

The Chicago Lighthouse  
2011 Annual Report

new  
sites,  
new  
sight.





Cover image: Sam Negron, who is totally blind and a Chicago Lighthouse Communications Center intern, demonstrates the new BrainPort technology during a recent visit to Chicago's Navy Pier.

BrainPort is breakthrough technology that translates visual information from a digital video camera to a blind person's tongue through gentle electrical stimulation, providing the ability to identify nearby highly-contrasting objects, even reading letters and numbers.

See page 8 for more details.

For The Chicago Lighthouse, 2011 was a year of new sites with planning a comprehensive vision care facility in Glenview, establishing a retail presence at Navy Pier, and forging a new partnership with Best Buy®.

It was also a year of new sight that promised exciting breakthroughs for individuals who are blind through the Lighthouse's participation in a FDA clinical trial to evaluate the cutting edge BrainPort technology.

## Letter from our Chairman and President and Executive Director

Dear Friends:

Development of a comprehensive site in Glenview. A retail venture at Navy Pier. A jobs program in Rock Island. A partnership with Best Buy®. Cutting edge research that can further open doors for people who are blind or visually impaired. All of these exciting innovations were occurring at The Chicago Lighthouse in 2011. They represent “new sites” for our agency. As such, we thought it appropriate to dedicate this year’s Annual Report to them and all the other far-reaching initiatives that are taking place here with the support of our generous friends and supporters.

Thanks to a grant from the North Suburban Healthcare Foundation, we will make history in January 2012 by opening a “new site” in suburban Glenview. This marks the first time that we will provide comprehensive services beyond our main operation on Roosevelt Road. Among other things, the new Chicago Lighthouse Vision Rehabilitation Center will offer a state-of-the-art vision care clinic and retail store with the latest in adaptive technology devices.

Another “new site” that came about in 2011 was our retail operation on Chicago’s bustling Navy Pier, the city’s premier tourist attraction.

The store, which sells lighthouse-themed and other



nautical souvenirs, employs individuals who are visually impaired.

With an unacceptably high unemployment rate of 75%, finding jobs for individuals who are blind is job one for us. Accordingly, we were pleased to develop a jobs program in cooperation with Ability One and the U.S. Army at the military arsenal in Rock Island, Illinois. This additional “new site” is providing employment for even more people who are blind or visually impaired.

In a time of government cutbacks, forging ahead with new partners in the private sector is absolutely essential to any non-profit’s success. At the Lighthouse, we embarked on a bold new effort this past year with Best Buy®. Our adaptive technology area, under the leadership of Tom Perski, began hosting special displays showcasing video magnifiers, software, and large print keyboards at “new sites” in Best Buy® stores in Chicago suburbs to assist those customers experiencing vision loss. The initial results have been promising and the company plans to add monthly Lighthouse

displays at other stores in the coming year.

In addition to all these endeavors, the Lighthouse has been “the new site” of groundbreaking research that can result in greater opportunities for people who are blind or visually impaired.

Working with the medical firm, Wicab, Inc., our research department is gathering data for BrainPort, an investigational non-surgical assistive visual prosthetic device that translates information from a digital video camera to a blind person’s tongue, through gentle electrical stimulation.

The device can enable people who are blind to reach for nearby objects, identify alphanumeric characters, and become more aware of their surroundings. In the long-term, we hope that this can boost employment options even more for people who are blind.

To make sure that The Chicago Lighthouse will continue to develop such pioneering initiatives as these to better serve people who rely on our programs, we launched a major endowment effort in June called “Share The Vision: A Campaign to Secure the Future.”

Co-chaired by two outstanding Lighthouse board members, Dr. Warren Chapman and Marv Lader, our goal is to raise \$15 million over the next three years for our endowment.

While coping with a challenging economy and fewer governmental resources, we are pleased to report that The Chicago Lighthouse is facing the future with optimism, confidence, and our agency’s favorite word, Hope! As proud as we are

of our agency’s accomplishments in 2011, we are setting our “sights” on achieving even more in 2012!

We encourage you to visit either of our sites in Chicago and Glenview and help us provide Hope for those who have impaired vision.

Sincerely,

**Bruce R. Hague**  
Chair, Board of Directors

**Janet P. Szlyk, Ph.D.**  
President and Executive Director

**Finding jobs for individuals who are blind is job one for us.**

# new sites to reach more in need



## New Comprehensive Vision Care Facility in Glenview

It has a state-of-the-art vision care clinic offering optometry, psychological counseling and occupational therapy services. It provides a legal clinic and retail store offering the latest in adaptive technology services. It boasts an array of enrichment programs for children and seniors.

