



LIGHT LINE™

A MONTHLY BLOG FROM MIAMI LIGHTHOUSE FOR THE BLIND

Issue 32 November 2016

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SAVE THE DATE! 85th Diamond Anniversary Celebration

Saturday,
January 28, 2017

at the Historic
Biltmore Hotel

For more
information,
[click here](#)

Matching Challenge announced at the "See the Light Luncheon," celebrating 85 years of service

Christine Stiefel, founder of The Wildflower Foundation, offered a one-for-one matching challenge to our donors of \$150,000 to be raised by the end of 2016, the first year of her four-year matching challenge. Funds raised will be used for critical program support. The opportunity to participate is still available.



Christine Stiefel, founder of The Wildflower Foundation, (left) and Virginia Jacko, President and CEO of Miami Lighthouse (right)

Riviera Country Club in Coral Gables was the scene of this year's elegant "See the Light Luncheon," generously underwritten by Nostro Jones, P.A., GenSpring Family Offices and the Anthony R. Abraham Foundation.



Keynote speaker Paul Schroeder, Consultant and Past Vice President of the American Foundation of the Blind, presents to guests at the luncheon

NBC-Channel 6's John Morales emceed the event that began with a performance by Miami Lighthouse Music Program student Danays Bautista, singing "Amazing Grace." Keynote speaker Paul Schroeder, completely blind since early childhood, entertained the guests with his often amusing nostalgic stories about growing up without sight, then turned serious as he talked about the important role of the Miami Lighthouse in the lives of the blind and visually impaired. Schroeder is Consultant and Past Vice President of the American Foundation of the Blind, and his obvious awe and respect for the work of the Miami Lighthouse professional team drew prolonged applause from the audience.

Guests viewed a fascinating video titled "[It's Possible To See Without Sight](#)" that features Miami Lighthouse clients participating in various programs. Full [event photo album here](#).

Happy Halloween!

Happy Halloween from everyone at Miami Lighthouse!



Students and teachers from Miami Lighthouse's Pre-K Lighthouse Learning Center for Children on Halloween

Innovative Pre-K program well underway at Miami Lighthouse

Groundbreaking took place during the summer on our new Lighthouse Learning Center for Children building, but the incredibly innovative pilot program -- the only one like it in the country today -- is well underway!



Student Daniela with teacher Tobi Elden working on an art project.

Malice DaSilva and Tobi Elden, Florida licensed teachers, work Monday through Friday at the Lighthouse, with eight very active three- and four-year-old youngsters. Some are legally blind and some are sighted. When I visited the busy classroom this week, I can honestly tell you, I had trouble telling which was which. Everyone was much too busy telling me their names and showing me their latest work. That's the whole idea of this remarkable early childhood program being carried out in concert with Miami-Dade County Public Schools and the Early Learning Coalition.

As Malice told me, "This program gives visually impaired youngsters the opportunity to develop to their highest potential in a rich environment. You must make accommodations. If you can't see, you can feel. To that end, we are teaching tactile adaptations. The read is studying pre-braille to prepare them to read. Most importantly, both the blind and the sighted are becoming fast friends and learning to live and work together."

We'll be reporting more on the progress of this fascinating Pre-K program. Watch for future posts.



Student Julian playing with blocks

White Cane Day celebration was a community awakening

Grand Marshal Billy the Marlin with members of the City of Miami's mounted police force and fire department walked down Southwest 8th Street on Friday, October 14th, escorting some 150 blind and visually impaired participants in our annual White Cane Day celebration. The annual event celebrates independence for the blind as symbolized by their white cane.



2016 White Cane Day celebration

Volunteers from Florida Blue, UM's Delta Gamma Sorority, and various Lions Clubs, were all part of the celebration that started and ended at Miami Lighthouse. Once back at the Lighthouse, this year's emcee, Ron Magill, the Goodwill Ambassador of ZooMiami, welcomed the crowd and introduced presentations by keynote speaker Penny Shaffer, Market President of Florida Blue, and the event's presenting sponsor; Denise Valkema of National Federation of the Blind; and Paul Edwards of the Florida Council of the Blind. Breakfast was underwritten by Walgreens Store #2544 and lunch by Burger King #12778.

Also introduced at the celebration, news that Uber -- a sponsor of the event -- and Miami Lighthouse are exploring the idea of an innovative partnership aimed at expanding mobility options for blind and visually impaired riders. Other sponsors included MassMutual Miami, Vanda Pharmaceuticals, Lions for the Blind, the Law Offices of Benedict P. Kuehne, OrCam Technologies, and Spine Solutions.

Contributed by Joan Spector

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