

A Chicago Lighthouse
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A JOB MEANS THE WORLD
TO SOMEONE WHO IS BLIND OR VISUALLY IMPAIRED



From President & Executive Director, Dr. Janet Szlyk

During National Disability Employment Awareness Month in October, we reaffirmed our commitment to finding jobs for people who are blind or visually impaired. With national unemployment among this group estimated to be an astronomical 75%, the need has never been greater. At The Chicago Lighthouse, boosting job opportunities for the people we serve is Job One!

In the past year, we added 50 new positions through our contract management services and retail operations. The Lighthouse's newest retail venture, a store in Chicago's popular Navy Pier, debuted this past summer, providing jobs for several individuals who are visually impaired. But our goal is not just to create a job, but a challenging position that offers a decent wage and future advancement.

I am proud to report that at this summer's Annual Meeting of the National Federation of the Blind (NFB) in Orlando, Florida, the Lighthouse was showcased as a model system for fair wages, benefits, excellent working conditions and an emphasis on developing challenging employment opportunities.

This pay model of fair incentives has been working quite well for us, with a low turnover rate and high morale even in a tough economy as compelling evidence. Our intent is to serve as a role model for external organizations on how to treat their employees who are blind.

As I noted in my remarks to the NFB group, the keys to our

success have been ensuring that our program participants are properly prepared for the workplace; offering a comprehensive job placement program whereby our dedicated counselors work tirelessly to place clients in positions; and hiring internally. In fact, over half of the agency's staff is blind or visually impaired.

Our focus now is on building even more job opportunities for the blind and visually impaired community. Toward this end, we have constructed a brand new call center at the Lighthouse. The center serves as a training ground for our interns, and also handles customer service responsibilities for internal and external clients.

In addition, we look forward to the opening of The Chicago Lighthouse Vision Rehabilitation Center in Glenview this December. Initially, the center, made possible through a generous gift from the North Suburban Healthcare Foundation, will be staffed by 14 Lighthouse employees who are experts in the fields of education, low vision, law and adaptive technology. Our goal is to bring the Lighthouse's model of comprehensive care to the northern suburbs.

On another upbeat note, I wanted to extend my deepest appreciation to the United Way of Metropolitan Chicago's "Live United 2020" campaign for its generous donation to our Birth-to-Three Family Intervention Program. The donation came through the campaign's education initiative inaugurated by Mayor Emanuel at a special breakfast on September 9th. The campaign is a decade-long vision to transform communities of greatest need throughout the metropolitan area. For more information on this critical effort, please visit LIVEUNITEDchicago.org.

I hope you enjoy this issue of the Beam. As always, I invite you to come for a visit to see all that is happening at The Chicago Lighthouse.

New Lighthouse Board Chair Expresses Optimism about Agency's Future

Banker Bruce Hague, who recently assumed the board chairmanship of The Chicago Lighthouse, is upbeat about the 105 year old agency's future despite a challenging economic environment. Hague, who had served previously as Board Treasurer, currently is President, National Commercial Lending, for The Private Bank and is a member of the bank's Executive Management Committee.

"Chicago is a very generous community, especially the business community," he noted, maintaining that business people want to be engaged with the meaningful work done by organizations like the Lighthouse. Hague points out that the agency has so many diverse programs in vision care, education, manufacturing and other areas that it would have broad appeal to potential donors.

He also expresses optimism about the potential offered by the Lighthouse's new satellite facility in suburban Glenview, which is scheduled to open later this year. "This is such a momentous development for us," he maintains, noting that the new site will open doors for the Lighthouse to a large market of people in the northern suburbs who can utilize the agency's innovative services and programs. Asked how the agency can successfully weather the current economic storm, Hague points to its "fantastic staff" and "dynamic board of directors" who work tirelessly on behalf of people who are blind or visually impaired.

Prior to Private Bank, Hague was president of National Commercial Banking for LaSalle Bank, N.A., responsible for overseeing 23 regional banking offices, including all commercial regional offices located throughout the U.S. and international corporate banking. He was also responsible for LaSalle National Leasing, Corporate Finance and ESOPs. Prior to joining the company in 1992, Hague worked with two Chicago area groups in mergers and acquisitions. In addition, he gained extensive banking, finance and business experience as a commercial lender with American National Bank of Chicago for 11 years.

A member of the Northwestern University Alumni Association, Hague also serves on the boards of the Daniel J. Murphy Scholarship Foundation and Children's Memorial Medical Center. He earned a bachelor's degree in economics from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and a master's degree in management, finance and accounting from Northwestern's J.L. Kellogg Graduate School of Management.



Bruce Hague addressing attendees at the Lighthouse's SummerFest event in August.

