



# Miami Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired Annual Report 2017



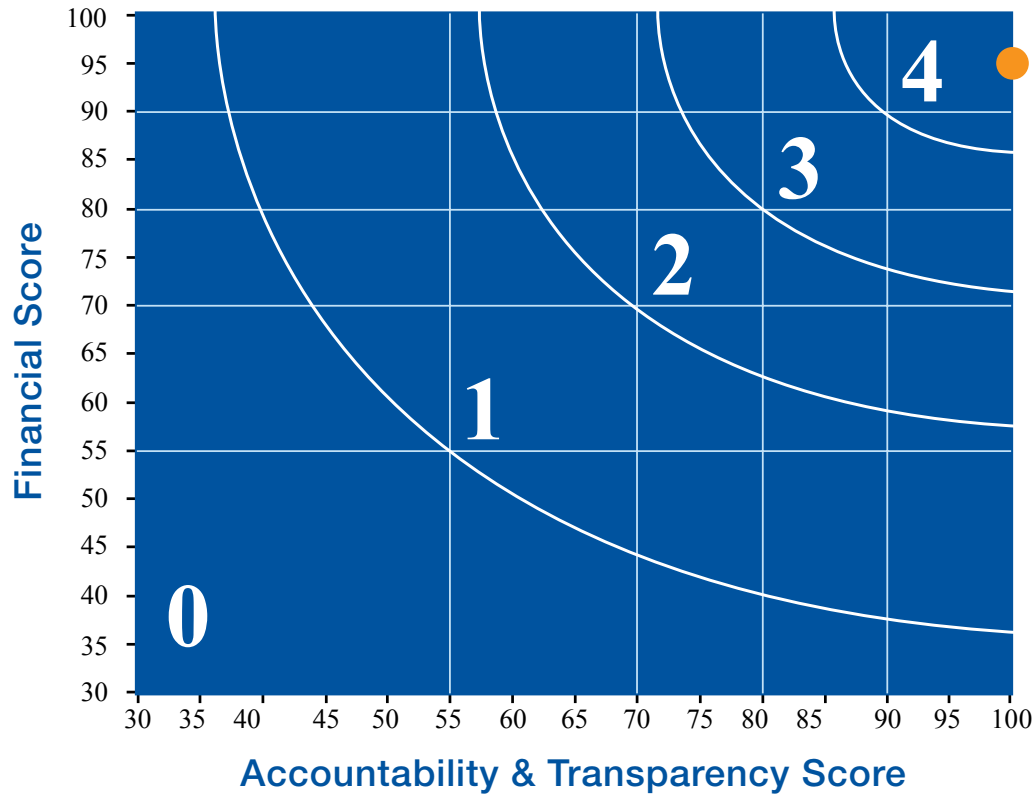
TOP 1% in USA by Charity Navigator

MIAMI  
LIGHTHOUSE  
for the BLIND  
AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED



# Charity Navigator Score February 1, 2018

Miami Lighthouse is currently the only nonprofit in Miami with ten consecutive 4-star ratings from Charity Navigator and is rated nationally in the 99th percentile of the over 9,000 charities rated by Charity Navigator. In other words, we are among the elite 38 charities in the U.S. that have received 10 consecutive 4-star ratings from the nation's premier independent nonprofit evaluator Charity Navigator, reflecting our sound fiscal management, responsible use of donor dollars and financial strength.



	SCORE (out of 100)	RATING
OVERALL	96.67	★★★★
● Financial	95.30	★★★★
● Accountability & Transparency	100	★★★★

Source: Miami Lighthouse listing on Charity Navigator website:  
[www.charitynavigator.org](http://www.charitynavigator.org)



Cover photo: Miami Lighthouse Learning Center for Children™  
 Pre-Kindergarten teacher Ms. Stephania with her students



Dear Friends of Miami Lighthouse,

Thanks to you, 2017 was a year of empowerment for children, youth, and adults who, through our impactful programs, can lead more productive lives with a feeling of purpose and satisfaction.

We held our Miami Lighthouse Learning Center for Children™ dedication on August 16, 2017. Completion of our new facility enabled us to expand our inclusion Pre-Kindergarten from 15 students in the prior school year to 40 students in 2017, and 60 are enrolled for fall semester 2018 with the potential to accommodate 80 children in the following years.

