



# the Beam

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From the  
President and Chief  
Executive Officer:  
Janet P. Szlyk, PhD

Dear Friends,

In addition to honoring three outstanding supporters of our community of care: Dr. Joel Kaplan, Illinois Supreme Court Justice Anne Burke and Alderman Edward Burke, The Lighthouse's Gala on June 3rd will celebrate a very special milestone, the 110th anniversary of this world-class organization!

When one looks through our rich collection of archival material, you can't help being struck by how innovative and responsive The Lighthouse has always been in creating timely, life-changing programs to assist the people we serve. This is particularly true in the critical area of employment. From the very beginning, securing jobs for individuals who are blind or visually impaired has been at the heart of The Lighthouse's mission.

In fact, our very first manufacturing operation began in the basement of founding member Winona Hood in **1906**. Four years later, we unveiled a factory that made household utensils such as brooms.

By **1920**, The Lighthouse had a thriving job placement program, referring candidates who were blind to positions with such leading firms as Edison Electric, Chicago Nut Company, Victor Gaskets, Ankell & Barker

Cars, Garrett Buggies and smaller companies making calendars, furniture, boxes and other items. During World War II, The Lighthouse placed 250 people in various war industry plants in Chicago.

It is worth noting that in the **1940s** and **50s**, The Lighthouse was championing the cause of diversity by having people of all racial backgrounds work together side by side. This was happening at a time when northern cities like Chicago were still highly segregated.

Our commitment to finding jobs for people who are blind got a tremendous boost in the late **1970s** when we began making clocks for the U.S. government. Today, we operate one of the few remaining clock factories in the country and our clocks adorn the walls of federal facilities across the nation and around the world!

**More recently**, we have partnered with the Illinois Tollway, UI Health and other organizations to develop meaningful jobs for hundreds of talented individuals who are blind, visually impaired, disabled and Veterans.

The future of The Lighthouse has never looked brighter and I want to thank all our generous donors, exemplary Board members, dedicated staff, volunteers and other supporters for their immeasurable contributions. We invite you to be a part of our celebration on June 3rd at The Four Seasons.

**Happy 110th Anniversary,  
Chicago Lighthouse!**



The Chicago  
Lighthouse  
1906 ~ 2016



REASONS TO

# celebrate!

## LIGHTHOUSE NAMES PRESCHOOL AND DEDICATES NEW SOLARIUM

On Wednesday, April 13th, The Chicago Lighthouse formally named its blended Preschool in honor of local humanitarians, Judy and Ray McCaskey, who provided generous support for the school. The Lighthouse also dedicated a new solarium/indoor playground area, which is adjacent to the Preschool.

The Dedication, which attracted an audience of nearly 60 Lighthouse Board members, donors and other friends, also featured a ribbon cutting ceremony; music from highly acclaimed jazz musician Lisa Hilton; and a performance from the preschoolers.

In their welcome remarks, Lighthouse Board Chair Dick Schnadig and Lighthouse President & CEO Dr. Janet Szlyk extended their appreciation to the McCaskeys, the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, The Service Club of Chicago, the Wohlers Family Foundation and Blue Cross Blue Shield for their outstanding support of The Lighthouse's programs for children.

Established in 2013, The Lighthouse's Preschool for All program teaches both visually impaired and

sighted children in a blended setting, and is the first of its kind in the Midwest. Through interaction and play, the Preschool instills sensitivity and respect for diversity from a young age. All materials, toys and books are adapted to meet each child's individual needs. In addition, students are introduced to Braille as a means for developing early literacy skills.

The solarium was especially designed to accommodate youngsters who are blind, visually impaired or disabled. All of the play items are intentionally brightly colored, so children with visual impairments can more easily see them. In addition, some of the equipment was chosen because it can meet the needs of youngsters in wheelchairs. As an added plus, much of the playground equipment in the new solarium is made from recycled bottles, so it is environmentally conscious.

The Preschool and other educational services are part of the *community of care* offered by The Lighthouse, one of the nation's most comprehensive organizations assisting people who are blind, visually impaired, disabled and Veterans.

ABOVE: The McCaskey family shown at the Solarium ribbon-cutting ceremony. BELOW: (Left and Center) Chicago Lighthouse preschool children perform a skit for the crowd and enjoy the beautiful new play space. (Right) Lisa Hilton performs at the event.





## LIGHTHOUSE SHOWCASES INNOVATIVE ORCAM DEVICE

OrCam, a game-changing product designed to make reading a lot easier for people who are visually impaired, is currently being showcased at The Chicago Lighthouse, one of the few sites in the U.S. to offer demonstrations, evaluations and training on the device.

