



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**MIAMI LIGHTHOUSE FOR THE BLIND & JOSE FELICIANO
TO HONOR DONORS AT RUBY JUBILEE DINNER CONCERT**

MIAMI, OCTOBER 24, 2011- **Miami Lighthouse for the Blind** will celebrate its 80th anniversary on November 12 with a sold-out Ruby Jubilee dinner concert featuring the Miami Lighthouse musicians performing side-by-side with eight-time Grammy winner José Feliciano, who will receive the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Latin Recording Academy days before coming to Miami for this concert. He will be presented a honorary diploma from Superintendent Alberto Carvalho as part of the celebration in recognition of his accomplishments and in appreciation for his concert with Miami Lighthouse students and instructors. The event honors donors who have given or pledged at least \$80,000 to Miami Lighthouse. U.S. Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, who co-chairs the U.S. Congressional Vision Caucus, is mistress of ceremonies.

“This is a major milestone for Miami Lighthouse, marking our tremendous growth in services to the blind and visually impaired over the past several years,” said Michael A. Silva, Chairman of the Miami Lighthouse Board of Directors. Silva also is serving as dinner concert chair, along with Lisa Pisciotta.

“We have a total of 23 Ruby Jubilarians and legislative officials who will be honored at the dinner concert,” Silva said. “Their contributions, alongside many others, have made the work of Miami Lighthouse possible for the growing number of blind and visually impaired people in Miami-Dade County and throughout Florida.” Miami Lighthouse, founded in 1931 by Miamian Dolly Gamble with the support of her friend Helen Keller, has grown from a small operation to one that serves nearly 10,000 program participants annually. In 2007, it acquired the Heiken Children's Vision Program, which last year provided free eye examination and free eyeglasses to nearly 8,000 children in public schools living below federal poverty guidelines.

“Miami Lighthouse provides orientation and mobility training, personal management and independent living skills, computer training, Braille instruction, job readiness, and most importantly, confidence for leading a productive life,” said Virginia Jacko, president and CEO of Miami Lighthouse. CEO Jacko is a former Miami Lighthouse client who became totally blind several years ago.

“We are so grateful to José Feliciano for his continued support of Miami Lighthouse and of Braille literacy,” CEO Jacko said. “José Feliciano embodies what a person can achieve when he makes up his mind to overcome vision loss and has the will to succeed.” The acclaimed Miami Lighthouse Better Chance Music Production Program™ was launched in 2010, funded through The Knight Foundation Arts Challenge, will allow participants and their instructors to perform alongside Mr. Feliciano, and the sixth Miami Lighthouse album, “See the Light,” produced in the program's own Henry and Inez Stone Music & Sound Studio, will be released at the event.

Miami Lighthouse has received a four-star ranking from Charity Navigator four years in a row, placing it among a select eight percent of not-for-profit institutions in the United States. The celebration, sponsored by Northern Trust, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida, Florida Power and Light, Bacardi USA and others, will be held at 7:00 p.m. Saturday, November 12, at the historic Biltmore Hotel in Coral Gables. For further information or to make donations to the Miami Lighthouse, contact Virginia A. Jacko at 305-856-4176 or vjacko@miamilighthouse.org.

###

MIAMI LIGHTHOUSE MISSION STATEMENT:

*To provide vision rehabilitation
and eye health services
that promote independence,
to educate professionals,
and to conduct research in related fields*

Media Contact:

Cameron Sisser, Miami Lighthouse: (786) 362-7515

Mel Lichtenheld, Wragg & Casas: (305) 372-1234