



the Beam

Summer 2018 ■ Volume 18 Number 2



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

Dr. Szlyk addresses the crowd at the Lighthouses on the Mag Mile press conference along with Jeff Hanson, a featured artist of the campaign.

Dear Friends,

When you visit Chicago's famed North Michigan Avenue and surrounding areas this summer, you are in for a special treat! You will find more than 50 six-foot tall amazing lighthouse sculptures all along this world famous thoroughfare, better known as the Magnificent Mile®. At first glance, you might associate the lighthouses with Chicago's status as a nautical city and major Great Lakes port. Upon closer look, however, you will note that these sculptures carry a powerful message of hope and unity that will provide a mind altering experience.

Welcome to Lighthouses on The Mag Mile, a free public art display celebrating access and inclusion for people with disabilities. From now through August 11, you will be wowed by these stunning works of art, which are designed by talented local and national artists, including many people who are disabled.

The Chicago Lighthouse is very proud to present this world class exhibition in partnership with our outstanding Board Member David Huber and his firm, Huber Financial Advisors, LLC, as well

as many other visionary individuals and organizations, especially The Magnificent Mile Association®. I want to extend special appreciation to all the sponsors, including many Lighthouse Board Members, and of course, all the artists who have participated.

Among them is a dear friend of The Lighthouse, **Jeff Hanson**, who has gained international fame for his work, which adorns the homes of the likes of Warren Buffet and Sir Elton John. In fact, Jeff, who is visually impaired, was chosen by Mr. Huber, a long time admirer, to personally design his firm's lighthouse. Heavy texture and bright colors, which define Jeff's art, are depicted in his lighthouse. "*Sailing Chicago Harbor*," a colorful summer garden surrounding a scenic Lake Michigan lighthouse.

Jeff, 24, is embarking on an ambitious goal to raise \$10 million for children's charities by the time he hits 30. To see samples of his work, visit: jeffhansonart.com.

Similar messages of hope and optimism will be reflected in all the other lighthouses as well.

Our intent with this exhibit is to break down barriers and open more doors for people with disabilities. Despite the progress that has been made, much more still needs to be done to ensure full equality. **According to national statistics, 70% of Americans with severe disabilities are unemployed.**

But for change to happen, each of us must do our part. **As you enjoy our lighthouses this summer, ask yourselves, what you can do to create access and inclusion for our fellow citizens with disabilities.** We all have a role to play. All of us at The Chicago Lighthouse are beacons. **We ask that you become beacons too!**



LIGHTHOUSES ON THE MAG MILE

June 19 - August 11

PRESENTED BY



ONCE IN A LIFETIME ART DISPLAY SEEKS TO OPEN DOORS

They will steal your hearts and open your eyes to what is possible. In the process they will ask you to become engaged and consider what you can do as an individual to break down barriers and open more doors for people with disabilities.

This is the powerful message behind the more than 50 six-foot lighthouse sculptures which are beautifying the landscape of Chicago's North Michigan Avenue and surrounding areas this summer.

The sculptures, featuring a wide variety of designs and patterns, are designed by accomplished local and national artists, many with disabilities. They encompass Lighthouses on The Mag Mile, a free public art display conducted by The Chicago Lighthouse in partnership with Huber Financial Advisors, LLC, and many other visionary organizations and individuals who are committed to access and inclusion.

Spearheading this bold initiative is Lighthouse President and CEO Dr. Janet Szlyk who first came up with the idea as she walked along The Magnificent Mile®. "I remember how popular exhibits featuring cows and canines were," she recalled. "So I thought, why not lighthouses to build on Chicago's status as a nautical city and the role they play in serving as beacons!" The analogy carries over to The Chicago Lighthouse, which serves as a beacon of light and

THE LIGHTHOUSES SERVE
AS A VIVID REMINDER
ABOUT WHAT PEOPLE
WITH DISABILITIES
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CHANCE.

—Dr. Janet Szlyk, President & CEO

opportunity for people who are blind, visually impaired, disabled and Veterans.

For Dr. Szlyk, the lighthouses serve as a vivid reminder about what people with disabilities can do if given the chance and that we as a society still need to do more to ensure that barriers are broken and more opportunities, particularly in employment, will be

available. In addition, she points out that members of the public who view the lighthouses may become more aware of disability issues.

"Citing the success of The Chicago Lighthouse in creating hundreds of jobs for members of the disabled community as well as Veterans, **we want to issue a call to employers that individuals who are disabled are a talented part of our workforce that has far too long been untapped.**"

She invites everyone to explore, celebrate and become engaged in Lighthouses on The Mag Mile. **"We are eager to grow our community of friends for the causes of access and inclusion!"**

"I am from St. Joseph, Missouri and visited Chicago last week. The last day I was there, my daughter and I decided to do some shopping. I was so pleased and amazed when we began seeing the lighthouses! We had no idea they were being displayed at this time. They were so beautiful! Thank you and the artists for sharing such awesome artwork with the public. It was really the highlight of my trip.—Bravo!"

For more information, visit lighthousesonmagmile.com



He admits that being involved as a sponsor for Lighthouses on The Mag Mile this summer was a no brainer.

“When Dr. Szlyk first mentioned this idea, I knew it was a winner and that I had to participate,” says David Huber, a Lighthouse Board member and CEO of his own wealth management firm, Huber Financial Advisors, LLC. He noted that 2018 represents his 10-year anniversary of working with The Chicago Lighthouse Board of Directors as well as Huber Financial’s 30-year anniversary. Mr. Huber said: “Partnering with The Lighthouse to give voice to what’s possible for people living with disabilities is a great way to celebrate this banner year!”

