



LEADING THE WAY



The Chicago
Lighthouse

the Beam



Dear Friends,

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

The calendar may say we are heading into the dreary days of winter, but it feels like spring at The Chicago Lighthouse. There is a familiar energy of purpose and meaning around the building. All of our

Programs have resumed at least some in-person services. Our Preschoolers are in the classroom. Our Seniors are visiting Lighthouse North once a week and our Adult Living Skills participants are finally able to gather in-person.

There is also the energy of new faces at The Lighthouse. We have a new Vice President of Educational Services, Jordan Owens; a new Preschool teacher, “Miss Val,” and a new Director of Adult Services, Marykay Culleton. As you will read in the following pages, they are reinvigorating our Programs to help our students and adult participants become and remain lifelong learners.

As we look to 2022 and beyond, we want to harness all of this energy to do more life-changing work for people who are blind, visually impaired, disabled and Veterans everywhere. You may already be familiar with our recently launched partnership with BlindSight Delaware to expand our Call Center social enterprise model into another area of the country.

Finally, we are moving forward with our building project, “The Foglia Residences at The Chicago Lighthouse.” We expect site planning and construction to begin in early 2022, so that we can have our 76 fully accessible, affordable housing units ready for use by Fall 2023. This building, which will also include ground-level retail space, will make a huge impact in Chicago and could serve as a prototype for other organizations to build similar residences in other areas of the country.

***I think you will agree that
our future is bright.***



New Faces Bring New Energy

Back at The Lighthouse for the 2021-22 School Year



The first day of school is always exciting, but it was even more special this September. Because of the pandemic, our school for children who are blind, visually impaired, disabled, and otherwise at-risk was remote for the first part of the last school year. On the first day of class in 2020, the students greeted their teachers and classmates through a screen. This year,

we welcomed our students back to the Judy and Ray McCaskey Preschool and the Children's Development Center with colorful balloons and happy faces behind our masks.



Among the new faces in our school are two new educational leaders. Jordan Owens joined The Lighthouse in August as the Principal, Vice President of Education Services, and Director of Special Education, and she is already making her mark. She has incorporated a new health and wellness period into the daily school schedule. All students now spend at least 30 minutes every day working on mobility and movement in the gym.

Jordan has also implemented a functional curriculum to help students learn real-world skills through their schoolwork. ***"For instance, we might teach math concepts using money as an example," Jordan says. "We need to teach kids how to use the many different payment systems that exist, and we can incorporate that into the regular curriculum."***

Another new addition to The Lighthouse staff, Valerie Pokladowski is The Lighthouse's new Preschool teacher. "Miss Val" previously taught at Lincoln Park Preschool for six years, and she is excited to create an inclusive, welcoming classroom.

"The Lighthouse's mission is so similar to my own values: We want to help students take control of their own learning and growth," Valerie says. "It's a natural fit for me."

We are taking care to ensure the school year can continue safely by wearing masks and practicing social distancing in the school. Now that we have the students from the Preschool and the Children's Development Center back at The Lighthouse, we are ready to make up for lost time and ensure they have an enriching school year together.



High-fashion and models with and without disabilities returned to the in-person runway for this year's **FLAIR: Eye on Style**. The afternoon of "Fun, Fashion, and Philanthropy" honored Susan Griffiths Gohl for her dedication to The Lighthouse and other communities, and featured a performance of "A Million Dreams" by Nina, one of our Youth Transition Program participants.

Thank you to our guests, Co-Chairs Sherill Bodine and Sheree Schimmer, Co-Hosts Tracey DiBuono and Candace Jordan, as well as our sponsors and fashion partners for helping us raise funds for our children's and youth programs.

GETTING BACK TO ADULT LIVING

Q&A with:

Marykay Culleton
Director Adult Day Services



Having helped adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities for more than 30 years, Marykay Culleton knows every day is an adventure. “My mantra is, ‘It is what it is,’ because everything can change, and we need to make the best of all situations,” she says.

As Director of our reinstated Adult Living Skills Program, Marykay has been helping adults with intellectual or developmental disabilities who are also blind or visually impaired, reunite after months of pandemic-enforced separation. Having returned to The Lighthouse in September, our adult participants are thrilled to be back together.



Participants of the ALS Program learn many independent living skills, such as meal preparation.