In addition, it marks the first time in its 106-year-old history that The Chicago Lighthouse is operating a comprehensive facility outside its current headquarters at 1850 W. Roosevelt Road.

Thanks to a special gift from The North Suburban Healthcare Foundation (NSHF), the Lighthouse unveiled the new site, known as The Chicago Lighthouse Vision Rehabilitation Center, at 222 Waukegan Road in suburban Glenview this past January.

Noting that its mission is to promote health, wellness and education in north suburban communities, NSHF President Beverley Kroll observed that The Chicago Lighthouse, with its reputation for providing innovative services to seniors and other groups, was a perfect fit.

“We are absolutely thrilled about expanding our services to many underserved communities in Glenview and surrounding suburbs,” said Lighthouse President Dr. Janet Szlyk. “We extend our deepest appreciation to the North Suburban Healthcare Foundation for their amazing generosity and vote of confidence in us!”

Serving as Director of Operations is Kevin Hurst, who comes to us with a rich background in non-profit affairs. Previously, he held director positions at prestigious organizations such as The American Cancer Society, JP Morgan Chase Foundation and an affiliate of Paul Newman’s Association of Hole in the Wall Camps for children with disabilities.

“I am honored to be given the chance to manage The Chicago Lighthouse Vision Rehabilitation Center in Glenview,” he said. “I look forward to joining my colleagues in welcoming north suburban residents to our site and to acquaint them with our world class programs.”

For further information on The Chicago Lighthouse Vision Rehabilitation Center in Glenview, call Kevin Hurst at 847-510-2060 or write [kevin.hurst@chicagolighthouse.org](mailto:kevin.hurst@chicagolighthouse.org)

## New Retail Venture at Navy Pier

In its continuing effort to create jobs for people who are visually impaired, The Chicago Lighthouse has launched an exciting new retail venture at Navy Pier, the city’s premier tourist attraction.

The store provides full-time and part-time employment for individuals with visual impairments and offers a broad array of colorful gift items focusing on lighthouse and nautical themes.

“We are absolutely thrilled to undertake this dynamic new initiative and become part of the Navy Pier family,” said Dr. Janet Szlyk, Lighthouse President and Executive Director. “In doing so, we’re pleased to create jobs for people who are visually impaired at a time when the economy is still struggling and experiencing a high unemployment rate,” she observed.

Among products available are lighthouse replicas, home décor items, clocks, adult/kids apparel and children’s toys/games/books. Prices range from \$2.50 to \$50.00 per item to appeal to a wide variety of customers. All profits go directly to supporting the 28 agency programs that are dedicated to improving the lives of people who are blind or visually impaired.

Dr. Szlyk noted that the Navy Pier store is overseen by a manager, Elbert Ford, who is visually impaired and staffed by two employees who are also visually impaired.

She acknowledged the critical role played by Jennifer Nemeč, founder of Ideation Studio, in the design and décor of the new facility. Ms. Nemeč, who also worked on the development and design of Oprah Winfrey’s retail store, previously was the lead designer for the Lighthouse’s Tools for Living store at our main facility on West Roosevelt Road and its convenience store at Rush Medical Center.



NSHF Board Chair Bev Kroll, stated,

“The Lighthouse fits our mission perfectly, which is to promote health, wellness and health education to benefit North Suburban communities in designated service areas.”



Beverley J. Kroll, Board Chair

The Chicago Lighthouse thanks The North Suburban Healthcare Foundation for their generous gift!



Board members and guests of The North Suburban Healthcare Foundation are shown at the Lighthouse’s annual dinner in May.

### Chicago Lighthouse Partners with Best Buy® to bring Special Assistive Technology to Area Residents

“We are thrilled that with the help of Best Buy®, we can get the word out that there is still hope despite vision loss.”

— Tom Perski



Photo: Lighthouse team Tom Perski, Sandra Valentino and Eric Cromey with Jennifer Chopp, community relations program lead, and other Best Buy® staff at a Best Buy® event in Norridge, IL.



Special technological devices to assist individuals experiencing vision loss are now available to area residents thanks to a unique partnership between The Chicago Lighthouse and Best Buy®.

These devices, which include video magnifiers, special software and large print keyboards, can help people losing their vision due to conditions such as macular degeneration carry out everyday tasks like reading mail, paying bills and checking the thermostat on the wall.