Lighthouse NEWS and EVENTS

LIGHTHOUSE HOSTS FIRST "FLAIR: FUN. FASHION. PHILANTHROPY." EVENT

On September 24th and 25th, The Chicago Lighthouse hosted its first *Flair: Fun. Fashion. Philanthropy.* event, which attracted hundreds of fashion lovers.

Over the past year, the Lighthouse acquired over 1,400 pieces of new and gently pre-owned designer fashions from individuals and retail stores. The donated fashions were sold at a pop-up retail store in the 900 North Michigan Shops, with proceeds benefitting Lighthouse services. The event raised over \$50,000.

Flair kicked off the premiere VIP event at Saks Fifth Avenue on Saturday morning, Sept. 24th, with a breakfast runway show. Hosted by Sherren Leigh and Cassandra Gaddo from *Today's Chicago Woman*, the production featured both professional models and amateur models with visual impairments.



Above: Mary Zabelski, head of the Lighthouse's Children's Development Center, with Patricia Ward, one of the models at *Flair* representing the visually impaired or blind community.

Below: Our wonderful *Flair* co-chairs Lynn Cooper, Ellie Thompson and Kaye Rahn.



LIGHTHOUSE CELEBRATES SUMMERFEST AND NEW CAMPAIGN

To guarantee that it will have a secure financial future and continued ability to provide services for people who are blind or visually impaired, the Lighthouse launched a major endowment campaign "Share the Vision" at the special *SummerFest* event on August 9th. Board Chair Bruce Hague and the Endowment Committee's co-chairs, Dr. Warren Chapman and Marv Lader, presented the new campaign to over one hundred visitors. The Lighthouse extends our appreciation to Steve and Georgiann Pangere who brought a large number of guests to the event from Indiana.

THE CHICAGO LIGHTHOUSE GIVES RECORD MONEY TO STUDENTS WHO ARE BLIND OR VISUALLY IMPAIRED

In the Scholarship Program's eighth year, The Chicago Lighthouse reached a momentous milestone, awarding over \$100,000 toward costs in higher education to students who are blind or visually impaired. On July 23rd, the awards were given to 49 students in amounts ranging from \$5,000 for four years to \$1,000. Although a locally-based program, the winners represented 11 states across the country. This is a testament to the fundraising efforts of Scholarship Committee co-chairs, Dr. Joel Kaplan and Marv Lader.

Learn more about how you can help the Scholarship Program by calling Jen Miller at 312-997-3643.

KANE LEGAL CLINIC NEWS

Members of the legal community and supporters of The Chicago Lighthouse gathered for *Blind Justice*, a benefit cocktail party for the Kane Legal Clinic. The event attracted 74 guests and raised \$7,000 for the clinic, widely regarded as the only program of its kind exclusively providing pro-bono legal assistance to people who are blind or visually impaired.

Retired Cook County Circuit Court Judge Nicholas T. Pomaro has led the clinic since its inception in 2005, which has helped more than 1,000 individuals. Judge Pomaro was recently recognized for his work by

Chief Justice John Roberts of the United States Supreme Court. In April, Judge Pomaro attended a session of the Supreme Court and met privately with Chief Justice Roberts.

Chicago attorney Len Sherman has recently joined The Chicago Lighthouse's Kane Legal Clinic as a volunteer. A graduate of Northwestern University School of Law, Mr. Sherman has been a licensed attorney in Illinois since 1974. "After hearing about the work that the Kane Legal Clinic does in meeting the needs of an underserved population, I figured that it would be a good place to help out," he said. Previously, Mr. Sherman served as director of the Illinois Department of Professional Regulation and director, Illinois Secretary of State, Department of Administrative Hearings.

2011 DINNER SHINES LIGHT ON OUTSTANDING PHILANTHROPISTS

The Chicago Lighthouse's 2011 Seeing What's Possible Dinner shown its spotlight on 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. The gala event, which took place May 12th at the elegant Four Seasons Hotel, attracted 440 well wishers and raised more than \$200,000 for agency programs.

CHICAGO LIGHTHOUSE WINS 2011 GOLDEN TRUMPET AWARD

The Chicago Lighthouse has been named a recipient of a 2011 Golden Trumpet Award from the Publicity Club of Chicago (PCC) for outstanding achievement in public relations. The Lighthouse's entry, "Chicago Lighthouse: A New Milestone," won for garnering a significant number of national and local media placements about the agency's expansion and rehabilitation project that concluded in the fall of 2010. Those placements included the CBS Evening News, Newsday, Retail Merchandiser and The Nation's Health.

