miami Lighthouse CVI Collaborative Center; Myrna Vaca- Director of Community Relations University of Miami Health System; Francesca Crozier-Fitzgerald, Director of Miami Lighthouse CVI Collaborative Center; Virginia Jacko, President and CEO Miami Lighthouse; Gale Nelson, Chair Greater Miami Chamber Non Profit Business Committee; Deborah Koch, Vice Chair Greater Miami Chamber Non Profit Business Committee; Hector Ponte, Incoming Greater Miami Chamber Chair; Juan Dupuy, Parent of Miami Lighthouse Academy Student; Dr. Anuj Jayakar, Pediatric Neurologist Nicklaus Children's Hospital Brain Institute*

Our students enjoy a "once in a lifetime" experience!

More than 50 Miami Lighthouse students zoomed into an extraordinary adventure when car enthusiasts and sponsors donated their time to give them the ride of their lives. Our students interacted with an impressive fleet of over 20 high-performance vehicles, and were able to hear and feel the roar of the engines, as well as, sit in, explore and ride in the captivating cars ranging from Ferraris, McLarens, Porsches, Lamborghinis, Vipers, a NASCAR and many more. The highly anticipated event was carefully designed to instill confidence through the power of touch and interaction with the cars.

The event garnered extensive media coverage including [CBS-4 Miami](#), [WPLG Channel 10](#), [DuPont Registry](#) and [Community Newspapers](#).



Miami Lighthouse Students pose in front of Homestead-Miami Speedway NASCAR

We thank all our sponsors who made the event possible: Michael Weintraub, Homestead Miami Speedway, Grove Bank & Trust, Luisa and George Foyo, Milagros and Juan Fernandez Barquin Sr., Caridad and Edward Ruggiero, The Collection, Baptist Health South Florida, Caterina Sastri, Frank Voytek, Pete Fernandez, Alexander Mendoza, Nielson Family, Neil Solser, Trish and Dan Bell, Pepe Abrante Cosio, John Vidalin, Dr. Mike McDermott, Jhonny Mercado, German Valencia, Olga Villaverde, Alexander de la Cruz, Dr. Ari and Patty Abril, David Pernas, The Grandio Family, Albert Gocsmann, Becoming Legendary, SFM Services, AG Supercars, WTS Dynamics, Flatout Investments, and others.

Miami Dade Optometric Physicians Association Meeting Held at Miami Lighthouse

Members of the Miami Dade Optometric Physicians Association (MDOPA) held their September dinner meeting at Miami Lighthouse. Dr. Eric Chow, MDOPA President, welcomed attendees and Virginia Jacko, President and CEO of Miami Lighthouse, introduced a video about our Miami Lighthouse Florida Heiken Children's Vision Program which was established by MDOPA members in 1992 as the Dr. Bruce Heiken Memorial Fund. Dr. Carlos Mendoza-Santiesteban, Associate Professor of Clinical Ophthalmology at University of Miami

Bascom Palmer Eye Institute, along with Francesca Crozier-Fitzgerald, Director of Miami Lighthouse CVI Collaborative Center and Tania Perez, Associate Director of Miami Lighthouse CVI Collaborative Center gave a continuing education presentation on “CVI : From the Clinical and Educational Perspectives”. The evening’s music was provided by Miami Lighthouse nationally recognized Music Program and the event was sponsored by Physician Recommended Nutraceuticals.



Miami Lighthouse Honorary Board Director Dr. Maricarmen Perez Blanco, President and CEO Virginia Jacko, Dr. Carlos Mendoza-Santiesteban and President of MDOPA Dr. Eric Chow

White Cane Day Walk

We invite you to celebrate nearly 95 years of providing hope, confidence and independence to the blind and visually impaired as we celebrate National White Cane Day on Monday, October 16th, starting at 8:30am. Over 150 blind and visually impaired program participants will raise awareness about White Cane Safety Laws, escorted by City of Miami Fire and Police Departments, and led by Grand Marshals Miami-Dade County Commissioners Eileen Higgins and Micky Steinberg and Albert

Gocsmen for his volunteer efforts, walking from Miami Lighthouse, down SW 8th Street and back.

The celebration will continue with lunch sponsored by McDonald's and featured entertainment for the celebratory affair will be our nationally recognized Miami Lighthouse Music Program. There will be a raffle with prizes and giveaways and much more. Event sponsors include Uber, Verizon Tracfone, Tropical Financial Credit Union, 305 Hive, Vispero, Keiser University, Mattingly Low Vision, Ambutech, and others.

Where: Miami Lighthouse for the Blind
601 Southwest 8th Avenue
Miami, FL 33130

When: Monday, October 16, 2023
8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
Breakfast, snack and lunch provided

Cost: \$10 suggested contribution for the visually impaired,
\$20 for all other participants

Register: Erika Deetjen, edeetjen@miamilighthouse.org

In the News:

- [Miami's Community News, September 20, 2023 – "Drivers Showcase High-Performance Cars for Charity Providing Blind Students Once-in-a-Lifetime Experience"](#)
- [Miami's Community News, September 17, 2023 – "Miami Lighthouse for the Blind hosts back-to-school event"](#)
- [South Dade News Leader, September 8, 2023 – "Vision Screening Comes to Keys Gate Charter School"](#)

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Contributed by Joan Spector

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