Miami Lighthouse continues to be known as a national center of excellence in vision rehabilitation and has experienced phenomenal growth both in terms of service and finances since 2004, for example:

- A more than 33-fold increase in the number of program participants, i.e., from 500 to nearly 17,000 per year.
  - An increase in revenue from \$2.9 million to \$10.9 million.
  - An increase in net assets from \$12.6 million to \$27.3 million.
  - An increase in the number of employees from 59 to 129 based upon W-2s submitted to the IRS.
- This growth is due to program expansion, such as our new Learning Center Certified Teachers of the Visually Impaired, early learning teaching assistants, and support staff for our Heiken Children's Vision Program.

Nationally, Miami Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired is in the 99th percentile of the more than 9,000 charities rated by Charity Navigator based upon sound fiscal management and efficient use of donor dollars. In other words, Miami Lighthouse is among the elite 38 charities that have received ten consecutive 4-star ratings from the national evaluator Charity Navigator. Of the organizations followed by Charity Navigator, only 1% of the charities evaluated has received ten consecutive 4-star evaluations. We are currently the only non-profit in Miami to have achieved this distinction.

We could not have attained this recognition without you. We count on your support to ensure continuation of our tradition of excellence in service for the blind and visually impaired. Thank you for your help in sustaining our incredibly important effort.

Sincerely,



Louis Nostro, Esq.  
*Chairman, Board of Directors*



## 2017 Miami Lighthouse Board of Directors

Louis Nostro, Esq.

*Chairman*

Ramon F. Casas

*Immediate Past Chair*

Owen S. Freed, Esq. †

*Secretary*

Peter R. Harrison

*Treasurer, Assistant Secretary*

Virginia A. Jacko

*President and CEO*

Donna Abood

José A. Abrante

Will Beckham

Kent M. Benedict

Sander R. Dubovy, M.D.

Gary D. Fox, Esq.

George W. Foyo

Irwin M. Frost, Esq.

Pablo Gonzalez

John H. B. Harriman

Anne E. Helliwell

Thomas E. Johnson, M.D.

Alfred Karram, Jr.

Alan P. Levitt, O.D.

The Honorable Gwen Margolis

Stephen A. Morris, O.D.

Jan S. Morrison

Maricarmen Perez-Blanco, O.D.

Scott J. Richey

Steven J. Solomon

Angela Whitman

René J. González-Llorens, Esq.

*Legal Counsel*

† deceased

### NEW BOARD APPOINTMENTS FOR 2018

Jose A. Abrante

*Assistant Secretary*

### BOARD DIRECTORS

Harry W. Flynn, Jr., M.D.

Sheila Freed

Charles J. Nielson, Sr.

The Honorable Tomás Regalado

Alex Suarez





## Client Services as per 2017 IRS Form 990

Employing nationally recognized best practices and evidence-based curricula, our services for people throughout Miami-Dade County cover all ages ranging from early intervention for blind babies and Pre-Kindergarten for three- and four-year-old children to low vision rehabilitation for seniors. Our subsidiary, the Florida Heiken Children's Vision Program, provides eye care at no cost to underserved children throughout Florida. In 2017, Miami Lighthouse served nearly 17,000 individuals.

### FLORIDA HEIKEN CHILDREN'S VISION PROGRAM

- 11,382 exams
- 8,271 glasses
- 694 medical referrals

### MUSIC PROGRAM

- 224 participants

### SENIOR GROUP HEALTH AND ACTIVITIES

- 121 program participants

### EARLY INTERVENTION BLIND BABIES PROGRAM

- 96 children and families



*Our Florida Heiken Children's Vision Program offers children a choice of eyeglass frames*

*Music students Joshua, Isaac, and Christian performing at The Children's Trust Summer Showcase 2017 held at the Wynwood Yard*



*Olivia*



*Senior Group Health and Activities Program participant Nick*

### LOW VISION SERVICES

- 1,969 "Living with Low Vision" community presentations
- 1,586 Vision Solutions Center clients
- 552 low vision exams
- 287 patients received vision rehabilitation services from our occupational therapist