This past fall, assistive technology display areas staffed by Lighthouse representatives were placed inside Best Buy® stores in suburban Norridge and Niles. In time, other Best Buy® stores throughout the metropolitan area will feature the displays.

“To my knowledge, this is the first time low vision technology devices have been shown in any of our Best Buy® retail stores anywhere in the U.S.” says Jack Stonebraker, community relationship program manager with the company.

“We know that the Lighthouse has an outstanding reputation and will be a valued partner in showcasing this special technology to our customers who may be experiencing vision loss.”

“We are excited about the partnership with The Chicago Lighthouse to showcase adaptive technology and appreciate that the services the Lighthouse offers will enable us to better serve people who are visually impaired.”

Tom Perski, senior vice president of rehabilitation services, noted that with the aging of the massive baby boom generation, millions of people will soon be coping with reduced vision.

Perski noted that the aforementioned video magnifiers come in portable and desktop models. These camera and screen displays magnify print from 3 times to over 20 times the normal size and allow a person to read most any printed material. Portable video magnifiers can be used on the go to see restaurant menus and price tags when shopping.

“Special software and large print keyboards can keep a person with vision loss using their computer with both enlarging and screen reading components,” he stated.

In addition, The Chicago Lighthouse’s vision rehabilitation service can prescribe magnifying glasses and special optical aids to help.

“The expertise of the Lighthouse technology staff allows for demonstrations of computers, iPhones and many other devices to help seniors and others to function like a pro. There are even stand alone devices that can take a picture of a page of print and read it aloud in seconds with a clear normal sounding voice,” Perski observed.

# new "sight" with breakthrough technology.



1.

Visual information is collected from the user-adjustable head-mounted camera and sent to the BrainPort base unit.

2.

The base unit translates the visual information into a stimulation pattern that is displayed on the tongue.

3.

The tactile image is created by presenting white pixels from the camera as strong stimulation, black pixels as no stimulation, and gray levels as medium levels of stimulation, with the ability to invert contrast when appropriate.

## Lighthouse Participates in Ground-Breaking BrainPort Research

Having the ability to reach for nearby objects. Being able to identify letters and numbers. Even becoming aware of surroundings in an industrial setting.

These major breakthroughs are available to people who are blind thanks to an innovative vision device called BrainPort.

"BrainPort is an investigational non-surgical assistive visual prosthetic device that translates information from a digital video camera to a blind person's tongue, through gentle electrical stimulation," explained Dr. Aimee Arnoldussen, a neuroscientist who is a specialist in BrainPort vision substitution applications.

Since 2006, Dr. Arnoldussen has been Principal Investigator and Experimental Scientist on a number of current and completed grants and contracts focusing on BrainPort technology.

For the past several months, she and several colleagues from the medical firm, Wicab, Inc. have been partnering with The Chicago Lighthouse on this cutting-edge research.

"I appreciate the opportunity to work with the Lighthouse on this project," she stated. "The agency is nationally known for its innovative programs on behalf of people who are blind. It is a big plus for

us to be able to tap into their expertise and extensive network of contacts."

Dr. Arnoldussen pointed out that the BrainPort vision system consists of a postage-stamp-size electrode array for the top surface of the tongue, a base unit, a digital video camera, and a hand-held controller for zoom and contrast inversion.

Study participants have been able to recognize high-contrast objects, their location, movement, and some aspects of perspective and depth. Trained blind participants use information from the tongue display to augment understanding of the environment.

"Users often equate the sensation on their tongues with champagne bubbles," she smiled.

Dr. Arnoldussen observed that the current investigational prototype works best for individuals who are blind and have no better than light perception.

This year-long study allows subjects to use the device at home after completion of initial clinic screening and training. Eligible subjects must be between the ages of 18 and 79 years of age and have had a medical diagnosis of blindness for at least 6 months. In addition, subjects must have completed rehabilitation such as orientation and mobility training with a white cane or guide dog.

"Since we do not stimulate the eye or optic nerve, our technology has the potential to work across a wide range

of visual impairments," she said, adding that researchers are actively developing device modifications to address the needs for those with low vision such as macular degeneration.

