



The Chicago
Lighthouse

the BEAM

Spring 2024



A SHINING BEACON OF INFLUENCE



The Chicago Lighthouse

1850 W. Roosevelt Road • Chicago, IL 60608

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

UPCOMING EVENTS

chicagolighthouse.org/events

FLAIR! Fashion Show & Luncheon

September 13, 2024

Ritz Carlton, Chicago

Games Galore

September 19, 2024

Northmoor Country Club, Highland Park

Rise to Shine 10K/5K/1M Inclusive Run & Walk

October 20, 2024

Illinois Medical District



Make your gift
TODAY!



Dear Friends,

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

Innovation is in The Lighthouse’s DNA, and our ability to innovate to meet our community’s ever-changing needs is how we have thrived for 118 years and counting. It is also

why so many people and organizations have looked to us as a model for their own programs and services.

It was innovative for us to provide jobs for people who were blind in the 1920s, and even more so when those jobs were assembling complex telephone switchboards—the height of technological innovation at the time. Advancements in care for premature babies led to increased postnatal conditions like retinopathy of prematurity; in response, The Lighthouse launched an in-home early education program to help these children learn to live in a world built for the sighted—long before there was a state-funded early intervention program.

More recently, our innovative spirit has focused on

technology, both in the ways it can provide our clients with more confidence and independence and how it can help us better serve our clients. We consistently seek out partnerships with companies that use artificial intelligence to power assistive technology devices that help people with visual impairments live with confidence and independence. Our innovative spirit also fuels our low vision research, including working with pioneering engineers on the world’s first wireless brain implant that has provided rudimentary light perception to a participant who is totally blind.

Soon, we will unveil our latest innovation, The Foglia Residences. In addition to answering our community’s needs for accessible, affordable housing, this 76-unit building will include some of the latest technology and devices to help residents live in safe, secure homes.

Our innovative spirit is the reason The Chicago Lighthouse has been able to shine as a beacon of hope and possibility for 118 years, and why it will continue to shine for years to come. In that spirit, this issue of the Beam highlights some of the individuals and programs that embody our spirit of innovation and discovery and their limitless potential.

ON THE COVER: At night, The Foglia Residences will illuminate to evoke a lighthouse and a gateway to the Illinois Medical District.



A Shining Beacon of Influence

Set to open this fall, The Foglia Residences will have an influence extending far beyond the corner of Roosevelt and Wood.



At night, the southwestern corner at the top of The Foglia Residences will glow, gently illuminating the sky and informing the area of its presence, while serving as a gateway to the Illinois Medical District.

Like so much of The Foglia Residences, the design is intentional. The exterior is meant to evoke The Chicago Lighthouse as it welcomes people who are blind, visually impaired, disabled and Veterans into its safe harbor and supportive community. It is far from The Residences' only distinctive touch, however, and like The Lighthouse's programs, many of those features will have an impact far beyond the building's walls.

From different textures of flooring and wall coverings to denote the transition from different areas within the building to faucets and door handles that are easily operated by those with limited mobility, every element has been carefully thought out. Outside, the landscaping and planting have been designed to facilitate safe navigation around the building and roads. David Brint, co-founder of Foglia Residences developer Brinshore Development, said that sort of thoughtful

development will continue to influence future projects.

"What happens in other buildings is, you have minimum requirements for people who are visually impaired, but other elements beyond that are not usually considered," he says. "We will certainly incorporate many of these ideas in our other projects."

Another influential feature of The Foglia Residences is one that most people will not see: the financing. The building is the first in the country to use Low Income Housing Tax Credit financing to support a building designed with the needs of individuals who are blind or visually impaired in mind. Brint expects other communities will see The Foglia Residences' viability and follow suit.

"I hope it triggers the idea that this can be done, that it's useful, and that there are a lot of people that need this housing," says Brint. "The awareness of what it is and the awareness of it as a beacon to others around the country and world will be great."



HELP WARM THESE NEW HOMES

Accessibility needs for many of the Foglia Residences' tenants may extend beyond those that have been incorporated into the building. To help make our new neighbors feel comfortable and secure, The Chicago Lighthouse has launched a Housewarming Campaign, featuring appliances and furnishings that will transform these new apartments into warm, welcoming, accessible homes.

Each item in our Housewarming Campaign has been carefully selected by our Occupational Therapists for its adaptive features, such as talking kitchen scales and high-contrast cutting boards for those with low vision, sofas with optimal back support, and furniture with pull handles for those with mobility issues.

Make a gift to The Chicago Lighthouse's Housewarming Campaign today and be a part of helping a new resident start a new chapter full of confidence and independence.



VIEW THE
FULL
WISH LIST
TO CHOOSE
YOUR GIFT!

CULTIVATING A NEW GENERATION OF COMPASSIONATE LOW VISION OPTOMETRISTS

Although more than 7 million people in the U.S. have low vision, it is estimated that there are only 1,000 low vision specialists in the country. With the need for low vision services projected to dramatically increase over the next 20 years, The Chicago Lighthouse Low Vision Clinic has been offering training opportunities for optometry students and residents so that they can understand the importance of specialized, holistic and compassionate low-vision care.

This year, Andjela Bursac, an extern, and Dr. Steven Sargent, a resident, have been learning how to conduct comprehensive low vision exams in our clinic. In contrast to typical eye exams, these exams explore the patient's day-to-day life, assessing their holistic needs, which may require additional support such as assistive technology or occupational therapy. These interactions help these budding optometrists see their patients in different ways.