**INDEPENDENT LIVING** – Adult (age 54 and under) and Older Blind (age 55 and over)

- 169 clients

**VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION** – for working adults or those who want to return to work

- 137 clients

**SUMMER TRAINING AND RECREATION PROGRAM** – children ages 5-13

- 83 students

### ADULT BASIC EDUCATION / GED AND ESOL PROGRAMS

- 83 adult participants

### LIGHTHOUSE LEARNING CENTER FOR CHILDREN™

(Spring and Fall semesters 2017)

- 57 children enrolled

### PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES AND VISION REHABILITATION

- 43 youth ages 14-22 enrolled
- 40 were placed in internships

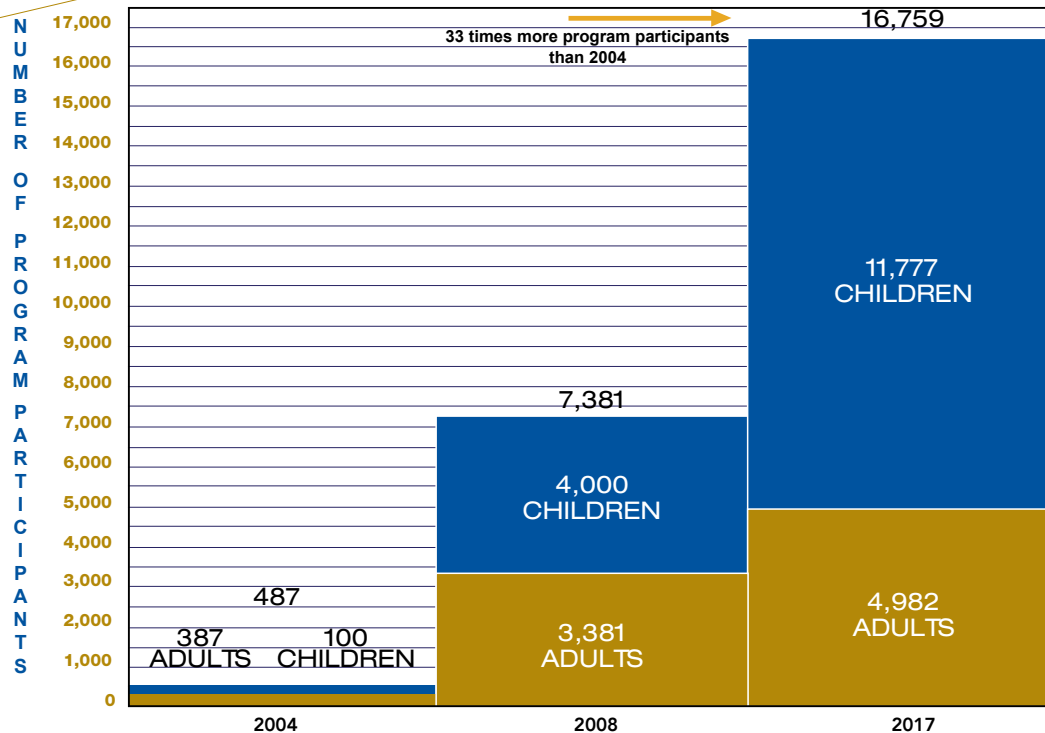
# History of Program Participants



*Pre-Employment Transition students were invited for a work experience field trip at McDonalds. Students Adriel and Jean with McDonald's franchise owners Jose and Milly Montes*



*Children in our Miami Lighthouse Learning Center for Children™ 2017 Pre-K Program*



We are growing faster than Amazon Prime, and this is why we are grateful to our contributors and need your continuing support. If you are shopping at Amazon, shop instead at [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) and choose Miami Lighthouse as the charity to receive a donation every time you make a purchase.



## 2017 Statement of Financial Position

ASSETS	2017	2016
Cash and cash equivalents (including cash held in investment money funds of \$309,903 and \$110,994 and deferred revenues of \$1,362,929 and \$1,471,300 at 12/31/2017 and 2016 respectively)	2,162,226	4,912,957
Cash designated for construction	279,014	2,863,210
Accounts and interest receivable	520,033	395,147
Prepaid expenses	129,568	147,762
Contributions receivable	119,703	1,285,953
Beneficial interest in irrevocable trusts	342,104	293,126
Investment securities	13,032,142	11,267,435
Property and equipment, net	12,534,931	6,633,235
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$29,119,721</b>	<b>\$27,798,825</b>
<b>LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>		
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	423,389	946,451
Direct Services and deferred revenues	1,362,929	1,471,300
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>\$1,786,318</b>	<b>2,417,751</b>
Net Assets		
Unrestricted (including quasi endowment of \$12,662,651 and \$10,794,072 at 12/31/2017 and 2016 respectively)	24,383,881	17,102,521
Temporarily restricted	1,823,232	7,152,263
Permanently restricted	1,126,290	1,126,290
<b>TOTAL NET ASSETS</b>	<b>27,333,403</b>	<b>25,381,074</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$29,119,721</b>	<b>\$27,798,825</b>