Made in Israel, OrCam uses a tiny camera mounted onto a pair of glasses and a very small computer. Users then point to a section of text, which they want read. The OrCam will take a picture of that section of the text, send the picture to the processor which will convert the text into a digital format, then the text will be spoken out loud through the speaker - all within a few seconds!

“This represents a revolutionary development not only for people with visual impairments wanting to read books, but also to identify selections on restaurant menus and names on theatre playbills,” noted Tom Perski, senior vice president of rehabilitation services. “A whole new cultural world could be opened up to those with visual impairment!”

Perski pointed out that there are two versions of the device: the OrCam MyReader, which allows the user to read text and identify bills, and the OrCam MyEye, which also has the ability to recognize faces and products.

“Sitting at a restaurant with a friend and using the OrCam MyEye device meant that we didn’t have to focus on my visual disability because I was able to read the menu on my own,” smiled Debbie S., who recently tried the device and now whole-heartedly embraces it.

Luke Scriven, Chicago Lighthouse assistive technology specialist, demonstrates OrCam. The device was profiled on ABC 7. To view the segment, visit: [www.chicagolighthouse.org/news/orcam-profiled-abc7](http://www.chicagolighthouse.org/news/orcam-profiled-abc7)

Call (312) 997-3677 for more information about OrCam.

## ALS Participant Discovers Life-Changing Experience at The Lighthouse



A tender moment between ALS participant, Lourdes Medina, and her niece, Patricia Rodriguez who works at The Lighthouse.

She has found joy in making coffee and breakfast in the morning.

She is able to walk to the bus without assistance.

She loves to write, count and even sing.

While these everyday occurrences are taken for granted by most people, they represent a major breakthrough for

someone coping with Down’s Syndrome like Lourdes Medina, a participant in the Adult Living Skills (ALS) program at The Chicago Lighthouse.

Shy by nature, Lourdes has really “opened up” and gotten a whole new attitude thanks to life-changing care she has received at The Lighthouse, according to her niece, Patricia Rodriguez, a clinic customer relations supervisor in

our low vision center.

“I have always been especially close to my aunt and wanted her to get the best possible treatment,” Patricia noted. “When we came to the conclusion that she was not getting that care at the last social service agency she was placed at, we decided to give the ALS program at The Lighthouse a try.”

Patricia pointed out that the family couldn’t be more pleased with the result.

“Since coming to The Lighthouse, my aunt has become noticeably more independent, more outgoing with others and comfortable in her own skin,” she says. Patricia credits ALS Director Bob Mantsh and his staff for their consideration, patience and willingness to always give Lourdes a chance to show what she can do.

“Lourdes is a very popular member of our program,” Bob said. “Not only has she gained many friends, but she has a strong work ethic and performs any task we ask her to do such as cleaning the kitchen area with great care.”

Patricia readily acknowledges that bringing her aunt to The Lighthouse was one of the best things that could have happened to her!

“Thanks to what she learned here, she is spoiling us by making great coffee,” she laughed.

**PLANNED GIVING**—With a planned gift (like a gift in your will or trust) to The Lighthouse, you can help thousands of people The Lighthouse serves each year AND obtain significant financial benefits. In making a planned gift, you will also have the satisfaction of knowing people with visual impairments in the future will benefit from your generosity today. For more information, please contact Jen Miller, senior vice president of development, Planned Giving, at (312) 997-3643 or [jennifer.miller@chicagolighthouse.org](mailto:jennifer.miller@chicagolighthouse.org).

## DR. JANET SZLYK ADDRESSES ISPB 100<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY DINNER

Lighthouse President & CEO Dr. Janet Szlyk was a featured speaker at the 100th Anniversary Dinner of the Illinois Society for the Prevention of Blindness (ISPB) on April 8th.

Dr. Szlyk congratulated the Society on its milestone celebration and thanked it for generously supporting Lighthouse services.

“Your gifts change lives,” she noted.

Dr. Szlyk also talked about how the new eSight and BrainPort® devices, available exclusively in the Midwest at The Lighthouse, are playing key roles in assisting those with vision loss.

“We greatly appreciated Dr. Szlyk’s comments and representation of The Chicago Lighthouse,” said ISPB Executive Director Donna J. Dreiske.

Also in attendance at the Dinner were Lighthouse Board Member John A. Raske and his wife Angela; Dr. Kara Crumbliss, vice president of low vision services at The Lighthouse who serves on the ISPB Board as vice president; Dr. Tracy Matchinski, who treats patients in The Lighthouse’s low vision clinics; and Dominic Calabrese, senior vice president of public relations at The Lighthouse.