“I think it is one of the most exciting projects we have undertaken and can go a long way in advancing the causes of access and inclusion for people with disabilities,” he adds. In fact, Mr.

STEPPING UP TO THE PLATE

HUBER FINANCIAL AN ENTHUSIASTIC SUPPORTER OF LIGHTHOUSES ON THE MAG MILE

Huber was so impacted by the effort that he offered to be the presenting sponsor. He is also a fan of acclaimed artist Jeff Hanson, who is among those participating in the event, and asked him to design the Huber lighthouse.

Having a visual impairment himself, Mr. Huber is a supporter of a core mission of the public art display, to break down barriers and extend more opportunities for members of the disabled community.

“From my own experience, I know first-hand what we can bring to the table and what we can achieve if given the chance to do so!”

Above: David Huber.
Right: David Huber (far right) poses with his family/friends and Jeff Hanson (in colorful shirt,) artist of the Huber Financial, LLC sponsored lighthouse.



ARTIST WITH DISABILITY CREATES DESIGN TO SHOWCASE MOTION SHE HAS LOST

As she loses mobility due to an incurable form of progressive muscular dystrophy, she uses her art to regain the sense of movement that she has lost.

Meet Pooja Pittie, a Chicagoan who shifted careers from finance and entrepreneurship to pursue her life-long passion for art. Previously, Ms. Pittie's work has been exhibited at such prestigious venues as Expo Chicago and Art Miami. Currently, she is represented by the McCormick Gallery in Chicago.

Her considerable talents along with her passion and optimism earned her a spot as one of the artists participating in The Lighthouses on The Mag Mile Public Art Display taking place through August 11.

Staying optimistic even when confronting a serious challenge like a disability is important to Ms. Pittie and can be seen in her art, including her lighthouse sculpture.

"As an artist living with a muscular disability, I wanted to create art that reflected my positive attitude, despite my struggles," she says. "In this spirit, my lighthouse is titled 'Boundless' and I hope it gives the visitor a little glimpse into my endless optimism and the joy with which I paint."



Ms. Pittie adds that as a society, it is important to provide thoughtful access and inclusion to people of all abilities in order for them to reach their full potential.

"An inclusive community is an abundant one, where there are no limits to what is possible. An inclusive world is welcoming, colorful and bright, just like this lighthouse," she smiles.

Above: Pooja Pittie paints the undercoat for her lighthouse sculpture. **Left:** The finished piece, titled "Boundless" can be viewed at 520 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago.



WAIT! There's more. The lighthouses will be available for auction after the public art display. If you would like to be notified of when the lighthouses will be available, please visit:
www.lighthousesonmagmile.com

WELCOMING ART LOVERS WITH DISABILITIES

Thanks to the **AWARE** Audible Wayfinding app and Sensible Innovations (sensible-innovations.com) our Lighthouses on The Mag Mile public art display is accessible to ALL.

Using 'iBeacons' that are attached to each sculpture along with the Aware app, individuals who are blind or visually impaired are able to obtain information about the sculpture. Details include how the sculpture looks and information about the artist/theme. The 'iBeacons' trigger the app, which identifies the location and downloads the information.

Ultimately, the **AWARE** app provides those who are visually impaired independence and freedom to explore at their own pace and without limits.

The **general public** can take a self-guided tour of the lighthouses by downloading **OTOCAST**. **Both apps are FREE.**

Hear from the Artist

App Store

Google Play



Aware
Audible Wayfinder
for People Who are Blind



YOUTH TRANSITION PROGRAM CONTINUES TO OFFER OPPORTUNITY FOR GROWTH

New partnerships are enabling our Youth Transition Program's adolescents who are blind or visually impaired to have an especially memorable summer.

The Program's First Jobs component in particular has benefited from new support. Thanks to our new partnership with **Walgreens**, eight young adults have just begun paid externships in Walgreens stores in downtown Chicago and nearby suburbs, where they are learning job skills that will help them build careers and bright futures. To maximize this learning experience, each extern is paired with a coach and receives one-on-one orientation and mobility support.

The Youth Transitions Program's Summer in the City component is also prospering from fantastic community support. This Program allows our students to learn life skills while experiencing adventures like a Wrigley Field Tour, Lake Michigan boat cruise, and a (fully accessible) night at the theater. Thanks to increased support, including incredible funding from **Reader's Digest Partners for Sight Foundation**, we were able to expand this Program to two weeks for the first time.



Summer in the City participants visit Lighthouses on The Mag Mile.

by hosting focus groups. On March 1, 2018, the first informational session to educate our community was held at The Lighthouse. Dr. Philip Troyk, the lead researcher for the ICVP team, presented information on how complex the vision system is, previous research conducted in the area of vision prostheses, and the ICVP device. Attendees asked a variety of questions including how visual memory would impact what a person might see with the ICVP device. A video recording from the March 1st session along with general information about the project can be found on the ICVP webpage: www.chicagolighthouse.org/icvp.

The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of the National Institutes of Health.

www.chicagolighthouse.org/newsletter-signup





The Chicago Lighthouse

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Lighthouses on The Mag Mile

June 19 - August 11 | Chicago's Magnificent Mile®

FLAIR. Fun. Fashion. Philanthropy.™

Tuesday, October 2 | Loews Chicago Hotel

Style for Sight

Thursday, November 8 | ENAZ | Highland Park, IL