



Center of Excellence  
Strategic Planning Goals 2013-2016  
Developed at Board Retreat on April 6, 2013  
Status Update as of April 19, 2017

### Meeting the Needs of Visually Impaired Children

- Offering Braille and Technology literacy for schoolchildren year round to supplement their in-school learning.
- Increased positions for Teachers of the Visually Impaired to four.
- Received 2016 Children's Trust Summer Literacy Grant renewable for 2017 and 2018.
- Recipient of 2016 Program of the Year award from The Children's Trust for our Early Intervention Blind Babies Program.
- Recognized for outstanding achievements in education, 2015 Beacon Council Award.
- Awarded new funding from the Division of Blind Services for Braille and Technology Literacy Children's Program with participating Florida Association of Agencies Serving the Blind.
- Received license from the Department of Children and Family to operate Pre-K on site.
- Thanks to generous support from The Wildflower Foundation, The Family Foundation and The Batchelor Foundation we have expanded programs in music, living skills, children's vision program, and Braille literacy.
- Completed capital and program support on \$5 million Challenge to create the Lighthouse Learning Center for Children™ (\$8 million capital, \$2 million program support). The Center was designed by the architectural firm of Wolfberg Alvarez and is being built by MCM Munilla. Building dedication is scheduled for August 16, 2017.
- Launched with Miami-Dade County Public Schools and the Early Learning Coalition inclusion pre-kindergarten pilot program with 15 blind and visually impaired three- and four-year-olds and their sighted peers in fall semester 2016 with pre-kindergarten for 30 children slated to begin August 2017 in our new Lighthouse Learning Center for Children™ which will offer daily services for 40 children from 1 through 4 years old.
- Awarded Children's Trust Youth Enrichment and Ronald McDonald House Charities of South Florida grants for children's music program.
- Ongoing collaboration with Miami-Dade County Public Schools through contracts and MOUs for:
  - Pre-kindergarten educational services.
  - Programs of education and related services for students with visual disabilities for one- and two-year olds.
  - Functional Vision and Learning Media Assessments for visually impaired students pre-k through grade 12.
  - Braille Transcribing for visually impaired students.
  - Preventive eye care for financially disadvantaged school children through our Florida Heiken Children's Vision Program, which in 2016 provided over 9,500 financially disadvantaged schoolchildren statewide a comprehensive eye examination with 7,700 prescribed glasses at no cost. Of those receiving an exam, 696 were referred for medical intervention for eye conditions with the potential to cause vision loss.
  - Lighthouse Learning Center for Children™ Research Demonstration Project: Pre-K Program for Children with Disabilities.
  - Lighthouse Learning Center for Children™ Research Demonstration Project: Parent Academy.
  - The Children's Trust Parenting and Home Visitation (Blind Babies Program).
- Expanded children's staff to include a Director of Children's Programs in addition to the Manager of Children's Program position; hired pediatric occupational therapist, hired a teacher certified in pre-kindergarten to work in tandem with a Teacher of the Visually Impaired in our pilot Pre-K.
- National recognition of our Early Intervention Blind Babies Program Mother's Play days, publication "Blind Babies Play Program: A Model for Affordable, Sustainable Early Childhood Literacy Intervention through Play and Socialization," Practice Perspectives section, *Journal of Visual Impairment and Blindness*, May-June 2013.