## LIGHTHOUSE PARTICIPATES IN ANNUAL DISTRICT 1-A LIONS HELEN KELLER 5K RUN/WALK



Runners celebrate as they cross the finish line!

On a picture-perfect Sunday morning with sunny skies and moderate temperatures, several Chicago Lighthouse staff members came ready with their racing gear and walking shoes.

They participated in the Sixth Annual District 1-A Lions Helen Keller Run/Walk held at Richards High School in suburban Oak Lawn on April 24th.

All proceeds from this special event, organized by Lions Chris Coleman and Frank Kirar, help support The Lighthouse and other organizations assisting people who are blind, visually or hearing impaired.

“We are very happy to put this program on and serve our fellow citizens with disabilities,” said Lion Chris. “We want to thank everyone from The Lighthouse who attended and extend our appreciation for all the good work they do!”

Awards were passed out to men and women who placed first, second and third in their respective age categories.

In addition, participants took free vision, hearing and wellness tests. The Race/Walk received coverage from NBC 5 Chicago, the Daily Southtown and several other media outlets. Chicago’s popular K-HITS (104.3 FM) also streamed live from the site and provided musical entertainment.

## CHICAGO LIGHTHOUSE OBSERVES 2016 NATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH WEEK



Karoline Kijowski, special events intern, has her blood pressure checked during NPHW.

Emphasizing the fact that good health contributes to a happy workplace, The Chicago Lighthouse celebrated National Public Health Week (NPHW) from April 4-8 with a number of educational and fun activities.

Among them were group exercises; a yoga session; dances; lunches offering nutritional dishes; informational discussions; and a biggest loser contest designed to help individuals safely lose and keep off weight.

“We wish to thank all our staff and program participants for getting involved,” said Jeanette Bonzani, senior vice president of human resources at The Lighthouse. “We also want to extend special appreciation to the Rush nursing and medical students.”

Among Lighthouse staff members who participated in the observance was Karoline Kijowski, a special events intern in the Financial Development department. “I think it is great that The Lighthouse observes Public Health Week,” she said. “This important event not only promotes the importance of good health, but it encourages us to take better care of ourselves so we can lead happier, healthier lives!”

## LIGHTHOUSE CELEBRATES 110<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY AT JUNE 3RD GALA

The Lighthouse will celebrate 110 years of outstanding service at its Annual Seeing What’s Possible Gala on Friday evening, June 3rd. This very special black tie event will take place from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. at the Four Seasons Hotel, 120 E. Delaware Pl., in Chicago’s Gold Coast area.

Former Lighthouse Board chair and current member Dr. Joel Kaplan will be saluted for his generosity and tireless efforts as a goodwill ambassador for the organization.

Also being honored are Illinois Supreme Court Justice Anne Burke and Alderman Edward Burke for being ardent champions of people with disabilities. Serving as emcee will be ABC 7 News Anchor Hosea Sanders.

“I want to extend my deepest appreciation to our dinner chair and Board member, Cookie Cohen, for arranging an outstanding program,” said Lighthouse President & CEO Dr. Janet Szlyk. “We look forward to having all our friends and supporters join us for an amazing celebration of 110 years of service!”

All proceeds will support Lighthouse programs and services. For more information, please call Lindsay Inglis, special events manager, at (312) 447-3448.

Seeing  
WHAT'S  
Possible  
GALA 2016

To receive our most up-to-date Lighthouse happenings, sign up for our electronic newsletter and events at:

[www.chicagolighthouse.org/newsletter-signup](http://www.chicagolighthouse.org/newsletter-signup)



# The Chicago Lighthouse

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**Seeing What's Possible Gala 2016**  
**Celebrating 110 Years of The Chicago Lighthouse**

**Friday, June 3rd** | The Four Seasons Chicago  
[www.chicagolighthouse.org/event/gala](http://www.chicagolighthouse.org/event/gala)

**The Chicago Lighthouse Associate Board's**  
**30th Annual House & Garden Walk**

**Thursday, June 23rd** | The North Shore  
[www.chicagolighthouse.org/event/houseandgarden](http://www.chicagolighthouse.org/event/houseandgarden)

**The Chicago Lighthouse**  
**Fourth Annual Charity Golf Tournament**

**Monday, August 29th** | North Shore Country Club, Glenview, IL  
[www.chicagolighthouse.org/event/charitygolf2016](http://www.chicagolighthouse.org/event/charitygolf2016)

**FLAIR: Fun. Fashion. Philanthropy.™**

**Monday, October 17th** | The Ritz Carlton Chicago  
[www.chicagolighthouse.org/event/flair](http://www.chicagolighthouse.org/event/flair)