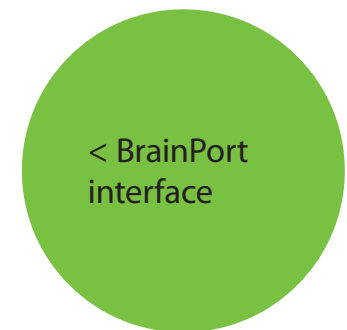
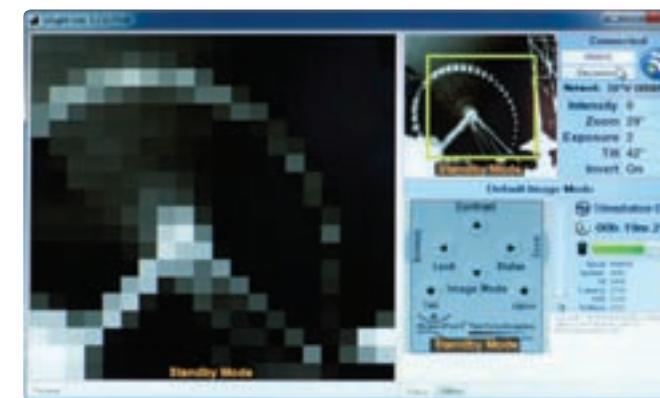
Dr. Arnoldussen expresses optimism when asked about the long-term potential of BrainPort.

*"Among other things, we hope this information has the potential to positively impact educational and employment opportunities for individuals who are blind."*

Noting that BrainPort is not yet ready for sale in the U.S., she added that Wicab plans to develop an assistive device suitable for commercial introduction in the near future.

"It is exciting to see advancements in technology leading to new possibilities for the blind community," said Patricia Grant, M.S., director of research at the Lighthouse. She added that study participants have voiced their appreciation for the opportunity to test and offer their personal feedback on the device.

"We wish to commend Dr. Arnoldussen and her colleagues for their tireless efforts on behalf of this novel device," said Lighthouse President Dr. Janet Szlyk. "We are very proud that they selected the Lighthouse as a research partner and we look forward to further collaboration that can enhance opportunities for people who are blind."



## 2011 Honor Roll of Donors

On behalf of the people served by The Chicago Lighthouse, thank you to almost 3,000 donors and volunteers who gave from the heart of their "time, talent, and treasure." The Lighthouse works because of YOU! (We regret we can only list total gifts of \$1,000 and above for the period July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2011.)

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## Lifetime Donors

These special friends of people who are blind or visually impaired have given to the Lighthouse over many years and sometimes generations. They are the reason the Lighthouse has celebrated over a century of service – Thank You!

\$1,000,000 and over

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## Anonymous Donor Offers \$250,000 Challenge to the Forsythe Center for Comprehensive Vision Care!

In 2010, an anonymous donor generously offered a \$250,000 challenge gift to support our Sandy and Rick Forsythe Center for Comprehensive Vision Care. The Forsythe Center includes the Low Vision Clinic and its eight satellite offices, low vision research, adaptive technology, and occupational therapy. Once we raised \$250,000 for the Forsythe Center from donors and friends, he pledged to match that amount. We successfully raised this amount, and this donor gave the Lighthouse's Forsythe Center the donation for the care of our low vision patients.

This donor is one of our most longstanding donors to The Chicago Lighthouse. Thank you so much to this anonymous donor for his amazing generosity to The Chicago Lighthouse!!!

# "seeing what's possible"

David and Nancy Huber preside over successful 2011 dinner

440 well wishers

\$200,000 raised



Under the direction of co-chairs David J. Huber and his wife Nancy, our 2011 "Seeing What's Possible" Dinner was a resounding success.

A Lighthouse board member, Mr. Huber is president of Huber Financial.

The dinner, which took place May 12th at the Four Seasons Hotel, attracted 440 well wishers and raised more than \$200,000 for agency programs.

Highlighting the evening was a salute to the achievements of several outstanding philanthropists and community leaders who have had a profound impact on the lives of people who are blind or visually impaired.

Honorees were titans in the Chicago non-profit community: Mrs. Lindy Bergman; Mrs. Buddy Mayer; Mr. Arthur and Mrs. Esther Kane; and Karen McCulloh.

In her remarks, Dr. Janet Szlyk, Lighthouse president and executive director, praised the Hubers for their outstanding leadership while paying tribute to the honorees and thanking donors for their support.



## Planned Gifts

Milton J. Samuelson Society Members  
Friends who have remembered The Chicago Lighthouse in their will, estate plan, or who have made another type of planned gift.

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July 2010-June 2011

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For information about making a Planned Gift to The Chicago Lighthouse, please contact Jen Miller, Director of Development for Individual and Planned Giving, at (312) 997-3643 or email [jennifer.miller@chicagolighthouse.org](mailto:jennifer.miller@chicagolighthouse.org).

