



IMPACT REPORT 2025

LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND BOARD CHAIR



LISA STELLA, MBA

Executive
Director



ROBERT H. GREGORY, III, ESQ.

Board
Chair

This year has been a powerful reminder of what's possible when community, compassion, and innovation come together. From babies to seniors, our clients—who are blind or visually impaired—have experienced a year filled with growth, connection, and opportunity. And at the heart of it all is our unwavering mission: to create pathways to independence and a life fully lived.

We kicked off the first quarter with our 4th Annual Envision 20/20 Luncheon, where stories of resilience and transformation took center stage. This event not only raised critical support but also deepened our community's understanding of what it means to live boldly with vision loss.

For our youth, we created spaces where they could simply be kids—laughing, dancing, and exploring. From a joyful prom night to immersive summer camps in Orlando and Palm Beach, and work experience opportunities for our teens. These opportunities nurtured confidence, independence, and lifelong friendships. They're more than just events — they're stepping stones to self-discovery.

In Port St. Lucie, the Treasure Coast Focus Club has relocated to the Indian River State College Pruitt Campus, offering adults a space to connect, share, and grow. Whether it's learning new skills or simply finding community, this club is helping clients build the confidence to navigate life on their own terms in the Northern Counties.

Our Book Club opened doors to new worlds through literature, while the Boot-Up Club brought people together each month to discuss everything from technology to personal passions. These groups foster not just social connection, but intellectual engagement and emotional well-being —key ingredients for a fulfilling life.

We also celebrated the achievements of our board members, whose leadership reflects the excellence we strive for. Dr. Steven Edens was nominated in December 2025 for a 2026 Palm Beach County Community's Choice Award, Anita Patel was the 2025 Channel Futures Technology Advisor 101 Award Winner, Alexa Evans' Untrendy Marketing nabbed four finalist nominations at the 2025 Reelies Awards, and Carmencita Mitchell was accepted to the Leadership Palm Beach County Class of 2026. We're also proud to share that in November 2025, our Executive Director, Lisa Stella, was selected for the Jim Moran Institute for Global Entrepreneurship's Nonprofit Executive Program Class of 2026—an opportunity that will bring fresh perspective, valuable partnerships, and renewed momentum to our leadership.

The Lighthouse for the Blind of the Palm Beaches experienced a truly meaningful series of events that highlighted community, advocacy, and empowerment. From the inspiring Open House—where board members, donors, and community leaders gathered to celebrate the organization's mission—to the impactful Bus Wrap Unveiling that raised visibility for accessibility, each moment reflected a shared commitment to inclusion. The official White Cane Awareness Proclamation from Palm Beach County underscored the importance of recognizing individuals who are blind or visually impaired, while the White Cane Awareness Day celebration brought the community together through connection, education, and powerful storytelling. Adding to these memorable moments was the inaugural Lighthouse Goes Wild for the Holidays at Busch Wildlife, which provided a joyful opportunity to celebrate clients and their families with photos with Santa and Mrs. Claus, animal encounters, engaging activities, refreshments, and a festive hot cocoa bar. Together, these events showcased not only the strength of the Lighthouse community but also the growing awareness and support for independence and accessibility.

We are profoundly grateful to you—our supporters, clients, board members, and team—because you are the force behind everything we achieve. As we look ahead, we do so with clarity, confidence, and bold ambition. The future is bright, and our most impactful work is still to come.

Sincerely,

Lisa Stella, MBA
Executive Director

Robert H. Gregory, III Esq.
Board Chair



Pictured L-R: (Back Row) Maryam Mohajer, Carmencita Mitchell, Robert H. Gregory, III, Esq, Randi Radin, Kimberly Clawson
(Front Row) Roshan Z. Massoumi, Allen Preston & Belle, Anita Patel, Martin S. Zipern

Not Pictured: Dr. Steven Edens, Alexa Evans, Donte' Mickens.

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Tribute Gift Honorees

We are grateful to the many donors who chose to celebrate a special person or honor the memory of a loved one through a charitable gift.

Wendy "Aunt Lena" Alling
Peggy Babcock
Maria Beaudouin
Marilyn Belkin
Jimmie Louise Berry
David B. Cano M.D.
Frank Chanen
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Doris Coron
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Estelle Wolman

RIVER'S JOURNEY: From First Steps to a Bright Future

River's journey began with a mix of hope and uncertainty. When she first entered the babies program, her family's greatest wish was simple yet profound: that she might one day regain her sight. At the same time, they faced the overwhelming challenge of finding the right doctors and support to guide her future. What they discovered, however, was something just as powerful—an environment where River could grow, learn, and thrive as she is.

It didn't take long for River's determination to shine through. One moment, in particular, captured just how far she had come: she began completing tasks upside down, not out of frustration, but because she was bored and eager to challenge herself. It was a clear sign that her curiosity and intelligence were blossoming in ways her family had only dreamed of.

A key part of that growth came from the bond River and her mother built with her teacher, Nicole. Through constant communication, encouragement, and genuine care, Nicole not only supported River's development but also gave her mother a deep sense of confidence. For the first time, she felt comfortable stepping back and allowing River to learn independently, knowing she was in compassionate and capable hands. Each update about River's progress became a source of pride and reassurance.

Today, River is stepping into a new chapter as she prepares for elementary school. She walks confidently with her cane, demonstrating a level of independence that once felt out of reach. Her attention span, once a concern, has transformed into a strength—she now comes home after a full day and continues working one-on-one with focus and determination. At home, her growth is just as evident. She listens, engages, and amazes her family every single day.

For River and her family, moving from the babies program into the children's program represents more than a transition—it's the beginning of a fun, exciting adventure filled with new opportunities. It has reshaped how they see her future. They now know she is surrounded by people who genuinely care, who believe in her potential, and who are committed to helping her succeed.

River's story is one of resilience, discovery, and possibility. And for her family, the impact is immeasurable. They are deeply grateful—not just for the progress River has made, but for a program that turns learning into joy, builds confidence, and creates a community where children like River can truly shine.



