



The Chicago Lighthouse

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

UPCOMING EVENTS

www.chicagolighthouse.org/events

Sweets for Sight

February 2, 2023

Location TBD

**Raising the Stakes for Vision
Poker and Casino Night**

March 2, 2023

Gibsons Steakhouse/Hugo's Frog Bar

Seeing What's Possible Gala

June 2, 2023

Four Seasons Hotel Chicago



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TODAY!



the Beam

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BUILDING INDEPENDENCE



Dear Friends,

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

I was recently speaking with a mother whose teenage daughter has been visually impaired since birth. She told me about her first experiences with doctors and other professionals (none of them affiliated with The Lighthouse, thankfully) who gave her a list of “will nevers.”

Examples included: Her daughter “will never” ride a bike, she “will never” walk to school unassisted, she “will never” travel alone, and she “will never” be independent.

Unsurprisingly, this young woman is on her way to doing all of those things, and many, many others. I wish those doctors and professionals could see her today, if only so they “will never” place the burden of low expectations on another child again.

At The Chicago Lighthouse, we are committed to ending the curse of “will never.” Our vision is one of “Why can’t I?” Why can’t a person with a vision impairment run a marathon? Why can’t a person who is blind work in a bank? Why can’t people who are blind, visually impaired, disabled and Veter-

ans find safe, affordable, accessible housing?

Come Spring 2024, that last question will be answered in the form of The Foglia Residences at The Chicago Lighthouse. This first-of-its-kind undertaking will offer 76 fully accessible apartments for individuals and families to call home. **For members of our community who have been told they “will never” live independently in Chicago, we are offering a “why can’t” solution.**

At this time of year, we are so grateful to everyone in The Chicago Lighthouse family—our donors, partners, sponsors and friends—who make it possible for us to help our clients take a “why can’t” approach to achieving their dreams.

Thank you and best wishes for the holidays.

ON THE COVER: Community and civic leaders celebrate the groundbreaking of The Foglia Residences at The Chicago Lighthouse. **L to R:** Guide Dog Gaston; Chicago Lighthouse Employment Services Counselor Maureen Reid; U.S. Representative Danny Davis; Chicago Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities Commissioner Rachel Arfa; Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot; Chicago Housing Commissioner Marisa Novara; Chicago Alderman Walter Burnett, Jr.; Chicago Lighthouse Friend and Donor Patricia Foglia; Chicago Lighthouse President and CEO Dr. Janet Szlyk; Brinshore Development Co-Founder and Principal David Brint, and Chicago Lighthouse Board President Robert Clarke.





L to R:
 U.S. Representative
 Danny Davis, Chicago
 Alderman Walter
 Burnett Jr., Dr. Janet
 Szlyk and Brinshore
 Co-Founder David
 Brint with Patricia
 and Vincent Foglia, for
 whom the building is
 named in honor of their
 incredible support.

Breaking Ground on a “New Era of Accessibility”

After more than two years of planning, design and preparation, The Chicago Lighthouse, in partnership with Brinshore Development and the City of Chicago, broke ground on The Foglia Residences at The Chicago Lighthouse.

The 76-unit building is the first in the United States directed at people who are blind or visually impaired to be financed through Low Income Housing Tax Credits. **It continues a Lighthouse tradition of developing pioneering projects to meet evolving community needs.** These projects have included providing food and blankets for people who were blind in the early 1900s, opening the Midwest’s first Low Vision Clinic in 1955, and pioneering vision research projects today.

Calling it a “new era of accessibility” for the city and the country, Lighthouse President and CEO Dr. Janet Szlyk was joined by Brinshore Development co-founder and principal David Brint and several community leaders including U.S. Representative Danny Davis, Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot, and Chicago Alderman Walter Burnett Jr., in commemorating the start of construction.

“This land has played many roles over the past 67 years – a garden, a recreational center, a playground, and, yes, even a parking lot,” said Dr. Szlyk. “In every case, its purpose has been to provide sanctuary and solace for our community. As we look to the future, we can all take pride that it will continue to offer this promise of safe harbor and comfort for individuals who are blind, visually impaired, have other disabilities or are Veterans for years to come.”



“This project is a mission of love, of creating something for a population of people for whom affordable housing is scarce,”

—David and Betsy Brint pictured with their son Alan, who is blind from a congenital eye condition.

The Foglia Residences will be an income-qualifying development offering studio, one-, and two-bedroom apartments for individuals and families. Leasing emphasis will be given to people who are blind, visually impaired, disabled, and Veterans, as individuals from these populations experience housing insecurity at higher rates than the general population.

“This project is a mission of love, of creating something for a population of people for whom unemployment stands at 70% and affordable housing is scarce,” said David Brint, Principal at Brinshore Development, adding that his son, Alan, is blind. “The Lighthouse is in the middle of solving those problems in so many different ways. It is our joy to be partners with them.”

The Foglia Residences will take an accessibility-first approach, integrating elements such as reflective colors, tactile and high-contrast wallpaper and flooring, and Braille on signage and in common areas. In addition to these features and other state-of-the-art amenities, the building will also include a roof deck, a spacious community room, an exercise/fitness room on the main floor and ground-level retail space. LBBA served as the architect on the project, and Designs 4 Dignity assisted with design elements.

The Foglia Residences are scheduled to open in Spring 2024.

For information and updates, please go to: chicagolighthouse.org/fogliaresidences.

A LEGACY OF SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES FACING MACULAR DEGENERATION



Michael and Lillian Yannell.

For much of her life, Lillian Yannell was a non-stop tour de force. She served as a nurse in the Korean War, taught college level nursing classes post-service, and later became a leader at her local hospital. Even in retirement, she was an avid golfer, traveler, and formidable bridge player.

