



A Legacy Can Light the Way



The Chicago
Lighthouse

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CHANGING LIVES EVERY DAY

MEATHEAD WITH A BIG HEART

A Recipe for Giving

Entrepreneur, *New York Times* best-selling author, photographer, Leader Dog for the Blind puppy trainer, and Barbecue Hall of Famer, “Meathead” is a man of many talents and a heart for giving back. And that’s right, he goes by one name. “Like Cher or Madonna, only more facial hair,” he says.

For nearly two decades, Meathead has been a dedicated supporter of The Lighthouse. His journey began when his work in the wine industry led him to assist with one of our fundraising events. During a tour of our facilities, he was struck by the innovation of our programs and the breadth of services we offer to individuals with vision loss.

His personal connection to our mission goes back even further. As a high school student studying photography, he became increasingly aware of how much the world is built for the sighted. Years later, a close friendship with a neighbor who was blind gave him firsthand insight into the barriers faced by the blind and visually impaired community. “My friend struggled with unemployment and had a hard time finding work,” he says. “That’s why the services The Lighthouse provides are absolutely vital.”

Over the years, Meathead became a Lighthouse Keeper, making monthly contributions to support the mission of The Chicago Lighthouse. **“As a small business owner, I understand how important steady cash flow is for a nonprofit,” he says. “Plus, it’s easy: the donation is**



“ I determine what I want to give for the year and spread it out monthly. It’s easier to manage and provides The Lighthouse with steady, reliable support.” —Meathead

automatically charged to my card, and I earn mileage as a bonus!”

In addition to supporting The Lighthouse, Meathead gives to more than 20 organizations, including Leader Dogs for the Blind, for which he has raised seven puppies by providing early socialization and foundational training before they move on to advanced guide dog training.

With the recent successful release of his second book, *The Meathead Method*, he has been reflecting on his philanthropy. “I’ve made a good living, and I think I can afford to give more. It’s important to support others,” he says. “This is something I feel called to do.”

Join Meathead in giving monthly and become a Lighthouse Keeper today!

Contact Lora Nickels at (312) 997-3643 or lora.nickels@chicagolighthouse.org or scan this QR code to make your recurring gift today!



LEARN THE IMPORTANCE OF LONG-TERM PLANNING

Don Duncan and his family know the impact The Chicago Lighthouse can have on one person's life. Don's brother Doug had Usher's syndrome and, as a result, benefited from The Lighthouse's programs—including employment placement, vision rehabilitation and legal services.

When Doug was diagnosed with cancer in the early 2000s, he wanted to leave lasting support for an organization that meant so much to him. He set up a plan to leave his estate to The Lighthouse in his will.

Now, as a member of the Board of Trustees, Don also continues to support The Lighthouse in many ways. It is as a financial professional that he believes he can make the greatest immediate impact, both for the organization and its community.

"My brother benefited from the services from The Lighthouse, and I'm focused on the good that The Lighthouse provides, and one of the ways that I believe I can give back is through financial knowledge and wisdom," Don says.

On Thursday, Oct. 9, Don, along with other professionals from Savant Wealth Management (including fellow Board member and Savant managing partner David Huber) will host an educational Lighthouse Financial Planning Day. **Open to anyone from The Chicago Lighthouse**

community, the informational event will not only cover areas like estate planning and charitable giving, but also planning for long-term care of loved ones with disabilities.



Contrary to what many might think, you do not need to have a lot of money or assets to have a financial plan.

—Trustee Don Duncan

"Some of that may be cash-flow management and how to afford things such as assistive technology, adaptive equipment and basic necessities like transportation and rent," Don says. "It may also involve helping people understand how they can take advantage of the public resources available to them or setting up a special needs trust."

The Financial Planning Day will include an overview presentation, followed by one-on-one informational breakout sessions where individuals can ask general questions.

"If you ever have any doubts about your charitable donations or long-term care for a loved one, you should consider getting a financial plan done," Don says. "You don't have to have a lot of money to have a financial plan."

This event is intended for educational purposes only and should not be construed as personalized financial advice or a recommendation.



REGISTER NOW for
The Chicago Lighthouse
Financial Planning Day
October 9, 2025

MAKE YOUR GIFT TODAY—please contact Lora Nickels at (312) 997-3643 or lora.nickels@chicagolighthouse.org.



LIGHT THE WAY TO OUR 125TH

In 1906, a group of Chicago socialites came together to help those in their community facing vision impairment. These women began with creating charity baskets for the blind. Their efforts grew into the organization now known as The Chicago Lighthouse, which annually provides comprehensive services to more than 50,000 people who are blind or visually impaired, and also others with disabilities and Veterans.

Looking forward to 2031 and The Chicago Lighthouse's 125th anniversary, we are proud to continue this work. Today, our mission spans 40 programs which provide employment opportunities, rehabilitative services, affordable housing, low vision care, advocacy and so much more.

