

A man with short brown hair, wearing a black polo shirt and a headset, is seated at a desk in a call center. He is holding a black telephone receiver to his ear with his left hand. In the background, other call center workers are visible at their desks, though they are out of focus. The overall scene is brightly lit, typical of an office environment.

the Beam

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SEEING WHAT'S POSSIBLE



From President & Executive Director, Dr. Janet Szlyk

“Pushing the Envelope”

When I review the recent progress we have made at The Chicago Lighthouse, one thought springs to mind: no advances are achieved without someone pushing the envelope.

As you may know, Louis Braille was the inventor of Braille, a system of reading and writing used by people who are blind or visually impaired. After two centuries, the Braille system remains an invaluable tool of learning and communication for people who are blind, and it has been adapted for countless languages. In the same spirit as Louis Braille’s innovation, we too are pushing the envelope to make a difference in the lives of people who are blind. Here are some recent examples.

Employees in our new Call Center for the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation (IDFPR) have received praise for their

outstanding service handling calls from professionals throughout the state inquiring about their license renewals. Opened this past March, the center employs more than 20 individuals, 25% of whom are totally blind with the remaining staff being visually impaired.

Thanks to the efforts of our education team, The Lighthouse has received a grant from the Chicago Public Schools enabling us to open a new Preschool this fall that will accommodate 40 children from ages three to five years who are at risk, low income, blind or visually impaired, or sighted learning in the same classroom. Admission will be free. Up until now, there is no preschool like this currently in existence in the Midwest.

In addition, we are pushing the envelope for our seniors with a new training program that will assist them in mastering iPad technology. We are also seeing what’s possible for teens who are both sighted and visually impaired with our first Lighthouse Away Southwest

Expedition to Canyon de Chelly National Monument in Arizona for a rafting trip on the San Juan River.

From our cafeteria, where instructors from the Le Cordon Bleu Cooking School work with chefs who are visually impaired to new low vision research that utilizes telemedicine to teach veterans with macular disease how to use their remaining vision (in their homes), to a new gene therapy for color blindness being investigated, The Chicago Lighthouse is always striving to do better for people who are blind or visually impaired.

Of course, all of this sets the stage for the opening later this fall of a state-of-the-art Call Center for the Illinois Tollway that will be operated by more than 200 people with disabilities. All have been recruited and trained by The Lighthouse. Not only will this amazing effort nearly double our existing staff, but it will bring in new sources of revenue to help fund our 28 programs and services.

Stay tuned for further developments.

In closing, I wish to commend our talented staff and our wonderful donors for their fantastic support. Your outstanding efforts every day on behalf of the people we serve guarantees a bright future for The Chicago Lighthouse!

Lighthouse Wins CPS Grant to Develop Groundbreaking Preschool Program

The Lighthouse has received funding from the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) to initiate a groundbreaking Preschool program at the agency this fall.

Specifically, the CPS grant will enable The Lighthouse to accommodate 40 children from ages three to five who are at risk, low income or blind or visually impaired. The funding falls under CPS’s Preschool for All: Ready to Learn Program. Admission to the program will be free.

“We are absolutely thrilled to get this grant and extend our deepest appreciation to CPS for their vote of confidence in us,” said Dr. Janet Szlyk, Lighthouse president and executive director.

Dr. Szlyk observed that the Preschool initiative falls well within the agency’s historic mission of promoting greater independence and opening doors to more opportunities for individuals who are blind or visually impaired.

She pointed out that studies show that children who are engaged in reading at a young age subsequently perform better in school and achieve greater success.

“Our motto is “Literacy for All” and we are making literacy a core component of our preschool, as we believe it is critical to the success of individuals in both their career aspirations and quality of life.”

Mary Zabelski, senior vice president of educational services at The Lighthouse, noted that some of the students will be recent graduates of the agency’s popular Birth to Three program.

“Their learning will continue through our Preschool, putting the children in a more advantageous position as they enter kindergarten,” she maintained.





Beverly, the day of her retirement party.

BEVERLY: ONE OF OUR MOST DEDICATED SAMUELSON SOCIETY MEMBERS

Beverly knows what it is like to have vision issues. The pain began in her eye when she was just seven years old.

"I would have such terrible pain in my right eye that I couldn't sleep," she recalls. "I couldn't play outside. It hurt to read. I spent weeks at a time at Children's Memorial Hospital while they tried to

figure out the problem. There was never a diagnosis."

Despite her eye troubles, Beverly persevered. After she finished high school, she began working at the federal court system, where she soon found her calling. Beverly worked for several judges, including the highly-respected Judge Abraham Lincoln Marovitz.

She excelled there. "I was the deputy clerk," she says proudly. "I gave the oath to new citizens before a judge. I naturalized them! I also signed injunctions, once they had been approved by a judge. I could prevent a plane from taking off if a judge approved it. I called the court to order and assisted with jury trials. I worked in the court system for 34 years. By the time I retired, I was the trainee for new deputy clerks. They were always understanding about my eye issues, but I tried to never let it get in the way of my job."