What new things can we expect from the ALS Program?

We are now able to use the auditorium and gym at ICRE-Wood, which is right across the street from The Lighthouse. That gives our Adults a chance to get out and practice our Orientation & Mobility skills on a weekly basis. We plan to introduce some meal-preparation activities, like making meals in a Crockpot or microwaved snacks. We also looking to get the canteen operating again, so we can work on job-skills.



ALS staff members work individually with each participant to address their unique goals and needs.

How have things been going in the ALS Program so far?

Good. We’re still figuring out what we can and can’t do with respect to the COVID restrictions. We’re working on developing more community interaction, introducing job skills, and practicing independent-living skills. The team is still getting to know everyone and figuring out how we can all group together to get the most out of the Program.



ALS participants are thrilled to be active and back together.

How has it been for the Program’s clients?

They are thrilled to be back. They were really excited to see each other after being apart for so long. Now that it’s been a month, they’re getting comfortable, which is good to see.

PLEASE CONSIDER A PLANNED GIFT! You can help the thousands of people we serve each year AND have the satisfaction of knowing people with disabilities in the future will benefit from your generosity today. It is easier than you think to make a gift through your estate or trust. For more information, please contact Jen Miller, Chief Development Officer, at (312) 997-3643 or jennifer.miller@chicagolighthouse.org to learn more.

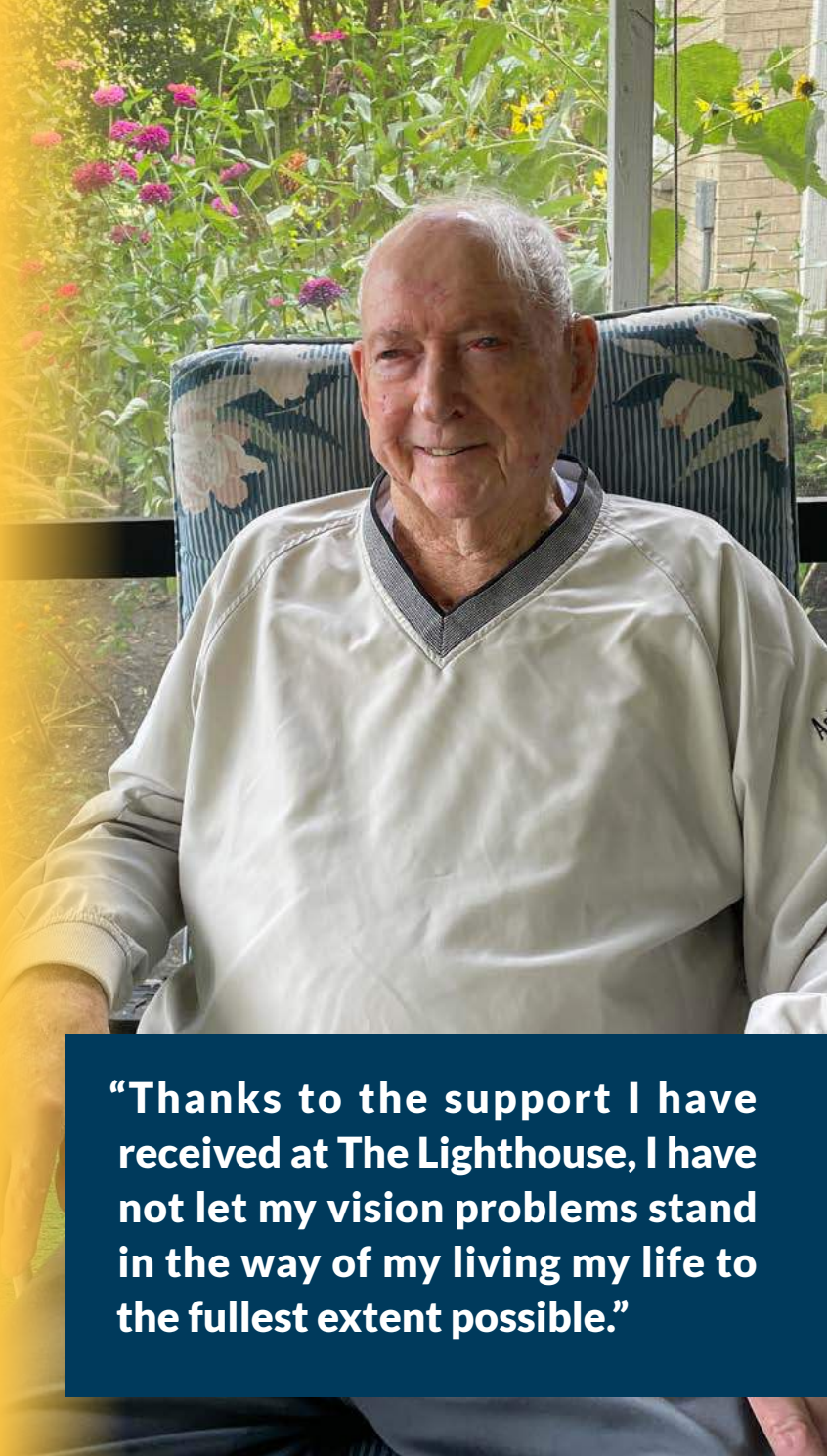
SPOTLIGHT ON A HAPPY ONE-HUNDRED YEAR OLD PATIENT AND DONOR!