## 2017 Statement of Financial Activities

REVENUES, GAINS AND OTHER SUPPORT	2017	2016
Bequests, legacies and trust income	0	37,659
Contributions, net	4,481,413	5,005,670
Grant funding, including from MDC	3,874,147	3,283,168
Investment income (loss) including realized and unrealized gains (losses), net	1,803,098	916,436
Change in beneficial interest in irrevocable trusts	48,978	19,190
Other	485,064	359,545
Special events	216,626	344,832
<b>TOTAL REVENUE, GAINS AND OTHER SUPPORT</b>	<b>\$10,909,326</b>	<b>\$9,966,500</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Vision rehabilitation program	671,731	606,130
Alternative rehabilitation services	780,311	1,281,024
Transition services and vocational training unit	1,103,609	1,089,780
Early intervention and children's program	2,624,624	1,069,446
Heiken children's vision program	2,461,525	2,295,760
Administrative and general	709,482	597,998
Development (rounding adjustment)	605,715	522,965
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$8,956,997</b>	<b>\$7,463,103</b>
<b>Change in Net Assets</b>	<b>1,952,329</b>	<b>2,503,396</b>
<b>NET ASSETS - BEGINNING OF YEAR</b>	<b>25,381,074</b>	<b>22,877,678</b>
<b>NET ASSETS - END OF YEAR</b>	<b>\$27,333,403</b>	<b>\$25,381,074</b>

# 2017 Financial Report

During 2017 net assets increased by nearly 8%. The increase was mainly due to capital contributions for our building expansion and significant market gains in our investment accounts. While the 2017 increase in assets is substantial, net assets increased 11% in 2016. This change in net asset growth demonstrates the fact that when an organization is in building mode, contributions are reflected in revenue without corresponding increases in expenses until the construction is complete. In subsequent years, depreciation expense is recognized without corresponding increases in revenue. Consequently, changes in net assets are much more favorable in years of capital growth.

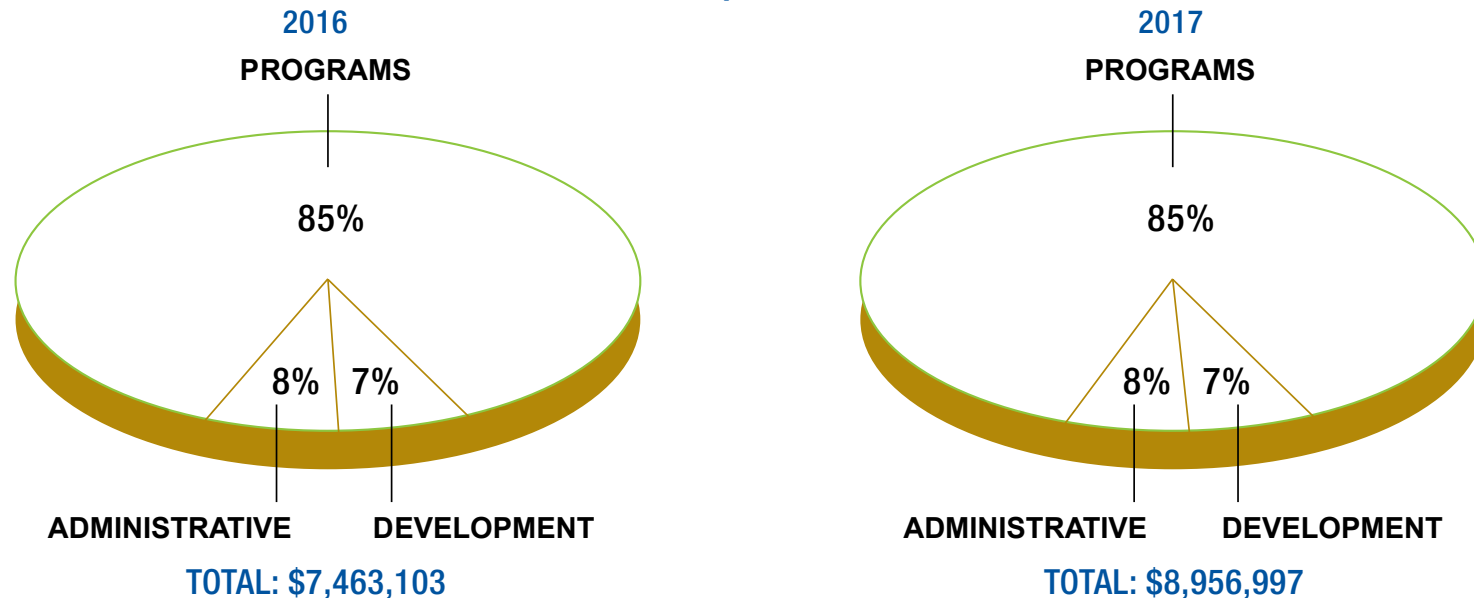
Our ability to continue to increase services year after year and touch the lives of so many individuals would not be possible without the generosity of donors and the wise management of our assets. Miami Lighthouse will continue to look for ways to secure new funding to support the increase in operating costs that come with our commitment to expanding services for visually impaired children and adults.

