



Report to Stakeholders November 2015

It's Possible to See Without Sight™

Thanks to you, our stakeholders, 2015 has been a year of empowerment for children, youth and adults who because of your generosity can lead more productive and independent lives.

- Seventy-two visually impaired adults are currently taking classes to both learn English and attain their GED in our new fourth-floor Sash A. Spencer Educational Empowerment Center.
- More than 13,000 blind and visually impaired children and adults received vision rehabilitation services and/or comprehensive eye examinations and glasses at no cost to them.
- Through our Job Readiness Training Program, we were able to increase the number of clients who obtained mainstream employment. Twenty-six clients in 2015 have been placed in competitive positions by our Job Readiness team as a result of our employment collaborations with Florida Division of Blind Services, Switchboard Miami, Baptist Health, Perez Art Museum Miami, Micro Data, Hyatt Hotels, Marriott Worldwide Call Center, and others.
- During our 2015 summer camp, 29 students had paid employment experiences, such as working at the Youth Fair, Miami Theater Company, Fausto Commercial Realty, Smart Bites Cafe, Miami Lighthouse Vision Solutions Center and Walgreens. The student who worked at Walgreens during the summer subsequently accepted a part-time position with Walgreens while she is pursuing a degree at Miami-Dade College.
- With partial funding from the Florida Department of Education Division of Blind Services nearly 150 seniors attend our daily Social Group Health and Activities Program which offers fitness, nutrition, tactile art, music and computing. This important program enables blind seniors to stay out of costly assisted living facilities and reduces medical costs.

Collaborations

- In collaboration with the Bascom Palmer Eye Institute and Second Sight, provided vision rehabilitation services for the first patient in Florida to receive the Argus II retinal implant. We developed and copyrighted our unique vision rehabilitation curriculum to be used with future implant patients.
- More than 40 faculty, residents and fellows from Bascom Palmer attended our eighth annual Bascom Palmer Eye Institute Reception. Guests toured our facility and learned about the variety of vision rehabilitation programs we offer for blind and visually impaired babies, children, adults and seniors. The keynote speaker, Dr. Harry W. Flynn, Jr., Professor of Ophthalmology at BPEI, presented a history of BPEI and its longstanding relationship with Miami Lighthouse dating back to Dr. Bascom Palmer's chairmanship of the Miami Lighthouse Board from 1947 to 1952.
- As part of our Center of Excellence in Vision Rehabilitation initiatives, Miami Lighthouse continues to address the shortage of professionals in the low vision rehabilitation field by supervising interns. During 2015 our certified low vision and occupational therapist provided practicum internships for eleven occupational therapist students from Florida International University and Barry University, and our Orientation and Mobility staff supervised five O&M interns from Florida State University and Stephen F. Austin University.
- To empower healthcare professionals with the knowledge they require to meet the needs and the growing number of patients who are impacted by low vision, in collaboration with the Florida International University Nicole Wertheim College of Nursing and Health Sciences Occupational Therapy Department we held our fourth continuing education seminar for Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists and Nurses which was attended by 44 registrants who received continuing education credits for their participation.

Recognition

- Miami Lighthouse was honored at the Florida Blue Foundation's 2015 Sapphire Awards as an outstanding nonprofit organization in community health care in recognition of distinguished leadership, innovation and achievements in community health in Florida. Finalists were selected by an independent panel with state and national expertise in community health best practices.
- The Beacon Council chose Miami Lighthouse as the recipient of its Distinguished Industry Award for Education at the 13th Annual Beacon Awards. These prestigious awards recognize outstanding contributions to the community by individuals, non-profits and various organizations in the Greater Miami area.
- A peer-reviewed article about our nationally recognized, innovative, copyrighted distance learning Braille music curriculum "A New Synthesis of Sound and Tactile Music Code Instruction: Implementation Issues of a Pilot Online Braille Music Curriculum" appeared in the Practice Report section of the March-April 2015 *Journal of Visual Impairment and Blindness*.

Financial Health

- Through effective work in seeking public funding and expanding philanthropic support, Miami Lighthouse enhanced its financial health and its sustainability while serving a more than 24-fold increase in clients since 2004.
- Miami Lighthouse ranks nationally among the top 2% of the 8,000 nonprofit organizations evaluated by Charity Navigator based upon sound fiscal management and responsible use of donor dollars thus ranking as one of the elite 160 nonprofits in the nation that have received eight consecutive 4-star ratings, the highest rating possible, from the national evaluator Charity Navigator. Of the organizations followed by Charity Navigator, only about one in four gets a 4-star rating and, indeed, to accomplish this for seven continuous years is most significant. *Please refer to the attached rating notification letter from Charity Navigator.*

Opportunities

Thanks to the generosity of individuals, foundations, companies, and other organizations, Miami Lighthouse expanded our efforts during 2015.

- At our 2014 See the Light Luncheon, a generous donor announced the "Expansion of the Center of Excellence in Vision Rehabilitation Grant Challenge." Under the terms of the Challenge, the donor will match gifts dollar for dollar up to a total of \$5 million supporting facility expansion of our Center of Excellence for Visually Impaired Children, estimated to cost \$10 million for capital and program support. When completed, the expansion will enable Miami Lighthouse to increase—and provide access to—critically needed services for the growing numbers of blind babies and young children. As part of this expansion initiative, we are collaborating with Miami-Dade County Public Schools to pilot a pre-kindergarten at Miami Lighthouse in 2016 in preparation for a launch in 2017. Such a program will enable blind and visually impaired youngsters to transition more easily to the public school environment.

