

# GOVERNOR'S VISIT

Information



# the Beam

Summer 2019 ■ Volume 19 Number 1



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

Dear Friends,

As the nation observes the 29th anniversary this month of the passage of the landmark Americans with Disabilities Act, The Lighthouse proudly reaffirms its unwavering commitment to promoting access and inclusion. Despite the progress that has been made, we are well aware that much more still needs to be done to insure a more inclusive and equitable society.

First, I want to thank Governor JB Pritzker for taking time from a busy schedule to visit The Lighthouse on June 24. We had a chance to emphasize our mission of promoting access and inclusion while showing him our world class organization. I also want to commend the Governor for his commitment to access by boosting funding in the state budget for people with disabilities.

Special thanks as well need to be extended to our outstanding Board Member Larry Broutman who has done his part to highlight the beauty of inclusion in his delightful new book, *Chicago Treasure*. Larry, along with his co-authors, Rich Green and John Rabias, have portrayed a diverse group of children, including many with disabilities, as their favorite nursery rhyme or fairy

tale characters. As Rich points out by including children with disabilities without calling them out, Larry is sending a powerful message about acceptance and inclusion. In addition, we commend him for generously donating the book's proceeds to The Lighthouse.

This summer also marks the first anniversary of our wildly popular public art display, *Lighthouses on The Mag Mile™*, which showed the world what artists with disabilities can do if given the chance. We are building on the success of that effort to launch a spectacular concert, ***Center Stage for Access and Inclusion***, which will take place at Chicago's famed Navy Pier on September 14.

This very special program, which is FREE and open to all, will feature national and local musicians, dancers and storytellers, many with disabilities, who will dazzle us with their amazing performances. Headlining the event will be Avett Ray, seven-year-old piano prodigy and YouTube sensation who happens to be visually impaired. "*Center Stage*" promises to provide us with a most memorable experience. We hope to see you there!





**GOVERNOR  
PRITZKER VISITS  
CHICAGO  
LIGHTHOUSE**



TOP LEFT: Illinois Governor JB Pritzker poses with leaders of The Chicago Lighthouse and the Illinois Tollway during his visit to the Illinois Tollway Customer Care Center on June 24. Shown left to right are Shana Whitehead, Chief of Business Systems at the Illinois Tollway; José Alvarez, Executive Director of the Illinois Tollway; Lighthouse COO Pam Tully; Gov. Pritzker; Lighthouse President and CEO Dr. Janet Szlyk; and Lighthouse Board Chair Gary Rich. TOP RIGHT: Board Member Karin Norington-Reaves (far left) and Principal Lee Burklund (far right) take Gov. Pritzker on a tour of The Lighthouse's Children's Developmental Center. BOTTOM LEFT: Rick Sullivan (left) product manager, Chicago Lighthouse Industries, presents a souvenir Lighthouse clock to Gov. Pritzker. BOTTOM RIGHT: Lighthouse customer service center employee Eric Ozier greets Gov. Pritzker during his visit.

In an effort to learn more about Lighthouse programs, including our partnership with the state on such key initiatives as the Illinois Tollway and UI Health Customer Care Centers, Governor JB Pritzker came for a personal visit and tour on June 24.

“We are delighted that after just a few months in office, Governor Pritzker took time from his busy schedule to visit The Lighthouse and see how our social enterprise works,” said Lighthouse President/CEO Dr. Janet Szlyk.

**She stated that one of most important objectives for the visit was to showcase our preschool to the Governor who is a strong supporter of early childhood education.**

“We wanted to make the case for adequate funding and were pleased when Governor Pritzker noted that funding for early childhood education was included in the bill recently approved by the General Assembly to boost infrastructure spending in Illinois,” said Dr. Szlyk.

The other key objective was to reiterate to the Governor the importance of the state use program, which identifies businesses to partner with not-for-profit organizations like The Lighthouse with the goal of employing people with disabilities. Dr. Szlyk pointed out The Lighthouse utilized the program to successfully bid for contracts to operate the Tollway and UI Health Customer Care Centers.

