



the Beam

Fall 2018 ■ Volume 18 Number 2



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

Dear Friends,

With all the sacrifices they have made to protect our freedoms, The Chicago Lighthouse is proud to join the nation in saluting our courageous Veterans this month.

We are very proud of all our Veterans on staff and commend them for their outstanding service. They make important contributions to the overall success of The Lighthouse and help enrich our entire community.

In their honor, we are devoting this issue to our Vets. Currently, Veterans make up 6% of our workforce. In addition, approximately 30% of our Veterans have been employed at The Lighthouse for four or more years.

To show our appreciation and give something back to the Veterans' community, we are honored to be the home of the Illinois Joining Forces helpline, which is staffed by Veterans Michael Smith and William Bryant. The helpline is generously funded by the Boeing Corporation, and provides information on employment, health care, housing, education and other vital services

available to Illinois' military men and women and their families. We are also pleased to now have a position devoted to assisting Vets secure employment thanks for a grant from the Robert R. McCormick Foundation. Staffing this position is Chandra Dagley, who served in the U.S. Army for ten years.

For all the progress that has been made, however, much still needs to be done to ensure that all those who served our country will have access to the resources and opportunities they need to ensure a fulfilling life.

Current statistics illustrate the all too high unemployment problem that still impacts many Veterans. For example, nearly 61% of pre-9/11 and 65% of post-9/11 Veterans did not have a job when they left the military.

To help change this, we maintain an ambitious effort to reach out to Vets and recruit them for good-paying positions in our customer care centers and other areas. We are always on the lookout for further opportunities to help our Vets and will keep you posted on new initiatives.



LIGHTHOUSE PROVIDES A WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT FOR VETERANS

While The Chicago Lighthouse was established to assist people who are blind or visually impaired, it also has a strong history of serving Veterans who are both sighted and visually impaired.

Throughout its 112-year history, The Lighthouse has provided rehabilitation and other services to Veterans who were blinded in our wars. For many years, the organization also supplied low vision devices to VA hospitals across the country. More recently, The Lighthouse's rela-

**"THE LIGHTHOUSE...
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—Dr. Janet Szlyk, President & CEO

tionships with the Veteran community have greatly expanded as many former servicemen and women took positions in our customer care centers.

"The Lighthouse wants to honor the brave men and women who served our country by providing them with a welcoming, supportive environment that recognizes their talents and provides

meaningful employment opportunities," said Lighthouse President and CEO Dr. Janet Szlyk.

continued inside



"We need to educate employers about all the positive qualities like discipline, loyalty and tangible skills that Vets bring to the table. The Chicago Lighthouse gets it!"

Stephen Coleman, U.S. Army Veteran and supervisor in The Lighthouse's UI Health Customer Care Center.



"The Lighthouse makes us feel comfortable and encourages us to be proud of who we are. I hope that other employers take a page from The Lighthouse to foster a strong sense of community among both Vets and people with disabilities."

Robin Baker, U.S. Army Veteran who is also visually impaired and works as a supervisor in The Lighthouse's UI Health, Cook County and IDFPR Customer Care Centers.



"If I can help people get their day off to a good start by being pleasant to them, I am delighted. That positive experience can only help reinforce the image of The Lighthouse as a happy place to work!"

James Thompson, a U.S. Navy Veteran, who is disabled and serves as a Lighthouse security guard and greeter to our staff and guests.

Dr. Szlyk pointed out that in addition to recruiting Veterans for jobs in our customer care centers, the organization is home to the Joining Forces Customer Care Center which operates a toll free number, connecting Veterans and their families with vital services in Illinois including health care, educational, employment and other resources.

The Lighthouse also established a new position, Veteran Coordinator, which works out of our Employment Services area to supplement the efforts of the Joining Forces team and provide support to ex-military personnel on how to prepare for and secure a job.

Serving in this new position is Chandra Dagley, a native of downstate, Matteson, Illinois, who was in the Army Reserve for 10 years.

“For Veterans, The Lighthouse walks the talk to makes things happen,” Chandra noted. “We are passionate in our committment to Vets and in opening doors to greater opportunities for them.”

She praised Dr. Szlyk for her commitment to helping Vets and for making them feel like an important part of The Chicago Lighthouse family. Chandra also pointed out the comprehensive and all-encompassing nature of Lighthouse services that are available to Veterans. For some of our Veteran Services, please see the story below.

“Our goal is to not only hire and train Veterans but provide them with the means to pursue meaningful careers,” Chandra stated.

For more information about hiring a Veteran in your business, contact: Angela Kearney at angela.kearney@chicagolighthouse.org or (312) 997-3654.



“For Veterans, The Lighthouse walks the talk to makes things happen.”

Veteran Coordinator Chandra Dagley provides support to ex-military personnel at The Lighthouse.