RIVER
Lighthouse
Client

LUCY'S STORY: From Fear to Freedom

When Lucy first began losing her vision in 2015, her greatest fear was simple but overwhelming: that she would no longer be able to take care of herself. That fear deepened in 2018 after the loss of her husband, when daily life became not only more difficult, but more isolating. Although her daughter stepped in to help, Lucy struggled with depression and the emotional weight of depending on others, something she had never been comfortable with.

At her daughter's encouragement, Lucy connected with the Lighthouse. Taking that first step wasn't easy. Asking for help felt unfamiliar, even uncomfortable. But what she found there began to change everything.

Through the Lighthouse, Lucy discovered a community of people who understood her experience. Meeting others living with vision loss, many facing even greater challenges, shifted her perspective. Their resilience inspired her, and their encouragement helped her begin to believe that she, too, could adapt and thrive. With the support of trained instructors, Lucy learned practical skills that restored her sense of independence. She gained confidence using her iPhone through accessibility features like VoiceOver and Siri. She learned techniques for cooking, ironing, writing, and managing her home safely. What once felt impossible gradually became manageable.

Beyond the classroom, Lucy began to re-engage with the world around her. She learned how to use paratransit services, giving her the freedom to travel independently to medical appointments and activities. She continues to attend educational presentations and social gatherings, where she builds friendships and continues learning.

These experiences didn't just teach Lucy new skills; they rebuilt her confidence and sense of belonging. Today, at the age of 89, she is active in multiple support networks, participates in recreational activities, and maintains meaningful connections with others in her community. She has even helped connect a visually impaired neighbor to the Lighthouse, extending the same support that changed her life. Now living independently, despite her children being far away, Lucy feels empowered rather than limited. She stays connected with her family, manages her daily life, and knows she has a trusted place to turn for guidance when needed.

Lucy's journey is a powerful example of what's possible when the right support meets determination. What began as fear and uncertainty has transformed into confidence, independence, and connection, not just surviving vision loss, but truly living beyond it.



LUCY
Lighthouse
Client

2025 ENVISION 20/20 LUNCHEON

Gratitude in Action: Thank You for an Extraordinary EnVision 20/20 Luncheon

What an extraordinary afternoon—and what an extraordinary community. With more than 135 guests joining us, our 5th Annual EnVision 20/20 Luncheon was our most impactful yet. More than a gathering, it was a celebration of possibility, independence, and the power of believing in what is possible beyond vision loss.

We were honored to present the **Dr. David B. Cano Servitude Award to Dr. Scott and Blanca Gartner**, whose dedication to low vision care and commitment to helping each person maximize their unique vision has changed countless lives. Their compassion and service beautifully reflect the legacy of Dr. David B. Cano, our longest-serving Board Member of 23 years, whose devotion to the Lighthouse and the visually impaired community continues to inspire us.

Our keynote speaker, **Sherlock Washington**, shared a compelling message of empowerment, inclusion, and perseverance. As a blind entrepreneur, Paralympic athlete, mentor, and advocate, Sherlock has transformed barriers into opportunities—not only for himself, but for countless others. His story reminded us that disability does not define potential; opportunity unlocks it.

Board Member Allen Preston brought the meaning of our Call to the Heart to life: a gift to the Lighthouse is never simply a donation. It is confidence for a child, independence for an adult, opportunity for a job seeker, hope for a family, and the belief that a life with vision loss can still be filled with purpose and possibility.

The afternoon was made even more special by the beautiful music of **Islay Rodriguez**, our spirited **teacup raffle**, and the generosity of our many local supporters and donors.

We are especially grateful to **Anne Fontaine** for celebrating our blind and visually impaired models in Anne Fontaine's exquisite designs and to **Mike Souza of So Chill Media**, who generously captured their strength, confidence, and beauty in a moving video featured during the luncheon.

To everyone who attended, donated, sponsored, volunteered, or shared in our mission—thank you. Your generosity does more than support the Lighthouse. It opens doors, builds confidence, creates independence, and helps people see a future filled with possibility.



OUR VOLUNTEERS: THE HEART OF OUR MISSION

In April, during the Palm Beach Focus Club meeting, we had the privilege of celebrating the remarkable volunteers whose compassion, generosity, and unwavering commitment help illuminate the path for so many in our community. Their selfless service reminds us that even the simplest act of kindness has the power to transform lives.

Our volunteers are more than supporters—they are ambassadors of hope, extending friendship, encouragement, and opportunity to individuals who are blind or visually impaired. Through their dedication, they help foster independence, confidence, and a stronger, more inclusive community where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

The Lighthouse for the Blind is strengthened each day by the hearts and hands of those who choose to serve. Their generosity inspires us, their compassion uplifts us, and their commitment reminds us that together, we can create a brighter future for all.

To each of our volunteers, thank you for sharing your time, your talents, and your hearts. You are a cherished part of the Lighthouse family, and your impact will continue to shine in the lives you touch for years to come.

The following volunteers were recognized:

- ◆ Andrea Borell
- ◆ Alexandria Borell
- ◆ Karen Smilen
- ◆ Sharon Pikus
- ◆ Emi Hutton
- ◆ Michelle Russell



If you are interested in becoming
a volunteer, please contact
Rosemary Mulero:
Rmulero@LHPB.org



← Scan here for
more info



SAVE THE DATE!

SEPTEMBER 30, 2026 80th Anniversary Open House

Time: 5:00 PM – 7:30 PM

Location: Lighthouse Offices
5601 Corporate Way, Suite 210
West Palm Beach, FL 33407

Our annual Open House will welcome Board Members, community leaders, partners, VIP supporters, donors, and guests to celebrate Lighthouse's 80th Anniversary year. Reception is invitation only and will include light refreshments catered by Recipes for Success.

OCTOBER 6, 2026 White Cane Awareness Month Bus Wrap Unveiling

Time: TBD

Location: Palm Beach County Government Complex
Downtown West Palm Beach

The Lighthouse will once again partner with Palm Tran for a special White Cane Safety Awareness Month bus wrap campaign. The unveiling event will include a public photo opportunity with Palm Beach County Commissioners and community leaders at the county government complex in downtown West Palm Beach, similar to last year's event. The wrapped bus will help promote White Cane Safety Awareness Month while increasing visibility for Lighthouse services and advocacy efforts throughout Palm Beach County.