To bring the point home, both centers along with the preschool, were included on his tour. Joining the Governor at the Tollway was new Executive Director Jose Alvarez.

In addition, Governor Pritzker toured Lighthouse Industries, where he was presented with a special clock featuring the State of Illinois logo that was made by employees who are blind. Dr. Szlyk also showed him our new line of fashion clocks, which debuted in 2017. A longtime Cub fan, Governor Pritzker smiled when he saw a clock bearing the Wrigley Field logo in honor of the 2016 World Champions!

*continued inside*

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**WE ARE DELIGHTED THAT AFTER JUST A FEW MONTHS IN OFFICE, GOVERNOR PRITZKER TOOK TIME FROM HIS BUSY SCHEDULE TO VISIT THE LIGHTHOUSE...**

—Dr. Janet Szlyk, President & CEO

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# GOVERNOR PRITZKER VISITS CHICAGO LIGHTHOUSE continued

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He was also given a copy of *Chicago Treasure*, the new book showcasing inclusion that was written by Lighthouse Board Member Larry Broutman.

Along the way, the Governor was warmly received by Lighthouse staff, including members of Employment Services, the Illinois Instructional Materials Center (IIMC) and CRIS Radio.

“I found Governor Pritzker to be very friendly and down to earth,” said Sandy Murillo, associate producer at CRIS who is totally blind. Sandy was among those staff members who greeted him and gave an overview of her work at CRIS.

“We were honored that the Governor came,” said Dr. Szlyk. “He impressed all of us with his thoughtful questions. He is knowledgeable, considerate, curious and funny. We look forward to continue working with him!”

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For his part, Governor Pritzker thanked Lighthouse management and staff for making him feel so welcome.

“I am deeply touched by the very warm reception I received here today,” he said as he departed. “The Chicago Lighthouse does such excellent work. I appreciated having an opportunity to see first-hand what you do.”

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THE VERY WARM RECEPTION  
I RECEIVED HERE TODAY.**

—Governor Pritzker

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**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, Chief Development Officer, at (312) 997-3643 or [jennifer.miller@chicagolighthouse.org](mailto:jennifer.miller@chicagolighthouse.org).



LEFT: Maritza who is depicted as Cinderella in *Chicago Treasure* greets “Elsa” of Frozen during the book’s launch. MIDDLE: Abigail who is featured in the book as “The Princess and the Pea” shows off her page. RIGHT: Author and Lighthouse Board Member Larry Broutman poses with several children who he photographed for the book.

## CHICAGO TREASURE SHOWCASES THE POWER OF INCLUSION

The universal message about the power and beauty of inclusion is vividly showcased in a whimsical new book featuring children, including those with disabilities, posing as their favorite nursery rhyme or fairy tale characters. Written by Lighthouse Board Member Larry Broutman, an award-winning photojournalist, *Chicago Treasure* features dozens of stunning images of children as Snow White, Cinderella, Old King Cole, Jack and Jill and many other characters. **“By including children who are disabled without calling them out, Larry is showing us the true meaning of inclusion,”** said Rich Green, co-author and illustrator.

Published in early spring, the book got an important boost with a segment that aired recently on WGN-TV and a profile that appeared in the June issue of Chicago Parent. It should generate additional buzz when Mr.

Broutman appears on ABC 7’s highly rated “Windy City Live” in mid-July. He will also be signing copies of *Chicago Treasure* during The Lighthouse’s upcoming Center Stage for Access and Inclusion event at Navy Pier on September 14.

A retired plastics engineer and professor, Mr. Broutman is spending his golden years as a prolific author as well as serving as a champion of children with disabilities. His previous books include *Chicago Monumental*, *Chicago Eternal* and *Chicago Unleashed*. He donates profits to The Lighthouse and another non-profit, Access Living.