Bill recently turned one hundred years old and has no plans to slow down. “In fact,” he says proudly, “my father was the oldest practicing lawyer who graduated from John Marshall Law School. My father lived to be 96 and had macular degeneration. He said that he did not like the taste of ‘retirement,’ so he kept on working!”

Bill’s career was in construction where he built houses on the North Shore, including every home on the street where he has lived for the past 60 years. He first encountered eye issues about 30 years ago, when he lost vision in one eye and later developed macular degeneration in the other.

“Luckily, I have been blessed with outstanding eye doctors since I began having eye troubles. I have been seeing Dr. Kara Crumbliss, at The Lighthouse’s Low Vision Clinic, for a while. She recommends the right assistive technology, for example, so I can work in my home office,” Bill shares.

“To that end, I am proud to give back to The Lighthouse. Jen [Miller, Chief Development Officer] keeps me up to date at all of the wonderful things that are going on there. If I have any questions, I call Jennifer and she helps me with whatever I need! Thanks to the fantastic support I have found at The Lighthouse, I have tried not to let my vision problems stand in the way of my living life to the fullest extent possible!” Bill says with a delighted smile.



“Thanks to the support I have received at The Lighthouse, I have not let my vision problems stand in the way of my living my life to the fullest extent possible.”

BRINGING ADVOCACY TO THE AIRWAVES



Disability Minute is produced entirely by talented writers and journalists with disabilities at The Chicago Lighthouse.

When Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker signed an executive order barring companies who do business with the State from paying people with disabilities sub-minimum wages, Sandy Murillo’s journalism instincts kicked in. The story was perfect for **“The Disability Minute,”** a new segment for WBBM Newsradio that Sandy is producing at The Chicago Lighthouse.

Two days later, Governor Pritzker was on the phone with Sandy, explaining the importance of equal pay for equal work. “People with disabilities deserve equal treatment with others who are working,” the Governor said in his only one-on-one interview about the topic.

Since August, Sandy, Maureen Reid, Ben Chargot and Kalari Girtley-Jackson (all of whom are Chicago Lighthouse employees and are blind) have been researching, writing, and hosting “The Disability Minute.” Produced in The Chicago Lighthouse’s fully accessible studio, the weekly segment provides an invaluable service for the Chicago community.

“We loved the idea this would be produced by people with disabilities to showcase what they can accomplish,” says WBBM Brand Manager and News Director Ron Gleason, who has been instrumental in getting the segment on air.

“As Chicago’s leading information service, this is a great way to inform everyone about the issues of importance to the disability community.” Gleason says.



The Chicago Lighthouse

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

UPCOMING EVENTS

www.chicagolighthouse.org/events

Sips for Sight (Virtual)

Wednesday, December 15, 2021

chicagolighthouse.org/event/sips

Raising the Stakes for Vision: Poker & Casino Night

Thursday, March 3, 2022

chicagolighthouse.org/event/poker

Sweets for Sight

Spring 2022

chicagolighthouse.org/event/sips-sweets

Seeing What's Possible Annual Gala

June 2022

chicagolighthouse.org/event/gala

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 9119
Chicago, IL