OCTOBER 15, 2026 White Cane Safety Awareness Day Fundraiser

Time: 11:00 AM – 7:00 PM

Location: Swampgrass Willy's
9910 FL A1AAlt #711
Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33410

This "give back" fundraiser is being organized by the owners of Swampgrass Willy's, who have a personal connection to Lighthouse and wanted to support our mission through a community awareness and fundraising event.

DECEMBER 3, 2026 80th Anniversary Gala

Time: 5:30-6:30 PM Registration | 5:30-7:00 PM Cocktail Hour | 7:00-10:00 PM Dinner & Dancing

Location: Pelican Club
1065 N Hwy A1A, Jupiter, FL 33477

The 80th Anniversary Gala is a signature celebration honoring eight decades of Lighthouse for the Blind of the Palm Beaches' commitment to empowering individuals who are blind or visually impaired and strengthening our community. The evening will recognize the supporters, partners, volunteers, donors, and community leaders whose collaboration has helped advance our mission and expand opportunities for those we serve.

A highlight of this year's celebration will be the interactive "Friction to Freedom" Showcase during cocktail hour. Through hands-on demonstrations and meaningful conversations, corporate leaders will be paired with Lighthouse staff and clients to experience firsthand how universal design, digital accessibility, and inclusive employment practices can transform everyday challenges into opportunities. The showcase will demonstrate how removing barriers not only creates greater independence and inclusion for people who are blind or visually impaired, but can also help businesses reduce operational friction, strengthen their workforce, and build a more inclusive talent pipeline.

APRIL 7, 2027 6th Annual Envision 20/20 Luncheon

Time: 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Location: The Beach Club
755 N County Rd, Palm Beach, FL 33480

The 6th annual celebration luncheon honors the Lighthouse and the remarkable blind and visually impaired individuals who strengthen our community through their leadership, service, and resilience. Together, we celebrate the supporters, partners, volunteers, donors, and community leaders whose generosity and commitment have advanced our mission, expanded opportunities, and created lasting impact. This gathering is a tribute to the power of collaboration, inclusion, and the shared belief that every person deserves the opportunity to thrive.

2025 RECAP

2025: A Year of Innovation, Community, and Impact

In 2025, Lighthouse strengthened its mission of empowering individuals who are blind or visually impaired through innovation, community partnerships, and life-changing programs. Every initiative reflected a commitment to increasing independence, expanding access, and creating meaningful connections for clients and families.

Advancing Accessibility Through Technology

Lighthouse expanded accessibility by reactivating its partnership with **RightHear**, an indoor navigation platform that enhances independent wayfinding for individuals who are blind or visually impaired. Ten digital wayfinding locations were activated throughout the Lighthouse, while staff attended the **Assistive Technology Industry Association (ATIA) Conference** to explore emerging innovations and bring new assistive technology solutions to the clients they serve.

Strengthening Community Partnerships

Community partnerships strengthened both financial support and public awareness of the Lighthouse mission. Collaborations with **Lilly Pulitzer** and **J.McLaughlin** generated unrestricted funding while engaging new supporters, and regional media opportunities further amplified client success stories and the impact of Lighthouse programs.

Celebrating Client Success

Lighthouse clients demonstrated the power of rehabilitation and independence through participation in the television program **Cooking Without Looking**. **Gabriel Rivera**, a graduate of the Recipes for Success program, and **Anne Hatton**, a former client who now serves as an Assistive Technology Training Specialist, showcased the confidence, skills, and independence made possible through Lighthouse services.

Creating a New Tradition

One of the year's defining milestones was the launch of **Lighthouse Goes Wild**, an inclusive holiday celebration that brought together clients, families, volunteers, sponsors, and community partners for an unforgettable evening at **Busch Wildlife Sanctuary**. Designed with accessibility at its core, the event fostered connection, celebration, and a new tradition for the Lighthouse community.

Looking Ahead

The accomplishments of 2025 reflect a year of innovation, collaboration, and impact. Through expanded accessibility, stronger community partnerships, and inspiring client successes, Lighthouse continued to empower individuals who are blind or visually impaired to live with greater independence and confidence. Thanks to the dedication of our staff, volunteers, board members, donors, and community partners, we are well positioned to build on this momentum in the years ahead.



CONNECTION, COMMUNITY, AND LIFELONG LEARNING

At the Lighthouse, connection is at the heart of everything we do. Through engaging programs that promote learning, independence, and community, we continue to create opportunities for people to explore new skills, share experiences, and build meaningful relationships.

The **Boot Up Club** meets monthly via Zoom, offering a welcoming environment for computer users of all skill levels. Each session introduces practical technology tips, online safety strategies, and tools that help participants navigate today's digital world with greater confidence. Beyond learning, the club provides a place for questions, conversation, and peer support—reminding us that technology is most powerful when it brings people together.

The **Book Club** gathers twice each month on Zoom for lively discussions that celebrate the joy and discovery of reading. With free access to digital audio and braille books through the Talking Books Service, members can enjoy a wide range of literature and participate fully in every conversation. **Let's Talk** is a monthly Zoom meeting facilitated by our Adjustment to Blindness Counselor, connecting participants outside the classroom to foster connection, build social skills as a newly visually impaired person, and share resources with others who understand the challenges of navigating a new life with vision loss.

This year, our readers traveled through unforgettable stories spanning history, mystery, adventure, and the human experience. From Ray Bradbury's thought-provoking classic **Fahrenheit 451**, which sparked conversations about knowledge and freedom, to Kristin Hannah's powerful **The Women**, which explored courage, sacrifice, and the experiences of women in wartime, each selection inspired reflection and meaningful discussion.

Readers also explored the resilience and relationships found in **West with Giraffes** by Lynda Rutledge, the questions about humanity and technology raised in **Klara and the Sun** by Kazuo Ishiguro, the inspiring personal journey shared in **Being Henry** by Henry Winkler, and the gripping mysteries and legal dramas of authors including David Baldacci, John Grisham, and Lisa Scottoline.