"When I retired," Beverly continues, "64 people attended my retirement party! I was so happy when I saw everyone who came: from judges to people I had trained to administrative staff. I was sorry to leave, but I knew it was time."

Beverly then spent time volunteering where she thought she could help the most. She assisted elderly adults in a nursing home. "Many people were blind, so I knew what

they were going through. I spent time with them, so they weren't lonely. I also volunteered at a resale shop, where the owner's daughter was blind. We accepted resalable items, sold them, and gave the money to blindness organizations. We also sent audio tapes to college students who were blind at no charge. I know I made a difference."

She had her right eye removed in 1993, and the doctors never determined the cause of her pain. They told her after the surgery, "Your left eye is perfect." But a few years later, her left eye began to bother her. This time the doctors were able to diagnose the eye problem: glaucoma. (Beverly dedicated a brick in The Lighthouse Children's Garden to Dr. Ruderman, who diagnosed and treated her glaucoma.) Beverly still struggles with eye issues. "I now put six drops a day of three different types of medicine in order to keep my left eye stable," she reports.

"I always knew about The Lighthouse and the great work it does," Beverly says. "I have been supporting it for over 10 years and remembered it in my will." She is a member of the Samuelson Society, which honors our donors who have made a planned gift (through their estate or trust).

"I struggled with eye issues all of my life. Now I tell everyone I know about The Lighthouse!"

In the past few years, The Lighthouse has assisted Beverly. She has been to one of our low vision satellite clinics for care. The eye doctor helped her obtain a special lamp for reading, and a magnifying glass for doing her checkbook. The agency then sent one of its occupational therapists to visit Beverly at her home a few times. She brought her various items which has allowed Beverly to be more independent, and she is grateful.

More than anything else, Beverly has tried to make life a little better for others. "I struggled with eye issues all of my life. I am grateful for my career and for the support of my family and friends. Now I tell everyone I know about The Lighthouse! Help them, that's what I say! Because you never know when someone you love will need assistance in coping with a visual impairment."

From our Vice President of Development for Planned Giving | **WILLS: ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS**

Q. I am about to speak with my attorney about naming The Chicago Lighthouse as a beneficiary in my will. What do I need to tell him? What do I need to tell you?

A. So glad you asked! Below is the recommended language for a bequest to The Chicago Lighthouse. Please give it to your attorney if you want to remember us in your will.

A Specific Bequest I give (insert dollar amount or specific description of property or asset) to The Chicago Lighthouse for People Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired, 1850 West Roosevelt Road, Chicago, Illinois 60608, or its lawful successor.

A Percentage Bequest I give ___% of my estate to The Chicago Lighthouse for People Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired, 1850 West Roosevelt Road, Chicago, Illinois 60608, or its lawful successor.

A Residual Bequest I give the residue of my estate to The Chicago Lighthouse for People Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired, 1850 West Roosevelt Road, Chicago, Illinois 60608, or its lawful successor.

If you have already remembered us or are intending to do so, please let us know. Contact: Jennifer Miller, Esq. Vice President of Development | Direct dial: 312 997 3643 Email: jennifer.miller@chicagolighthouse.org



Become a part of The Samuelson Society—seventy five plus members—and growing!!!

\$175,000 Challenge

from The Lighthouse's Longest Donor

HELP US MAKE IT BY JUNE 30TH!

Corwith Hamill is a "young" 99 year old gentleman and is still going strong. He is The Lighthouse's longest donor, having given to us since he was in grade school. (In fact, it was his grandmother who told him to start giving to us when he was little, as she was also a supporter. Taken together, Mr. Hamill and his grandmother have donated to us for our entire 107 year history!)

Now, Mr. Hamill has pledged to give us another fantastic gift. If we can raise \$175,000 before June 30, 2013, then he will give us \$175,000, to be directed to The Lighthouse's general operations!

Please help us to make this challenge by sending in a contribution in the enclosed envelope and please mark the box that says you want to participate in the challenge. Thank you so much, Mr. Hamill, and to you, for helping us to make this challenge!



The Chicago Lighthouse Mike Ditka *Charity*

GOLF

tournament



July 15, 2013



Monday, July 15, 2013 | 10:30 a.m. registration
www.chicagolighthouse.org/ditkagolf13

For information on tickets, sponsorship and underwriting opportunities, contact travis.hague@chicagolighthouse.org or call 847.510.6200 and ask for Travis Hague.

Proceeds support programs and services providing education, rehabilitation and employment services for people who are blind or visually impaired.



North Shore Country Club

Home of the 2013 PGA Encompass Championship Tour



The Chicago Lighthouse

for People Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired

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On the Cover: *Richard Schultz, Call Center Agent*