In 2017 we used 85% of every dollar received for programs that help people affected by vision loss.

Full financial statements, audited by Verdeja & De Armas, LLP, are available on our website at: <http://miamilighthouse.org/docs/2017AuditReport>

Richard Fernandez  
*Chief Financial Officer*

## Functional Expense Allocation





# Thanks to Our Donors

Because of the generosity of our donors, construction of our new **Miami Lighthouse Learning Center for Children™** was completed in 2017. The grand opening of our new facility and dedication of our Mary M. and Sash A. Spencer Campus was celebrated on August 16. Our unique inclusion pre-kindergarten classes for blind and visually impaired children and their typically developing sighted peers began on August 21. We extend our deepest thanks to all of the dedicated people and organizations that had a role in the building of this unique educational facility of our Miami Lighthouse, especially MCM our highly efficient general contractor, Wolfberg Alvarez & Partners our innovative architects, Ines Marrero-Priegues of Holland and Knight, City and County officials, and our generous donors who made our Miami Lighthouse Learning Center for Children™ a reality.

**WEEK OF  
SEPTEMBER 19, 2016**



**WEEK OF  
NOVEMBER 7, 2016**



**WEEK OF  
MARCH 20, 2017:**  
*Partially completed Miami  
Lighthouse Learning Center  
for Children™ is on the left*



MIAMI LIGHTHOUSE FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED

*Our completed Miami Lighthouse Learning Center for Children™ appears on the left. The Juan and Ophelia Roca "Bridge to Excellence" in the middle connects the new structure to our existing building.*







**APRIL 7, 2017:**  
Miami-Dade County Public School Superintendent Alberto Carvalho spoke about the importance of our new inclusion pre-kindergarten at the “topping off” celebration for our new Lighthouse Learning Center for Children™. “Topping off” marks the construction milestone of the completion of the roof on a building



**AUGUST 16, 2017:**  
**Miami Lighthouse Learning Center for Children™ Ribbon Cutting Ceremony:**  
Board Director Charles J. Nielson, Sr., Honorary Director Bill Beckham, Board Directors Peter Harrison, Stephen Morris, Pablo Gonzalez, Immediate Past Board Chair Ramón Casas, Board Director Will Beckham, CEO Virginia Jacko, Chair Louis Nostro, Board Directors Jan Morrison, Alfred Karram, Jr., and Dr. Eduardo Alfonso, Chair, Bascom Palmer Eye Institute



Campus dedication commemorative marker: CEO Virginia Jacko and Mrs. Sash A. Spencer



2017 Pre-K Inaugural Graduating Class



Our students singing “Somewhere over the Rainbow” at the Miami Lighthouse Learning Center for Children™ dedication ceremony