These books became more than stories—they became opportunities to connect, exchange ideas, and see the world from new perspectives. The titles we explored this year represent only a glimpse of the rich experiences shared through our programs. At the Lighthouse, learning never stops, friendships continue to grow, and every gathering reflects our commitment to creating a community where curiosity, connection, and empowerment shine bright.



BEYOND INDEPENDENCE: Mental Wellness Through Focus Club, Activity Club, and Caregiver Support

Building Community Through Connection, Compassion, and Creativity

At Lighthouse, we believe meaningful connections are essential to living well. Through Focus Clubs, Activity Clubs, and Caregiver Support Groups, we create welcoming spaces where individuals who are blind or visually impaired, their caregivers, volunteers, and community partners can build relationships, explore new interests, and strengthen independence. These programs do more than bring people together—they foster belonging, confidence, and a shared sense of community.

Focus Clubs: Building Friendship, Learning, and Independence

In 2025, Lighthouse Focus Clubs continued to provide opportunities for adults with blindness and low vision to connect through social, educational, and recreational experiences. The Palm Beach Focus Club welcomed more than **360 participants, caregivers, volunteers, and community partners** throughout the year with celebrations, educational presentations, creative activities, and opportunities to engage with valuable community resources.

The Treasure Coast Focus Club continued its growth, serving approximately **125 participants and caregivers** through monthly gatherings that combined connection with education. The program's move to Indian River State College's Pruitt Campus expanded opportunities for participation and collaboration while providing access to presentations on assistive technology, health and wellness, fraud prevention, and other topics that support independence.

Together, these programs demonstrate the power of community in helping individuals build friendships, gain confidence, and remain actively engaged.



BEYOND INDEPENDENCE (continued)

Activity Clubs: Creating Opportunities for Exploration and Inclusion

Lighthouse Activity Clubs opened doors to accessible cultural, recreational, and wellness experiences throughout the year. Participants enjoyed opportunities to experience the arts, explore the community, and connect with others through inclusive programming.

Highlights included accessible performances by The Symphonia, Palm Beach Opera, and Miami City Ballet; a multisensory art experience; an accessible movie outing; wellness activities; bowling socials; and community excursions. Treasure Coast participants also enjoyed accessible entertainment, outdoor experiences, and opportunities to discover new interests alongside peers. These shared experiences reinforced an important message: vision loss does not limit the ability to participate, explore, and enjoy meaningful connections within the community.

Caregiver Support Group: Strengthening Those Who Care

Caregivers often dedicate themselves to supporting others while navigating their own unique challenges. Lighthouse's Caregiver Support Group provides a compassionate space where caregivers can share experiences, find encouragement, and connect with others who understand their journey. Through conversation, support, and shared wisdom, participants build resilience, confidence, and a stronger sense of community. The group serves as a reminder that caregivers, too, deserve connection, support, and opportunities to recharge.

The success of these programs is made possible through the dedication of volunteers, community partners, donors, and participants who help create a more connected and inclusive Lighthouse community. Together, we continue to build a place where individuals and families feel supported, empowered, and inspired to thrive.



GROUP CLASSES & INSTRUCTION

Because Independence Should Never Depend on Ability to Pay

At Lighthouse, we believe vision loss should never define a person's future. Every individual deserves the opportunity to live with confidence, dignity, and independence. Thanks to the generous support of the Division of Blind Services, community partners, and donors, Lighthouse provides life-changing programs and services at no cost to individuals who are blind or visually impaired.

Through our seven-week Group Daily Living Skills Series, participants build practical skills for greater independence, including personal care, home organization, meal preparation, communication, and strategies for safety and confidence in everyday life. Each new skill is a step toward greater self-reliance.

Technology is also transforming what is possible. Lighthouse provides personalized training in assistive technology, including screen readers, magnification devices, smartphones, smartwatches, Ray-Ban Meta smart glasses, and adaptive software. In 2025, we expanded our technology training with dedicated iPhone, Android, and smart glasses programs. Hundreds of clients have gained skills to access information, manage daily tasks, navigate environments, communicate, and participate more independently in work and community life.

For those pursuing career goals, personalized vocational training helps clients identify strengths, develop workplace skills, and prepare for meaningful employment. Orientation and Mobility training builds confidence and safety through techniques for traveling independently with tools such as white canes or guide dogs.

These programs do more than teach skills—they open doors to greater opportunity, connection, and independence. We are especially grateful to the students from Keiser University whose compassion and enthusiasm brought added connection to our Group Daily Living Skills sessions, demonstrating the power of community and inclusive learning.

At Lighthouse, we help individuals rediscover what is possible—building confidence, independence, and brighter futures for the people we serve.



A YEAR OF GROWTH, CONNECTION, AND OPPORTUNITY:

2025 Children's and Transition Programs

Throughout 2025, Lighthouse's Children's and Transition Programs provided students with meaningful opportunities to build confidence, develop independence, strengthen friendships, and engage with their communities. Through educational experiences, recreational activities, leadership opportunities, and real-world skill building, students explored new interests while developing the tools needed to thrive.

The year began with community exploration and connection as students practiced teamwork and social skills through recreational outings and gained valuable independence through a Brightline trip to Fort Lauderdale, where they applied travel and navigation skills in a real-world setting. Students also participated in career exploration opportunities, including Career Day at Lighthouse, where they learned about employment pathways, workplace expectations, and self-advocacy.

Throughout the year, students embraced opportunities to learn, lead, and grow. Transition students strengthened independent living skills through overnight experiences in Orlando and Tampa, practicing planning, communication, teamwork, and navigating new environments. Students also explored science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics at the Broward Lighthouse STEAM Event while building connections with peers from across the region.

Community partnerships created many memorable experiences. Students participated in inclusive events such as the annual Spring Celebration and Beeping Egg Hunt, attended accessible arts programming, and prepared for important milestones like the statewide prom through a community-supported Prom Beach shopping experience. These opportunities reinforced that inclusion and accessibility create spaces where every student can participate fully.