THEIR FIGHT—OUR FIGHT: FINDING EMPLOYMENT FOR OUR VETS

According to Bureau of Labor Statistics, as of September 2018 approximately 266,000 Veterans in Illinois are unemployed. **A major concern facing our Veterans is securing viable employment which allows them a smooth shift into civilian life and to provide for their families.** One of the most common reasons Veterans are unemployed is employers are not always able to translate military skillsets into recognizable workforce qualities. This, in turn, can affect Veterans’ overall reintegration back to civilian life. These barriers can be affected by other issues Veterans face in their transition as well.



The Chicago Lighthouse is proud to employ Veterans in all areas of its workforce.

The Chicago Lighthouse has instituted multiple initiatives to provide support and access to the resources necessary to help Veterans. For instance, through our Employment Services Program, we work to help Veterans obtain the needed skills to shift from soldier to staff member. Our new Veterans’ Coordinator also helps bridge the gap between newly hired Veteran and seasoned Veterans at The Lighthouse, creating a mentoring system, to assist with the transition to civilian workforce. Our Veteran clients also have access to our other programs and services, including vision and psychological care, assistive technology, and The Kane Legal Clinic, among others. Our comprehensive Lighthouse support ensures that our Veterans feel properly prepared and confident to excel in their new jobs.

We will continue supporting our Veterans, through securing employment at The Lighthouse and beyond. They gave for us; now it is time that we assist them.

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

www.chicagolighthouse.org/newsletter-signup

Follow us on social media



LIGHTHOUSES ON THE MAG MILE™

MESSAGES OF ACCESS & INCLUSION LIVE ON!



One of our Birth-to-Three participants finds a special connection with the “Hooked on Reading” by Anne Hanley lighthouse sculpture that now resides outside of The Chicago Lighthouse North, in Glenview.

Though they are no longer gracing North Michigan Ave and surrounding areas, the stunning Lighthouse sculptures which captured the nation’s attention this summer, are still generating buzz.

While the lighthouses have found new homes at locations ranging from the roof of Lurie’s Children’s Hospital in Chicago to a home pier in Marco Island, Florida, their messages of access and inclusion live on and continue to inspire anyone who sees them.

Following the highly successful public art display, which ended August 11, several of the lighthouses were auctioned off, with proceeds benefitting Chicago Lighthouse programs serving people with disabilities and Veterans.

“The lighthouses touched many lives and helped the public gain a much greater appreciation for what people with disabilities could accomplish if given the chance,” noted Dr. Janet Szlyk, Lighthouse President and CEO, who initiated the concept.

Noting that coverage of the lighthouses reached over 160 million Americans, or roughly half the U.S. population, she observed that the event greatly enhanced The Chicago Lighthouse’s reputation as a thought leader on blindness and disability issues.

“Thanks to a CBS Sunday Morning segment, we received dozens of requests from organizations across the country on how to launch a similar effort in their respective communities,” Dr. Szlyk said. “In response, we developed and distributed a comprehensive toolkit listing key points.”

She also maintained that The Lighthouse will continue to champion another key message from the initiative, encouraging businesses to hire more people with disabilities.



This holiday, give a gift that matters

Fashion clocks made in the USA by people who are blind.

SHOP OUR NEW ONLINE STORE: chicagolighthouseclocks.com

TO ORDER or learn more contact: Rick Sullivan at (312) 997-3651 richard.sullivan@chicagolighthouse.org



Over 100 designs available

YEAR-END IMPACT

Thanks to you, this year, The Chicago Lighthouse has helped over 67,000 people receive the services they needed through our clinical, education, employment, and independent living programs. This would not have been possible without your support. On behalf of those we serve, thank you for changing the lives of our children and clients, like Matilda.

When she first came to our Birth-to-Three Program, Matilda was diagnosed with aniridia, a visual impairment. During her rehabilitation therapy, it was discovered that Matilda also had a sensory processing disorder, preventing her from fully receiving sound, taste, smell, sight, and touch. Her lack of senses made eating almost impossible, and she required a gastronomy tube to survive. By using a variety of therapeutic treatments, our teachers helped Matilda discover her senses. She can now identify different textures, smells, sounds, sights, and flavors. Matilda, who is now in our Judy and Ray McCaskey Preschool, has even developed a sweet tooth.



Every day, your support makes stories like this possible. With our year end approaching we hope you will keep us in mind. With your help, we can continue changing lives, like Matilda’s.

Mark November 27 for **#GivingTuesday!** Help support our Youth Transition Program. Your impact can be doubled with our **\$10,000 challenge match.** www.chicagolighthouse.org/donate

NOVEMBER							2018
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	
25	26	27	28	29	30		



The Chicago Lighthouse

1850 W. Roosevelt Road • Chicago, IL 60608-1288

UPCOMING EVENTS

www.chicagolighthouse.org/events

Sweets for Sight

Thursday, February 7, 2019

**Raising the Stakes for Vision:
Poker & Casino Night**

Thursday, February 28, 2019

Jazz Night

Tuesday, April 2, 2019

Seeing What's Possible Annual Gala

Friday, June 14, 2019

House & Garden Walk

Wednesday, June 26, 2019

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