But one day, when her son Michael noticed Lillian was having trouble seeing her cards, everything changed. Lillian was diagnosed with macular degeneration, and, seeking the best care for his mother, Michael brought her to The Chicago Lighthouse. **They**

were both impressed with the personal care and attention the clinical services and assistive technology teams provided. Michael never forgot the help she received.

When Lillian passed away in 2021 at the age of 93, Michael knew exactly how to celebrate her memory. He made a generous gift to The Lighthouse's Seniors Program, so that others experiencing age-related macular degeneration and other eye diseases can find community and support during a scary and uncertain time.

"I see the value of The Lighthouse, and people need to know it is there. Watching a loved one go through that slow decline is difficult," Michael says. "I am so grateful that The Lighthouse was there for us."

Make a Difference with Your Year-End Gift...And Enjoy a Tax Break!

Did you know people who are age 70 ½ or older can contribute up to \$100,000 from their IRA directly to a charity and avoid paying income taxes on the distribution?

To learn more, contact Lora Nickels, Senior Director of Individual Giving at (312) 997-3643 or lora.nickels@chicagolighthouse.org.

THE IMPORTANCE OF INDEPENDENCE

Few things are more daunting than the prospect of losing one's sight. As primarily visual beings, sight is our gateway to the world. People use their vision to navigate familiar and unfamiliar surroundings, avoid danger, prepare meals, and recognize familiar faces in social settings. When those abilities start to disappear, the psychological impact can be devastating. It is of little wonder that most people say they would rather lose their hearing, memory, speech, or even a limb, than lose their eyesight.

"Independence is extremely important for people who are blind," says Clinical Professional Counselor Dr. Frank Lane. "Nobody wants to be dependent on others."



Dr. Frank Lane
Clinical Professional
Counselor

The Chicago Lighthouse is pleased to announce that Dr. Lane recently joined our Bergman Institute for Psychological Support, a clinical practice that specializes in meeting the emotional needs of individuals adapting to vision loss. Through individual, group, and family counseling sessions, the Bergman Institute provides a supportive environment where patients can process the grief and fear they may be feeling. Like many of The Lighthouse's programs, it is a service that we are uniquely equipped to provide.

"Traditional hospitals and clinics don't understand the extenuating psychological impact of people with vision loss," Lane says. "We see a lot of depression and anxiety in our patients who are adjusting to vision loss. Anything we can do to help them become more independent helps alleviate those feelings."



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DR. FRANK LANE
LOW VISION PSYCHOLOGIST



#GIVING
TUESDAY

Make your gift on Giving Tuesday, November 29th and double your impact! Your generosity will be matched one-for-one, up to \$25,000, by Chicago Lighthouse Board Member Dick Schnadig and his wife, Patricia.

O&M PROMOTES INDEPENDENCE AND INCLUSION

The Chicago Lighthouse's Orientation and Mobility program, commonly known as O&M, helps people who are blind or visually impaired learn the skills that will provide independence.

It all starts with a visit to the home. Jaret Bozigian, The Lighthouse's O&M Specialist, helps clients learn to trail walls, feel objects and use sound to orient themselves. Once they master those techniques, Jaret expands their learning to include their workplaces and communities. For those who are deaf and blind, instructors use techniques such as Tactile American Sign Language and by tracing maps and routes on the person's upper back to teach navigation skills.

The goal is to make activities that were once commonplace, like crossing the street or taking public transportation, once again possible so individuals can experience the benefits of community and social engagement and remain physically active. "O&M provides a foundation for independence," Jaret says.

Sadly, O&M services are not covered by health insurance, meaning clients have to rely on support from the Illinois Department of Human Services, grant funding from private foundations or pay for the instruction out-of-pocket. A contribution to The Chicago Lighthouse helps fund our O&M programs for people who are blind or visually impaired so they can navigate their communities with confidence.



MEET KATIE HOWE— A WOMAN DETERMINED TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

In the mid-1900s, The Chicago Lighthouse's secretary skills training was a revolutionary component of our employment services program. It taught people with vision impairments office skills that could lead to finding meaningful jobs. Katie Howe, who is blind, was one of those students in 1975, and that training helped her land several jobs in offices as a secretary and receptionist. **The employment opportunities helped her raise two children on her own and remain an active volunteer in her community.**

As office technologies changed, Katie knew she needed to keep learning so she could advance in her career. In the 1990s, Katie returned to The Lighthouse to learn how to use computers, training which had just recently become available. "I was really glad I came back. It helped me continue to work in offices for several more years," Katie says.

Knowing firsthand the challenges that come with vision loss, Katie wanted to be sure others could find the same independence she had. In the early 2000s, she returned to The Lighthouse as a volunteer Braille teacher. Katie was hired permanently for this position in 2006, and continues teaching Braille to adults today.

Katie also donates a portion of her paycheck back to The Lighthouse to support our life-changing programs and services. She is especially fond of donating during the holidays so that children won't have to go without gifts or holiday cheer.

"Some people have circumstances that are challenging or unfortunate, and it is always important to count your blessings and help when you can," Katie says. "Donating even a little bit, whether it's your time or money, makes such a difference in someone's life."



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KATIE HOWE
CHICAGO LIGHTHOUSE
BRAILLE INSTRUCTOR



PLEASE CONSIDER A PLANNED GIFT! You can help the thousands of people we serve each year AND have the satisfaction of knowing that in the future, people with disabilities will benefit from your generosity. An estate gift of \$50,000 to our *Envision the Future* Endowment Campaign, with a 4% annual investment return, will generate \$2,000 annually for The Lighthouse in perpetuity. **Please contact the Development Team at (312) 997-3668 or giving@chicagolighthouse.org for more information.**