A YEAR OF GROWTH, CONNECTION, AND OPPORTUNITY: 2025 Children's and Transition Programs (continued)



Summer brought continued growth through camps, leadership experiences, and career preparation. Transition students participated in statewide overnight camp and gained valuable workplace experience through Work Experience Week with the City of Boynton Beach, developing communication skills, confidence, and professional readiness. Children's Program students enjoyed summer camp activities that encouraged creativity, exploration, friendship, and teamwork.

The fall and winter months continued to focus on preparing students for independence. Through social skills and etiquette programs, students practiced communication, confidence, and self-advocacy skills essential for adulthood. Additional community experiences, including accessible art events and hands-on learning opportunities, helped students build confidence in navigating the world around them.

The 2025 Children's and Transition Programs offered far more than activities—they created pathways to independence, belonging, and possibility. Every outing, workshop, and experience provided students with opportunities to discover their strengths, build lasting friendships, and celebrate their abilities.

Through the dedication of staff, families, volunteers, and community partners, Lighthouse continues to create an environment where children and young adults who are blind or visually impaired can grow, achieve, and imagine what is possible.



EARLY VISION SCREENING: A Critical Step in Preserving Children's Vision

Early vision screening in preschool-aged children is essential to identifying potential vision concerns before they can impact a child's development, learning, and overall quality of life. Without timely detection and intervention, children with undiagnosed vision problems may experience long-term challenges, including preventable vision loss. By bringing screenings directly into early childhood settings, we are taking a proactive approach to protecting children's sight and ensuring they receive the support they need as early as possible.

Our team continues to expand our community outreach efforts and provide accessible vision screenings for children throughout Palm Beach County. Director of Youth Services Elizabeth kicked off the school year by screening 189 children at the Hispanic Human Resources Center. She also facilitated screenings at St. Peters Child Enrichment Center and Opportunity Early Childhood Education & Learning Center.

Community Vision Screening Highlights:

- ◆ Completed vision screenings for **81 children at St. Peters Child Enrichment Center** — marking our **8th year partnering with their facility** to support children's eye health.
- ◆ Screened **112 children at Opportunity Early Childhood Education & Learning Center**.
- ◆ Michelle participated in community outreach events at the **Cox Science Center**, where she screened **55 children**, and the **Caridad Center**, where **59 children** received screenings.
- ◆ Youth Services Specialist Nicole provided screenings to **34 students** at the **Delray Achievement Center**.

Through these continued partnerships, we are making vision health a priority for children in our community and helping identify concerns early, when intervention can make the greatest difference.

Elizabeth also continues to participate in a monthly virtual interagency meeting for early intervention providers throughout Palm Beach County. These meetings provide valuable opportunities to learn about community resources, strengthen partnerships, and share information about the vision services we provide to children and families.



SEEING POSSIBILITIES: How First Tee Palm Beach County Created a New Path to Golf for Individuals Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired

Golf is a game built on precision, confidence, and connection. For individuals who are blind or visually impaired, the opportunity to experience the challenge and joy of golf requires creativity, patience, and a willingness to rethink what is possible. At First Tee Palm Beach County, that mindset led to the creation of something truly special: the organization's first-ever Blind or Visually Impaired Golf Team.

What began as an idea to make golf more accessible quickly became a powerful example of inclusion, innovation, and the transformative impact of sport. Through a six-week pilot program at First Tee in Riviera Beach, participants were given the opportunity to learn the game, develop new skills, and discover a renewed sense of confidence and independence on the course.

Five participants joined the inaugural session, where they were welcomed by instructors who approached every lesson with curiosity and creativity. Rather than seeing visual impairment as a limitation, the team focused on finding new ways to experience and understand the game. Every detail mattered. Every adaptation created another opportunity for success.

Simple but meaningful innovations helped bring golf to life in new ways. Bells placed inside the holes allowed golfers to hear the rewarding sound of a successful putt dropping in. A carefully aligned row of tees created a visual and tactile guide to help participants develop a straighter swing path and improve accuracy. Bump dots placed on clubs provided a physical reference point, helping golfers consistently position their hands and develop proper grip technique. These adaptations transformed traditional golf instruction into an interactive learning experience built around sound, touch, repetition, and trust.

As the sessions progressed, participants learned the differences between putters and drivers, practiced techniques for both short and long-distance shots, and developed skills focused on control and accuracy. What started on the driving range eventually moved onto the golf course, allowing participants to experience the excitement of applying what they had learned in a true playing environment.

The impact of the program was felt by more than just the golfers. Instructors found themselves becoming students as well—learning new teaching methods, discovering innovative approaches, and gaining a deeper appreciation for the importance of accessibility in sports. The experience challenged everyone involved to look beyond traditional methods and recognize that when barriers are removed, people can achieve extraordinary things.

The success of the first session inspired continued growth. After completing six lessons, participants looked forward to returning in the fall, and the program continued to build momentum. Lighthouse for the Blind sun visors were distributed to participants as a celebration of their dedication and commitment to the team.

Additional support helped expand the program's possibilities. Through a Quantum Foundation Grant, the Lighthouse was able to purchase Ray-Ban Meta glasses for the six Golf Club participants, introducing new technology designed to further enhance their experience and independence.

The program's continued success has been made possible through the dedication of many individuals. Rosemary and Michelle played a key role in coordinating attendance and supporting both participants and volunteers. Additional encouragement has come from volunteers, including two Palm Beach State College Nursing Program students and Lighthouse participant Theresa, who have helped create an environment filled with teamwork and support.

First Tee Palm Beach County's Blind or Visually Impaired Golf Team represents much more than a new program—it represents a belief that everyone deserves the opportunity to participate, compete, and find joy in the game of golf. Through innovation, compassion, and a commitment to inclusion, this team has opened a new chapter in what golf can look like and who it can inspire.

The greatest lesson from this journey is not just about learning how to swing a club. It is about discovering that with creativity, encouragement, and determination, possibilities are always within reach.