This work is only possible thanks to the generous support of our donors, many of whom choose to include The Lighthouse in their estate plans. **In the five years leading up to our 125th anniversary we have an ambitious goal of documenting 125 new bequests to support our work and invite you to join by making a planned gift to The Lighthouse.**



To become one of the 125 supporters who will leave a legacy at The Lighthouse and Light the Way to 125, please contact Senior Director of Individual Giving, Lora Nickels at (312)997-3643 or lora.nickels@chicagolighthouse.org.

GIVING TO THE LIGHTHOUSE TODAY...AND TOMORROW



Edith and Ken H.

Though they have been married for more than two decades, Edith and Ken H. each discovered The Lighthouse in different—and separate—ways. For Ken, it was through his family. Both of his parents were blind, his mother through genetics and his father through an accident, as was his uncle. Ken's uncle was a Lighthouse client and benefited greatly from our services.

Edith's connection was a bit more roundabout. A former Chicago police officer, Edith responded to a call about a suspicious package under a mailbox. After calling the bomb squad, the package turned out to be audio recordings of books for the blind. Not knowing where to turn, she called The Lighthouse.

"I told them the records were going to be put into inventory, and that I thought they were too important to be lost in the evidence room forever, so someone should come and get them," she says. "Someone came up that afternoon to make sure the box got to where it belonged."

It wasn't until many years later, however, that

Edith and Ken considered The Lighthouse for their charitable giving.

"Growing up with two blind parents, I always wanted to support an organization that works with blind people," Ken says. "The Lighthouse strikes us as an efficiently run organization that serves the blind and low-vision community."

Having spent his career as a "stocks and bonds guy," Ken also knew he was approaching a critical financial milestone. For those who have an Individual Retirement Account (IRA), there comes a time in your early 70s when you are required to begin drawing down on those savings. Ken and Edith were already living comfortably, so they found an option that could maximize their contribution to causes they cared about.

"You can use that required distribution as a charitable gift to any qualified 501(c)(3) organization, and you don't have to pay taxes," Ken says. "That means they get 100% of the donation."

For Ken and Edith, it was a way to maximize their giving while they are alive, but they have considered their legacy as well. Both Ken and Edith have named The Lighthouse as beneficiaries in their estate plans to ensure a cause they care about will be supported after they are gone.

To learn more about giving through IRA Required Minimum Distributions or how to include The Lighthouse in your estate plans, please contact Lora Nickels.

MAKE YOUR GIFT TODAY—please contact Lora Nickels at (312) 997-3643 or lora.nickels@chicagolighthouse.org.

Join The Samuelson Society!

The Chicago Lighthouse celebrates planned gift donors with membership in The Samuelson Society. It is named after former Executive Director, Milton J. Samuelson, a Lighthouse employee for over 30 years and a lifelong advocate for the blind community. Samuelson received honors and recognition from the Illinois Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired, as well as the Chicago Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities.

Benefits of Membership:

- Invitations to special events including tours and a meet-and-greet with the CEO.
- Recognition of your gift in our publications (if you choose).
- The knowledge that your gift will help The Lighthouse continue to change lives and provide critical programs and services for people who are blind, visually impaired, disabled or Veterans for decades to come.

If you have included The Lighthouse in your estate plans, please let us know and plan to join us for a special brunch on Friday, September 26th at 11 AM at the Chicago Lighthouse Huber Vision Rehabilitation Center in Glenview. For more information and to RSVP, contact Senior Director of Individual Giving Lora Nickels at (312) 997-3643 or lora.nickels@chicagolighthouse.org.



Easy Ways You Can Make a Difference

Planned gifts do not need to be complicated or even involve an attorney. Below are a few quick and straightforward ways you can leave a lasting legacy at The Chicago Lighthouse.

- Simply name The Chicago Lighthouse as a full or partial beneficiary of your life insurance policy or retirement account. You can leave the organization a specific percentage or dollar amount.
- Tell your loved ones you would like them to make gifts to The Lighthouse in your memory when they celebrate your life.
- Make a bequest to The Lighthouse through your will with gifts of cash, bonds, securities, and real estate. We can give you text that can be dropped into your estate plan documents. Contact Lora Nickels at (312) 997-3643 or lora.nickels@chicagolighthouse.org
- During your lifetime, donate appreciated stock or securities, or make a charitable distribution from your IRA to reduce your tax burden. Contact The Lighthouse or your financial planner to learn more.

Estate gifts are directed to The Chicago Lighthouse's endowment, which means these contributions are invested and their earnings provide annual support for The Lighthouse in perpetuity. For example, if you designate \$50,000 of your life insurance policy for The Chicago Lighthouse, it can result in yearly payouts of \$2,500 (assuming 5% investment returns annually). That \$2,500 will change lives in the generations to come by supporting access to essential services for individuals who are blind, visually impaired, disabled and Veterans.