# Our History of Collaboration

## BASCOM PALMER EYE INSTITUTE

As a University of Miami trustee and chairman of the Medical School Committee, Dr. Bascom Palmer was in a position to help generate personal and financial support through his informal group meetings. As a result of his activities with the Miami Rotary Club, he also became involved with Miami Lighthouse for the Blind. He solicited money for Miami Lighthouse, served as its president of the board from 1947 to 1952, and started a Miami Lighthouse satellite in Overtown to serve its local community. He also established a fund at Miami Lighthouse devoted to another dream he harbored: the creation of an eye hospital in Miami. As early as 1943 Dr. Palmer and members of the Lighthouse began discussing the feasibility of establishing an eye clinic in Miami. Five years later, the Lighthouse purchased the land for the proposed clinic, the site where the Anne Bates Leach Eye Hospital now stands. In 1948 there was an article in the Miami Herald entitled "Site Acquired to Construct Eye Clinic." It stated that, "land has been acquired for construction of a building to house an eye clinic, open to all persons who are without means of having their eyes tested." The property was purchased for \$15,000 in August of 1948 and was located on N.W. 17th Street between 9th and 10th Avenues, which was across the street from the entrance to Jackson Memorial Hospital. Until sufficient funds were raised to build an eye clinic, it was operated as a parking lot and employed a blind attendant. This property was subsequently the subject of a dispute, was condemned, and the Lighthouse placed the proceeds from the condemnation award with other funds contributed to the eye clinic. Dr. Palmer died in 1954. Without his leadership the fund to build the eye clinic ceased to grow.

Sometime later Dr. Edward W. D. Norton, the newly appointed Chairman of the Department of Ophthalmology at the University of Miami's School of Medicine, approached Miami Lighthouse Board Director Maurice Harrison [current Miami Lighthouse Board Director Peter Harrison's grandfather]. Dr. Norton requested that Miami Lighthouse supply the funds to build an eye clinic which would be run by the University of Miami School of Medicine and would be built on land owned by Dade County. This was agreeable to the Board of Directors of Miami Lighthouse. Ultimately, Miami Lighthouse provided the land and seed money, which was most of the funds the University of Miami School of Medicine needed to construct the Bascom Palmer Eye Institute's original building. The dedication of the Bascom Palmer Eye Institute took place on Sunday, January 21, 1962.

In late 1968 or early 1969 Dr. Norton once again requested the assistance of Miami Lighthouse. The Bascom Palmer Eye Institute needed more space. Miami Lighthouse contributed a substantial amount of money for this purpose. The fundraising was successful, and the building was built. Interestingly this new building was located on the four lots purchased by the Lighthouse in 1948.

The above text was compiled from information contained in a document prepared by Preston L. Prevatt, Esq., dated January 11, 1993, concerning Shutts and Bowen's ongoing involvement with Miami Lighthouse and *Twenty-Five Years of Vision: The Story of Bascom Palmer Eye Institute*, 1986.



*Bascom Palmer Eye Institute Groundbreaking  
March 6, 1961*

*Left to right: Dr. Kenneth Whitmer,  
former Chairman, Department of Ophthalmology,  
University of Miami; Maurice R. Harrison, Sr.,  
Incoming Chair, Miami Lighthouse for the Blind;  
Mrs. Bascom Palmer; Keith Phillips, Sr.,  
Past Chair, Miami Lighthouse for the Blind*

# Our History of Collaboration

## BASCOM PALMER EYE INSTITUTE (continued)

A strong collaboration between Miami Lighthouse and Bascom Palmer Eye Institute continues today as both institutions are partners in transforming lives through vision rehabilitation. Recently, our Low Vision Occupational Therapist, our Chief Program Officer, and the University of Massachusetts Professor and director of Vision Studies co-authored a case study on vision rehabilitation for the first Florida resident to receive the Argus II “Bionic Eye,” Bascom Palmer Eye Institute’s first patient of this kind. The case study was published in the *Journal of Visual Impairment and Blindness*. Bascom Palmer residents serve a rotation at Miami Lighthouse where they learn about devices available to improve the quality of life of their low vision patients and the vision rehabilitation programs we offer for patients whose vision deficiencies cannot be corrected by medical intervention. Our Chief Program Officer Carol Brady-Simmons participates in weekly grand rounds at Bascom Palmer. She serves as a resource for the ophthalmologists who make referrals to Miami Lighthouse for low vision services and vision rehabilitation.

## FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

In fulfillment of our mission “to collaborate with and train professionals,” since 2007 Miami Lighthouse has offered continuing education workshops “Engaging the Low Vision Community through Education, Research, and Service” for Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists and Nurses in collaboration with Florida International University’s Occupational Therapy Department. The goal of the workshop is to empower health care professionals with the knowledge they require to meet the needs of the growing number of patients who are impacted by vision loss. Starting in 2011, through collaborations with the FIU and Barry University, occupational therapy students interested in low vision complete their fieldwork experience at Miami Lighthouse under the supervision of our Licensed Occupational and Certified Low Vision Therapist. To date 64 Occupational Therapy students and two Certified Occupational Therapy Assistants have completed their practicum experience at Miami Lighthouse. This collaboration has resulted in two articles published in the scholarly journal for the profession *ADVANCE for Occupational Therapy Practitioners*: “Bringing Function into Focus: Implementing the Principles of Universal Design for the Low-Vision Population” and “Putting the Pieces Together: A Fieldwork Rotation at a Low Vision Residence brings Classroom Theories to Life.” Raquel Van Der Biest, our Licensed Occupational and Certified Low Vision therapist was also invited to serve a two-year term on the FIU Occupational Therapy Advisory Committee.



*Raquel Van Der Biest, Miami Lighthouse Licensed Occupational and Certified Low Vision Therapist gave a presentation entitled “Overview of Independent Living Skills” at our continuing education seminar for Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists and Nurses.*

## MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Miami Lighthouse also has contracts with the School Board of Miami-Dade County. Children’s programs contacts include pre-kindergarten, birth through age two, functional vision and learning media assessments, Braille transcribing, and a memorandum of agreement for our Florida Heiken Children’s Vision Program to provide comprehensive eye examinations and prescription glasses to Miami-Dade County schoolchildren. Our Adult Basic Education Program is also offered in collaboration with Miami-Dade County Public Schools.



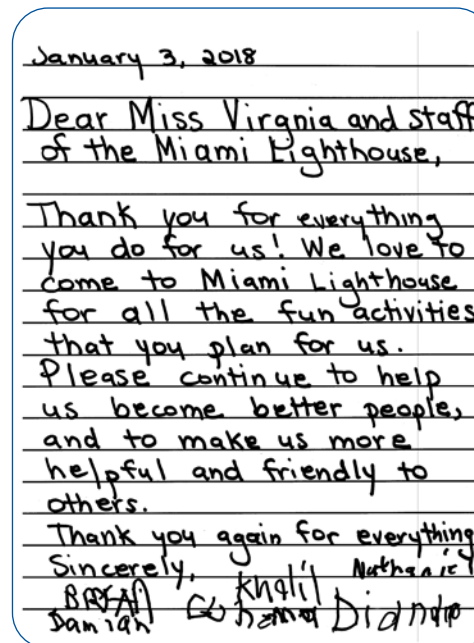


## NEW ONE-FOR-ONE CHALLENGE TO SUPPORT EARLY LEARNING

A generous donor has announced a four-year \$2 million challenge to sustain our early learning programs. By earmarking your donation to our "Lighthouse Learning Center for Children™ Matching Challenge" your gift will be matched dollar for dollar. Your contribution will sustain high-quality early learning education for future generations of blind and visually impaired and sighted children in our community.

The Helen Keller Legacy Society recognizes individuals who have named Miami Lighthouse as a beneficiary in their bequests.

To include Miami Lighthouse in your will, call Virginia Jacko at 305.856.4176 to discuss estate planning gifts.



*Thank you letter from students participating in the Winter 2017 session of our year-round Braille and Technology Literacy Program for children ages 5 to 13*



The Children's Summer Program, Better Chance Music Program, Florida Heiken Children's Vision Program and Early Intervention Program are funded in part by The Children's Trust. The Children's Trust is a dedicated source of revenue established by voter referendum to improve the lives of children and families in Miami-Dade County.



Miami Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired, Inc.  
Mary M. and Sash A. Spencer Campus  
601 SW 8th Avenue • Miami, Florida 33130 • 305.856.2288  
[www.miamilighthouse.org](http://www.miamilighthouse.org)



## Our Mission Statement

To provide vision rehabilitation, eye health services and education that promote independence, to collaborate with and train professionals, and to conduct research in related fields.

*The tactile ceramic collage shown here was made by our students and is now displayed in our new Miami Lighthouse Learning Center for Children™.*