WHITE CANE AWARENESS MONTH

The Lighthouse Owned October 2025: A Month of Awareness, Advocacy, and Community Connection

October 2025 became a defining moment for the Lighthouse — a month when awareness transformed into action, partnerships became powerful platforms for change, and communities across Palm Beach and the Treasure Coast came together to celebrate independence, inclusion, and opportunity for individuals who are blind or visually impaired.

Through meaningful collaborations, inspiring stories, and community engagement, the Lighthouse elevated the conversation around accessibility and demonstrated what is possible when people unite with a shared commitment to creating a more inclusive world.

The month began with a remarkable partnership between the Lighthouse and Palm Tran that brought the organization's mission into public view in a powerful and lasting way. On October 7, 2025, the Lighthouse unveiled a specially wrapped Palm Tran bus at the Government Center in downtown West Palm Beach — transforming an everyday vehicle into a moving message of awareness, empowerment, and inclusion.

The bus wrap served as a symbol of visibility, reminding thousands of community members that individuals who are blind or visually impaired are active, independent, and valued members of our communities. It represented more than transportation; it represented connection, opportunity, and the importance of ensuring that everyone has access to the resources and support needed to thrive.

Throughout the day, the bus was parked along 3rd Street, where community members, government leaders, and supporters gathered to learn more about the Lighthouse and Palm Tran's shared commitment to accessibility. At Centennial Bell Plaza, a special recognition program brought together Lighthouse Executive Director Lisa Stella, Palm Tran Executive Director Ivan Maldonado, local officials, community partners, and advocates to honor White Cane Safety Awareness.

The celebration featured meaningful remarks, educational displays, demonstrations, and conversations that allowed attendees to better understand the services provided by the Lighthouse and the everyday experiences of individuals living with vision loss. The event highlighted the importance of awareness, empathy, and collaboration in building communities where everyone has the opportunity to participate fully.

The momentum continued on October 15, 2025, as the Lighthouse celebrated White Cane Awareness Day with two inspiring events that brought together leaders, clients, supporters, and advocates across two counties.

The morning celebration at the Lighthouse welcomed Palm Beach County Mayor Maria Marino, along with Lighthouse staff, clients, board members, and community partners. Mayor Marino presented the



WHITE CANE AWARENESS MONTH (continued)



Lighthouse with an official Proclamation honoring White Cane Safety Awareness Day and recognizing the critical role of advocacy, education, and support in advancing independence for individuals who are blind or visually impaired.

The event offered guests an immersive look into the programs and services that empower Lighthouse clients every day. Team members and clients demonstrated assistive technology, orientation and mobility skills, and sensitivity training techniques designed to help the community better understand the experiences of individuals navigating the world with vision loss.

Mayor Marino participated in hands-on activities that provided a deeper appreciation for the skills, confidence, and independence developed through Lighthouse programs — including experiencing the use of a white cane and learning about sighted guide techniques. Her participation reinforced the importance of community leaders embracing awareness and understanding firsthand.

That evening, the Lighthouse carried the celebration to the Treasure Coast with a special gathering at Tutto Fresco in Port St. Lucie. Community and business leaders from the northern counties joined Lighthouse supporters for an evening dedicated to connection, advocacy, and celebrating the impact of the Lighthouse mission.

Guests enjoyed meaningful conversations, cocktails, and light bites while learning more about the organization through demonstrations and sensitivity training led by the Lighthouse team. The evening's keynote speaker Lighthouse Board Member, Carmencita Mitchell, delivered an inspiring message centered on resilience, empowerment, and the importance of believing in what individuals can accomplish when barriers are removed.

The event also featured a powerful personal testimony from Tommy Harms, a former Lighthouse client, who shared his journey and the transformative role the Lighthouse played in helping him regain confidence, independence, and a path forward. His story served as a reminder that the true impact of the Lighthouse is measured not only through programs and services, but through the lives changed every day.

The Lighthouse was honored to receive a Letter of Appreciation from Port St. Lucie Mayor Shannon Martin, recognizing the organization's dedication to serving individuals who are blind or visually impaired and its continued commitment to strengthening communities through education, advocacy, and support.

October 2025 was more than a month of events — it was a month of impact. From the unveiling of the Palm Tran bus wrap to White Cane Awareness Day celebrations across Palm Beach and the Treasure Coast, the Lighthouse demonstrated the power of partnership and the importance of creating opportunities for individuals with vision loss to live, work, and thrive independently.

By bringing together elected officials, transportation leaders, community advocates, clients, and supporters, the Lighthouse truly owned October — shining a brighter light on accessibility, inclusion, and the limitless potential of the people it serves.



RECOGNITION FROM THE COMMUNITY

Celebrating Recognition, Leadership, and Impact



Rosemary was honored to attend the 2025 Just Us Blind Girls Conference at the Braille Club on April 4, an inspiring initiative dedicated to empowering blind women and girls across Florida through education, advocacy, and community connection. During the event, Rosemary presented a plaque on behalf of the Just Us Blind Girls organization to Tekesha Saffold, recognizing her outstanding leadership and dedication in guiding the group since 2011.

The Lighthouse's commitment to advancing education, inclusion, and services for individuals who are blind or visually impaired continued to gain recognition throughout 2025. The organization and its team members were honored as finalists and nominees for several distinguished awards celebrating excellence in nonprofit leadership, education, innovation, and community impact.

Organizational Recognition

- ♦ **Health and Human Resources Business Award Finalist** – The Lighthouse was recognized as a finalist by the Chamber of the Palm Beaches, with Board members and staff attending the Awards Breakfast to represent the organization and celebrate this achievement.
- ♦ **Boca Raton Observer's 2025 Readers' Choice Awards Nominee** – The Lighthouse was nominated in the Charity categories for Education and Health, highlighting its ongoing commitment to serving the community.
- ♦ **2025 Our People's Choice Award Nominee** – The Lighthouse was recognized by the Black Chamber of Commerce of Palm Beach County as a nominee for Family, Community & Civic Organization (Nonprofit), honoring its role as a trusted community partner.
- ♦ **9th Annual Hats Off Nonprofit Awards Finalist – Nonprofit of the Year Impact Award (Education)** – The Lighthouse was recognized for its meaningful contributions to education and the lives of those it serves.