Andjela Bursac examines a patient.



Dr. Steven Sargent tests a patient's 3D perception.

"I've learned how to be more compassionate," says Dr. Sargent. "I love that I get to spend more time with each patient, to get to know them on a personal level and figure out how we can help them with our services. You're not just delivering a diagnosis; you're giving them ways to continue living their life and providing hope and independence."

"This externship has made me a better person and a better future optometrist," says Andjela. "I learned to see a patient as an entire person instead of a pair of eyes."

Through these initiatives, our hope is these doctors will take this extra level of knowledge and compassion into their practices where they can make meaningful differences in their patients' lives.

RE-ESTABLISHING EDUCATIONAL ENRICHMENT

For young children, learning is happening all the time. Knowing this, The Chicago Lighthouse has always looked to create as many learning opportunities as possible for our students.

While music and art therapy and social groups have long been a part of our educational offerings, we have formalized their inclusion through our new Children's Enrichment Programs, a series of six-week sessions focusing on literacy, socialization, music and art. These programs are available to all children ages 0-6 with disabilities—and especially those with visual disabilities—at both our downtown and Glenview locations.

“ The re-establishment of the Children's Enrichment Programs is another way that we demonstrate our commitment to serving the 'whole child,' including the educational, therapeutic, social-emotional, and community and family needs of children with disabilities.

Jordan Owens
Chicago Lighthouse
Vice President of Educational Services

To learn more about our Children's Enrichment Programs, contact Fay Zeigler at fay.zeigler@chicagolighthouse.org or (312) 666-1331 ext. 3203. These programs are possible thanks to the generous contributions from our donors. If you would like to make a contribution, visit our website at chicagolighthouse.org/donate.



Get ready to champion accessibility and make an impact at our 3rd Annual Rise to Shine 10K/5K/1M Run & Walk on Sunday, October 20, 2024. Register now at www.RiseToShineRace.com



BELIEVE IT OR NOT, I ENJOY SIGHTSEEING

People think I'm joking when I tell them I love 'sightseeing.' I'm completely blind, so they can't imagine how I can enjoy traveling without being able to see. For me, sightseeing involves using my other senses to learn about the places I visit.

I've traveled extensively throughout Mexico, from my parents' hometown of Michoacan to the beaches of Los Cabos and Cancun to the bustle of Mexico City. Each destination has presented me with its own unique multisensory experience.

I make a point of seeking out regional dishes in every place I visit. Not only do I taste the food, I query the locals about the dishes, their cultural history, and their ingredients. (The chapulin, a.k.a. grasshopper, I had in my Oaxacan quesadillas was delicious, FYI.)

I also enjoy touring iconic and historic sites. Tour guides are generally very descriptive, so I feel I'm getting a full picture. I can also appreciate the other sensory stimuli. No doubt, when I visited Chichen Itza, I took note of the subtle bird-like qualities of the pyramid echoes more than my sighted companions.

Traveling is one of the best ways to learn about the world and all the different people, cultures and perspectives in it. And, you don't need sight to enjoy all that it has to offer.



Sandy Murillo is an Associate Producer at Chicago Lighthouse Media and a graduate of our Birth-to-Three Program. "Sandy's View" is a reoccurring feature in our Beam newsletters.

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY: PAYING IT FORWARD

When Virginia Edelman woke up one morning with wet macular degeneration, her entire life changed in an instant. "It was startling to see what she had to go through," remembers her daughter, Cathy.



Virginia Edelman

Fortunately, Virginia could use assistive technology devices to continue doing the activities she loved, and – just as importantly – she had the means to afford the hefty price tags that often accompany those devices. After Virginia passed in 2022, Cathy chose to honor her mom's legacy by helping others who might not be in that same position. In partnership with The Lighthouse's Low Vision Clinic, she established the Virginia B. Edelman Memorial Fund to provide financial support for individuals who cannot afford to purchase these essential aids.

"Throughout my career I have seen how financial barriers prevent my patients from buying much-needed devices like electronic magnifiers. These items are not covered by insurance, but they can have a huge impact on quality of life," says Lighthouse Chief of Clinical Services Dr. Kara Crumbliss. "Cathy saw this need and made our dreams come true with her generous gift."

You, too, can make an impact as a philanthropic partner with The Chicago Lighthouse. Cathy encourages others considering a gift to The Lighthouse to visit for a tour. "When I saw the facility and met the staff, I was confident my gift would make a difference in the way I had hoped. My mother would be very proud."

To schedule your visit to The Lighthouse and learn more about making a gift, contact Lora Nickels, Senior Director of Individual Giving, at lora.nickels@chicagolighthouse.org or (312) 997-3643.

“After several rounds of radiation, I was left completely blind. Receiving an OrCam MyEye Pro thanks to the Virginia B. Edelman Memorial Fund has helped me live a better, more complete life. I am not as dependent on others to be my eyes, and I'm looking forward to it helping me get off my medical leave and back to my job.

Denisse, who received an OrCam MyEye Pro thanks to the Virginia B. Edelman Memorial Fund

YOU CAN SUPPORT THE CHICAGO LIGHTHOUSE THROUGH YOUR ESTATE PLANS! Planned gifts offer you the flexibility to maintain your current financial security while also providing long-term support for our mission. To learn more about estate gift opportunities at The Lighthouse, **contact Lora Nickels at lora.nickels@chicagolighthouse.org or (312) 997-3643.**