To receive our most up-to-date Lighthouse happenings, sign up for our E-News at: www.chicagolighthouse.org

New Lighthouse North Facility Debuts in December

It will provide both a low vision and legal clinic. It will offer the latest in adaptive technology services. It will boast an array of enrichment programs for children and seniors. It will mark the first time in its 105-year-old history that The Chicago Lighthouse will operate a comprehensive facility outside its current headquarters at 1850 W. Roosevelt Road, which will be known as The Chicago Lighthouse Vision Rehabilitation Center. Thanks to a special foundation gift from the North Suburban Healthcare Foundation (NSHF), the Lighthouse will unveil the new site at 222 Waukegan Road in suburban Glenview this December.



NORTH SUBURBAN
HEALTHCARE FOUNDATION

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 excited 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!” Watch for news of the public dedication on our website.

The Chicago Lighthouse Shoppe at Navy Pier



L-R: Chicago Lighthouse Shoppe at Navy Pier employees: British Cheeks, Elbert Ford, Lynn Smith, and Rob Cancilla.

The Chicago Lighthouse has launched a 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-related themes. All profits go directly to supporting the many programs at The Chicago Lighthouse that are dedicated to improving the lives of people who are blind or visually impaired.

Staff members who are visually impaired include Director of New Business Development Rob Cancilla, who helped develop and launch the store, Store Manager Elbert Ford, as well as Retail Associates British Cheeks and Lynn Smith. Serving a largely sighted customer base, Cancilla points out that the Navy Pier store is visually appealing while specially designed to accommodate the needs of workers who are blind or visually impaired.

“Our hope is to provide future opportunities for on-the-job and customer service training for additional people who are visually impaired. With the blind and visually impaired community coping with an unemployment rate of nearly 75%, finding jobs is absolutely essential.”

For more information, go to www.chicagolighthouse.org/Navy_Pier

Chicago Lighthouse and Ability One Team with U.S. Army to Create New Jobs

In an effort to support U.S. personnel in Iraq and Afghanistan, The Chicago Lighthouse and the Ability One Program are partnering with the Army Contracting Command-Rock Island (ACC-RI) to create several positions for people with visual impairments who will provide a broad array of contract management services. Starting September 15th, seven contract specialists and two warehouse personnel began working at ACC-RI through the Lighthouse.

Ability One was contacted to provide these services under the mantle of the Javits-Wagner-O’Day Act, a public law that directs the federal government to purchase certain products and services furnished by nonprofit agencies employing individuals who are blind or have other severe disabilities.

Further synergy was achieved when the Lighthouse worked with the Community Based Warrior Transition Unit - Illinois (CBWTU-IL), located at Rock Island Arsenal, and hired two warehouse personnel who are wounded warriors.



Chicago Lighthouse staff members help mark the launching of a new jobs program with the U.S. Army at the Rock Island Arsenal on September 15th.

Visit www.chicagolighthouse.org to get up-to-date information on Lighthouse news and events.

Upcoming Events

For information on upcoming events go to:
www.chicagolighthouse.org/events.

November 3-4, 2011 Enlighten Low Vision Conference

Renaissance Hotel and Convention Center
Schaumburg, IL

The Lighthouse is a co-sponsor of the First Annual Enlighten Low Vision Conference on November 3rd and 4th. The theme of this year's event, "About Low Vision Today - the U.S. and Around the World," will attract top doctors and vision professionals as well as experts in independent living, self-employment, low vision and technology.

For more information, call 877-687-2842 or go to:
www.atia.org/2011chicago/enlighten

Thursday, May 24, 2012 Seeing What's Possible Dinner

The Four Seasons Hotel Chicago
120 E. Delaware Place

Honorees:

Richard M. Daley, Former Mayor of Chicago
North Suburban Healthcare Foundation

Dinner Co-Chairs: Arturo and Janette Saenz

Program Committee: Sandra Forsythe (Chair),
Judy McCaskey, Anida "Cookie" Johnson Cohen



For your holiday and year-end gift giving, please remember The Chicago Lighthouse!

Your contributions are tax-deductible and support the people we serve. Donors of \$250 or more can choose to have or give a memorial brick in The Chicago Lighthouse's Children's Garden, a National Wildlife Federation designated sanctuary. This garden is paved with bricks honoring and memorializing special people who have touched the lives of our donors and clients.

Bricks are available in three different sizes: 4"x8" (\$250); 8"x8" (\$500); and 12"x12" (\$1,000).

Make your year-end gift or purchase a brick online, or contact Cacia Sit at 312-666.1331 x 3137 or email cacia.sit@chicagolighthouse.org.

THANK YOU!



The Chicago Lighthouse

for People Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired

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On the Cover: Expanding job opportunities for people who are blind or visually impaired, The Chicago Lighthouse launched The Chicago Lighthouse Shoppe at Navy Pier. All proceeds go directly to supporting the many programs at The Chicago Lighthouse.

Photo by 4 Aerial. www.4aerial.com