Colleague and Leadership Recognition

- ♦ **South Florida Tech Hub Golden Palms Awards Finalist – Education Champion Award** – Diane Salina was recognized as a finalist for her leadership and dedication to advancing educational opportunities and innovation. The awards ceremony was held on August 28, 2025, at Funky Buddha in Fort Lauderdale.
- ♦ **Palm Beach Illustrated Education Awards Finalist – Innovation Award** – The Lighthouse was recognized as a finalist for its innovative approach to education and services. The ceremony took place on September 11, 2025, at the Belgrove Resort and Spa.
- ♦ **Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER) Award – Outstanding Rehabilitation Professional for the Blind** – Congratulations to Winston Callum on receiving this prestigious honor on October 23, 2025, recognizing his exceptional leadership, expertise, and commitment to empowering individuals who are blind or visually impaired.



LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY AND GOVERNMENT RELATIONS ACTIVITIES

Advancing Advocacy and Resources for Blind Services Across Florida

The Lighthouse of the Palm Beaches, Treasure Coast, and Okeechobee is committed to nonpartisan advocacy that advances independence, inclusion, and opportunity for individuals who are blind or visually impaired. Lisa and Joan have strengthened relationships with elected officials, community leaders, and government partners across the region and in Tallahassee to advance the priorities of the Lighthouse and the 15 member agencies of the Florida Agencies Serving the Blind (FASB). Their advocacy has focused on legislative support, funding, and awareness for essential blindness services, including children's programs, vocational rehabilitation, services for older adults, and specialized programs provided through the Division of Blind Services.



Tallahassee Legislative Advocacy Day – February 19, 2025

The Lighthouse participated in FASB's Legislative Advocacy Day with the Florida Rehabilitation Council for the Blind and the National Federation of the Blind. Lisa coordinated and participated in meetings with 13 legislators and legislative offices representing Palm Beach, Martin, St. Lucie, Indian River, and Okeechobee Counties.



Key priorities included:

- ◆ Protecting and expanding the Children's Program.
- ◆ Strengthening Florida's White Cane Laws.
- ◆ Securing state and federal funding for vocational rehabilitation.
- ◆ Supporting programs for older adults who are blind.
- ◆ Preserving specialized services through the Division of Blind Services.

Meetings with Senators Gayle Harrell, Grall, Berman, Polsky, and Bernard, as well as Representatives Gerwig, Casello, Brackett, Tuck, Edmonds, Overdorf, Trabulsy, and Skidmore, strengthened relationships with policymakers and increased awareness of the Lighthouse and FASB's impact.

Protecting the Division of Blind Services

Following the advocacy day, the Lighthouse worked with FASB partners to monitor proposed legislation, including House Bill 1103 and Senate Bill 1050, which would have transferred the Division

LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY AND GOVERNMENT RELATIONS ACTIVITIES (continued)

of Blind Services to the Agency for Persons with Disabilities. FASB collaborated with member agencies, consumer organizations, lobbyists, government representatives, Senator Bradley, and Representative Jonsson to advocate for maintaining specialized blindness services. As a result, amendments removed both the Division of Blind Services and Vocational Rehabilitation from the proposed legislation, helping preserve the specialized structure and expertise essential to Floridians who are blind.

Community and Legislative Outreach

Joan expanded the Lighthouse's regional relationships through participation in the Indian River State College State of the College Address in April 2025 and other community and legislative events. Engagement with county commissioners, mayors, city council members, legislators, and education and community leaders created opportunities to increase awareness and expand Lighthouse services throughout the Treasure Coast.

Joan and Lisa also participated in the Women's Republican Strategy Update in May 2025, reinforcing the Lighthouse's commitment to working with leaders across political perspectives. These conversations strengthened relationships with regional officials and advocates and emphasized the importance of continued investment in blindness services.

Congressional Advocacy and Federal Outreach

Joan strengthened federal outreach through a meeting with Felicia Goldstein, Deputy Director for Congresswoman Lois Frankel's Palm Beach office. The discussion focused on the Lighthouse's legislative priorities and opportunities for congressional engagement, including an invitation for Congresswoman Frankel to participate in the Lighthouse's March 25, 2026 luncheon.

Continued Commitment to Advocacy

Through their combined efforts, Lisa and Joan have:

- ◆ Strengthened relationships with local, state, and federal leaders across party lines.
- ◆ Advanced FASB legislative priorities.
- ◆ Helped protect essential blindness-specific programs and services.
- ◆ Increased awareness of the Lighthouse's regional impact.
- ◆ Created new partnership opportunities throughout Palm Beach, the Treasure Coast, Okeechobee, and surrounding communities.

The Lighthouse remains committed to collaborative, nonpartisan advocacy that protects and expands the life-changing services that promote independence, opportunity, and inclusion for Floridians who are blind or visually impaired.

NOTEWORTHY

Lighthouse for the Blind: A Year of Growth, Innovation, and Expanded Impact in 2025

2025 was a year of growth, innovation, and expanded impact for Lighthouse for the Blind. Across five counties, the Lighthouse strengthened its role as a leader in vision rehabilitation, accessibility, and advocacy—creating new opportunities for individuals who are blind or visually impaired to build confidence, independence, and connection.



Celebrating Inspiration and Leadership

The year began by celebrating longtime supporter and renowned pianist David Crohan, who has shared his extraordinary talents at numerous Lighthouse events. Blind since infancy, David has inspired countless audiences by demonstrating the remarkable possibilities of individuals who are blind. As he prepared to relocate, Lighthouse leadership gathered to honor his contributions and lasting friendship.

Executive Director Lisa Stella was also featured in Boca Magazine as an “Expert in Assisting Persons with Visual Impairments,” highlighting her leadership and the Lighthouse’s expertise in accessibility and independence.

Expanding Regional Access

A major milestone was the addition of “Lighthouse for the Blind of the Palm Beaches, Treasure Coast & Okeechobee” as a DBA name, reflecting the communities served across Palm Beach, Martin, St. Lucie, Indian River, and Okeechobee counties.