**PURCHASE THE BOOK / VIEW MEDIA**

[chicagolighthouse.org/chicagotreasure](http://chicagolighthouse.org/chicagotreasure)

## YOUTH WHO ARE VISUALLY IMPAIRED PARTICIPATE IN NEW INCLUSIVE PHOTOGRAPHY INITIATIVE AT THE LIGHTHOUSE

Four youth who are visually impaired are the first in Chicago to participate in a new summer employment program called “Photography for All,” which aims to show that photography on Apple products is accessible to everyone. The youth are all enrolled in our First Jobs program, which is possible primarily thanks to the support of the Reader’s Digest Partners for Sight Foundation. “Photography for All” was created through our partnership with One Summer Chicago, a program with the Chicago Mayor’s Office which works with various organizations throughout the city to provide employment and internship opportunities for youth aged 14-24.

Throughout the six-week program, the participants will use iPad Pros to take photographs both at The Lighthouse and throughout the city and learn various editing and animation and coding techniques. Each participant will have the opportunity to choose the direction of their own photography project based on their particular interests. “I want to move forward with photography and am excited to learn about editing,” said Hiba, a high school junior participating in the program who recently developed an interest in taking photos and using color to represent emotions in her work.

They will also visit the Apple Store on Michigan Avenue for photography and editing instruction. According to Kathryn King, “Photography for All” Instructor, “We’re following along with the Apple ‘Everyone Can Create Photography’ curriculum, and we wanted to expand that to students with low vision so that they can also create photography and artistically express themselves like any other person.” Aside from photography, the program will also help the students develop their independent travel skills, as they will learn to use public transportation to travel to various locations and attractions throughout the city. At the end of the program on August 8 from 4:00 – 6:00 p.m., the group will present their work during a gallery showing at the Flagship Apple Store, located at 401 N. Michigan Avenue. We look forward to the wonderful work the youth will create this summer!



“Photography for All” participants Israa (left) and Hiba (center) use iPad Pros to take photos outside with instructor Kathryn King.



“I like taking pictures of nature lately,” says “Photography for All” participant Soul. He and the other participants use a special photography case with handles for their iPads which makes them easier to hold while taking photos.



SATURDAY

SEPT 14<sup>th</sup> 2019  
Navy Pier | 11am-2pm

THE CHICAGO LIGHTHOUSE PRESENTS:

# CENTER STAGE

FOR ACCESS AND INCLUSION

**ARE YOU “ALL-IN” FOR ACCESS AND INCLUSION?**—This September 14, we are excited to present a one-of-a-kind concert at Chicago’s famed Navy Pier which will highlight the power of access and inclusion in our community. Center Stage for Access and Inclusion will spotlight some of Chicago’s most talented performers with and without disabilities in music, dance, art, spoken word and more. Highlights of this free concert include:

- Special guest performer Avett Ray, a seven-year-old piano YouTube sensation who happens to be visually impaired and has appeared on national television including *American Idol* and *The Today Show*;
- Performers from Chicago’s best entertainment venues; and
- WGCI Radio personality and comedian Leon Rogers as emcee.

Aside from attending this event, you can also become involved as either a sponsor, volunteer or donor. Funds raised will directly support our 40 programs which empower people with disabilities and Veterans to lead more independent and fulfilling lives. Bring your friends and family and join us for an unforgettable day at The Pier!



SPECIAL GUEST

AVETT RAY



EMCEE

LEON ROGERS

**For more information, visit**  
<https://chicagolighthouse.org/centerstage>





# The Chicago Lighthouse

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

[www.chicagolighthouse.org/events](http://www.chicagolighthouse.org/events)

### FLAIR Fashion Show & Luncheon

**Friday, September 13, 2019 | The Drake Hotel**

[www.chicagolighthouse.org/event/flair](http://www.chicagolighthouse.org/event/flair)

### Center Stage for Access and Inclusion

**Saturday, September 14, 2019 | Navy Pier**

[www.chicagolighthouse.org/centerstage](http://www.chicagolighthouse.org/centerstage)

### Style for Sight

**Monday, December 9, 2019 | ENAZ – Highland Park**

[www.chicagolighthouse.org/event/style-for-sight](http://www.chicagolighthouse.org/event/style-for-sight)

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