If you have remembered us in your will or estate plan, please let us know, so that we may properly honor you!

# share the vision:

A Campaign to Secure the Future



Pictured left to right:  
Dr. Warren Chapman, Dr. Janet Szlyk and Marv Lader



### Lighthouse Launches New Endowment Campaign

To assure that The Chicago Lighthouse will have the resources to maintain its status as a trendsetter and national model in providing vision care, employment and other critical services, the agency unveiled an ambitious endowment campaign, "Share The Vision: A Campaign to Secure the Future," in 2011.

Serving as campaign co-chairs are Lighthouse board members, Dr Warren Chapman and Marv Lader.

"We see the expansion of our endowment as a way to secure for the future," noted Dr. Chapman. "Having an endowment fund to draw on as support for program optimization is good business."

"The Lighthouse is a national if not global resource that provides hope for anyone coping with vision loss and deserves strong support," Mr. Lader said.

For further information on how to help, contact Jennifer Miller, director, individual and planned giving, at 312/997-3643 or e-mail: [jennifer.miller@chicagolighthouse.org](mailto:jennifer.miller@chicagolighthouse.org)

## Financial Summary and Comparison

This condensed financial summary has been prepared by The Chicago Lighthouse. Complete financial statements, including notes and the independent auditor's report of Grant Thornton LLP, are available upon request and online.

### Statements

	As of June 30	
	2010	2011
<b>Assets</b>		
Cash	\$ 327,252	\$ 183,018
Receivables, Net	3,791,450	3,738,021
Inventories	922,480	995,113
Investments	16,378,373	16,338,148
Beneficial Interest in Perpetual Trusts	489,503	573,624
Prepaid Expenses	104,174	164,679
Land, Building and Equipment, Net	10,345,008	11,121,716
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$ 32,358,240</b>	<b>\$ 33,114,319</b>
<b>Liabilities and Net Assets</b>		
Liabilities	\$ 2,827,690	\$ 4,136,959
<b>Net Assets</b>		
Unrestricted	10,955,405	10,468,234
Unrestricted, Board Designated	13,761,949	12,654,587
Temporarily Restricted	2,886,645	3,843,939
Permanently Restricted	1,926,551	2,010,600
<b>Subtotal Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ 29,530,550</b>	<b>\$ 28,977,360</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ 32,358,240</b>	<b>\$ 33,114,319</b>

### Statements

	Period ended June 30	
	2010	2011
<b>Revenues</b>		
Contributions & Bequests	\$ 4,396,497	\$ 3,794,787
Beneficial Interest in Perpetual Trusts	447,911	-
Lighthouse Industries Sales	4,701,221	4,584,462
Program Revenues	7,442,712	8,226,287
Investment Income	352,755	338,981
Miscellaneous	58,550	98,852
Change in Value of Split-Interest Agreements	2,899	73,381
Net Realized Gain/(Loss) on Investments	(449,607)	(38,949)
Net Change in Unrealized Appreciation (depreciation) of Long Term Investments	1,054,584	1,607,005
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$ 18,007,522</b>	<b>\$ 18,684,806</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Program Services	\$ 15,023,868	\$ 15,473,649 81%
Management & General	2,818,757	2,943,394 15%
Fundraising	660,852	590,506 3%
Public Relations	182,178	230,447 1%
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 18,685,655</b>	<b>\$ 19,237,996</b>
<b>Change in Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ (678,133)</b>	<b>\$ (553,190)</b>
Net Assets at Beginning of Year	\$ 30,208,683	\$ 29,530,550
Net Assets at End of Year	\$ 29,530,550	\$ 28,977,360

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Vice President  
Development/Advancement

Zachary Anderson  
Contract Management Services

Elliott Boston  
Contract Management Services

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Kara Crumbliss, O.D.  
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Gerald Fishman, M.D.  
Pangere Center for Inherited  
Retinal Diseases

Patricia Grant, M.S.  
Low Vision Research

Kevin Hurst  
Chicago Lighthouse North

Bill Jurek  
CRIS Radio

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J.D., LL.M.  
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Ricardo Vilchez  
Information Technology

Annual Report 2011

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All of our accomplishments during the past year exemplified the Lighthouse's ongoing commitment to creating innovative solutions to meet the challenges facing individuals who are blind or visually impaired.





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for People Who Are Blind  
or Visually Impaired

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