Through partnerships with organizations including United Way and Indian River State College, the Lighthouse continued expanding access to services throughout the region.

Creating Pathways to Independence

In partnership with Indian River State College, the Lighthouse restored in-person Life Skills Classes in the northern counties, providing hands-on instruction in cooking, money identification, time management, daily living, and confidence-building.



NOTEWORTHY (continued)

The Lighthouse also expanded iPhone training on the Treasure Coast and introduced virtual Daily Living Skills instruction, making programs more accessible to individuals facing transportation or health barriers.

Advancing Accessibility Through Innovation

The Lighthouse contributed to conversations about AI and accessible transportation through the University of South Florida's Center for Urban Transportation Research Event in Tampa. Technology accessibility also advanced through the Talking Books Library Program, with Anne Hatton helping test the new "My Talking Books" integration with Amazon Echo and developing training resources for clients.

Strengthening Community Connections

Throughout 2025, the Lighthouse strengthened partnerships, expanded outreach, and increased community awareness through media coverage, presentations, and support groups. In Vero Beach, programs reached a new group of 26 participants, while additional outreach connected more individuals with assistive technology and Lighthouse resources.

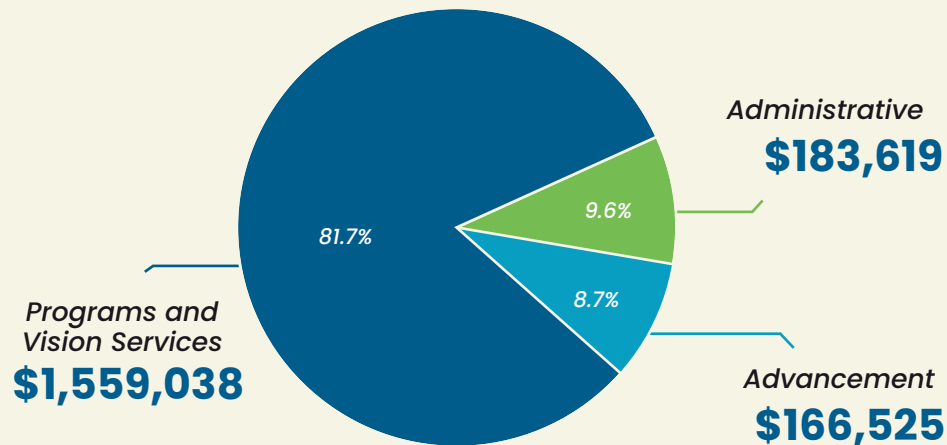
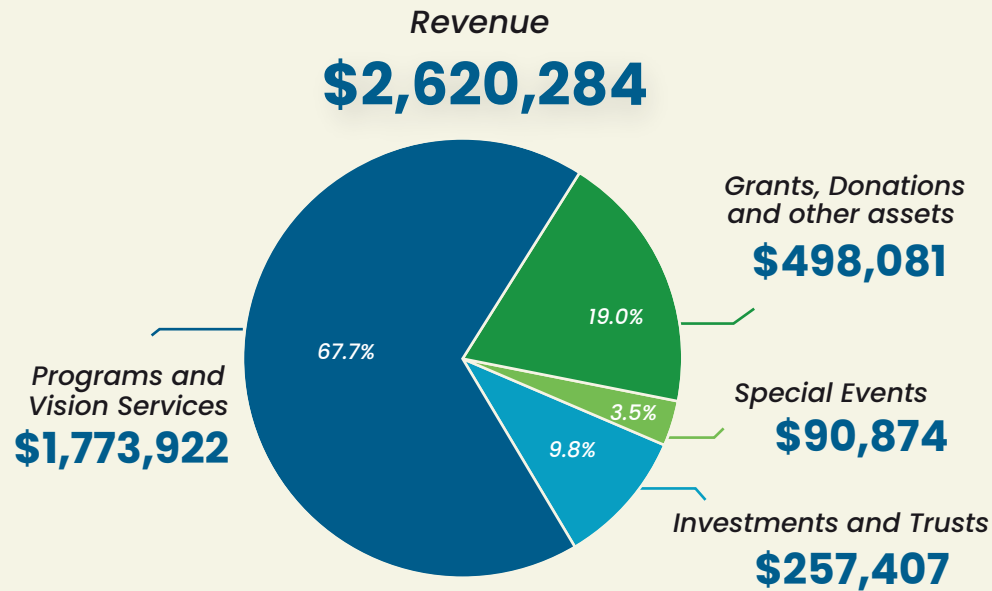
The holiday season further highlighted inclusion, from the Lighthouse Christmas tree at The Ben West Palm to a creative partnership with Palm Beach Day Academy students, who created accessible 3D ornaments and large-print, QR-enabled holiday cards for Lighthouse children and transition students.

Looking Ahead

As the Lighthouse enters its 80th anniversary year in 2026, it moves forward with stronger partnerships, expanded services, innovative programs, and a renewed commitment to illuminating possibilities for individuals who are blind or visually impaired.



FINANCIALS AND PROGRAM STATS



Vision Screenings **530**



Children's Vision Potentially Saved by Early Intervention **92**



Babies, Children and Teens received services **612**



Adults Received Services **295**



Mental Health and Wellbeing: Social and Recreational Programming **242**



Community Partners **80+**



Square Miles of Service **5,333**



Youth Service Hours **4,968**



Adult Service Hours **6,508**



Mental Health & Wellbeing Service Hours **2,114**



Direct Service Hours **13,590**



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Florida Agencies
Serving the Blind
Moving Beyond Vision Loss



DIVISION OF BLIND SERVICES
Florida Department of Education | dbs.fldoe.org



L
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Loyalty

to the mission,
organization, and
persons served.

Innovation

in the presence
of ever-changing
circumstances
and challenges.

Growth

in expanding our
reach to individuals
in need.

Happiness

is the goal we strive
to achieve for those
we serve.

Teamwork

results when values
include mutual
respect and
collaborations.