## **Providing Career Guidance and Job Placement**

- Received a Division of Blind services one-time grant to introduce call center training.
- Received a Division of Blind Services grant to help our musicians obtain performance opportunities.
- Awarded renewable High School High Tech Grant funded in part by The Able Trust and the Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to provide our Pre-Employment Transition youth (ages 13-22) opportunities to prepare for careers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century job market.
- During our 2016 summer camp, 34 Pre-Employment Transition students had paid employment experiences, such as working at Miami Children's Museum, Miami Theater Company, McDonald's, Fausto Commercial Realty, Smart Bites Café, Miami Lighthouse Vision Solutions Center and Walgreens. One of the students who worked at Smart Bites Café during the summer subsequently accepted a part-time position and remains employed there while attending high school.
- Awarded an Able Trust a non-renewable job placement grant to coach teenagers and adults in career choices and job placement.
- Hired Job Readiness Placement specialist to help Miami Lighthouse clients find their best employment opportunities.
- Through our Job Readiness Training Program, eleven clients in 2016 were placed in competitive, mainstream positions by our Job Readiness team as a result of our employment collaborations with the Florida Division of Blind Services, Jackson Health, South Miami Hospital, Miami-Dade County Public Schools, Baptist Hospital International Marketing, Blue Diamond Translations, the Miami Heat, Haitian-American Community Development Center, the Miami Children's Initiative, and others.
- Expanded collaborations with industry, e.g., collaboration with SFM Service, Inc., Pre-Employment Transition students gained work experience at the Youth Fair and GrayRobinson is providing Transition students orientation about employment in the legal professions.
- Awarded AT&T grant to launch broadcast journalism as a career opportunity.
- Received Comcast Foundation Grant to support Technology and Job Readiness Training for the Blind.
- Awarded Ronald McDonald House Charities grant for music production software upgrades and to purchase additional instruments.
- Earned statewide recognition for a partnership between Marriott Global Reservation Sales and Customer Care of Miami, Miami Lighthouse and the Florida Division of Blind services when Marriott was among the recipients of the 2014 Ability Awards presented by The Able Trust in recognition of Marriott's proactive hiring leadership.
- CEO Jacko invited by the Commissioner of Education to speak to the Florida Board of Education regarding Miami Lighthouse successful employment outcomes.

## **Meeting the Needs of Visually Impaired Adults, Especially Seniors**

- Recipient of highly competitive Innovation in Health Care three-year Florida Blue Foundation Grant to meet the community's need for low vision services for seniors under which we reached 4,169 individuals in 2016 through community education and outreach, primarily offering "Living With Low Vision" seminars at senior centers.
- Certified Low-Vision Occupational Therapist helps low vision patients make adjustments and modifications in their home.
- Received bequest from a grateful client to provide assistive technology to financially disadvantaged, legally blind clients of Miami Lighthouse.
- Expanded Senior Health and Group Activities Program under a new contract with the Florida Division of Blind Services thereby enabling us to provide daily music therapy, arts and crafts, health monitoring and nutritional counseling by a registered dietitian for more than 100 seniors.
- Awarded a grant from the Miami-Dade County Public Schools to offer adult basic education, GED and ESOL daily classes; currently serving 77 adults.

- Providing Job Readiness/Job Placement Programs to meet the individual needs of those who are blind or visually impaired. The programs offer state-of-the-art training in computer access using special auditory screen reading devices and large print magnification devices based on the specific vision impairment. These programs also help individuals who have had previous employment experience learn new ways to use their core competencies as a means of achieving and retaining competitive employment.
- Publication: A peer-reviewed article about our nationally recognized, 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*.

### **Innovating through Advanced Technology**

- Collaborated with Comcast to pilot the Spanish version of their talking guide remote.
- Providing web site audits based upon ADA legislation that mandates website accessibility for federal contractors, airlines and municipalities, e.g., City of Miami web site and Argentina Airlines web site among others.

### **Collaborating with Academe**

- Collaborating with Florida International University on continuing education workshops, internships and practicums; during 216 we provided internships for 19 Occupational Therapy students.
- 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 sixth continuing education seminar for Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists and Nurses which was attended by more than 40 registrants who received continuing education credits for their participation.
- Our Occupational and Low Vision Therapist was appointed to a two-year term on FIU's Occupational Therapy Advisory Committee.
- Publication: “Bringing Function into Focus: Implementing the principles of universal design for the low vision population,” appeared in the November 2015 issue of *ADVANCE for Occupational Therapy Practitioners*. Through a collaboration between the Occupational Therapy Department at FIU and Miami Lighthouse, occupational therapy students interested in low vision complete their three-month fieldwork experience at Miami Lighthouse.
- Publication: Putting the Pieces Together: a field work rotation at a low-vision residence brings classroom theories to life,” Special Focus: Vision Rehabilitation section, December 2014 issue of *ADVANCE for Occupational Therapy Practitioners*.
- Collaborating with the Frost School of Music on curriculum assessment for our music program
- Collaborated with Bascom Palmer Eye Institute and Second Sight to develop and implement orientation and mobility and occupational therapy training for Florida's first Argus II artificial implant patient; copyrighted training protocol.
- Publication: “Miami Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired Case Study: Vision Rehabilitation for the First Florida Resident to Receive the Argus II ‘Bionic Eye,’ ” *Journal of Visual Impairment and Blindness*, May-June, 2016.
- Continuing collaboration with Bascom Palmer Eye Institute by providing a low vision rotation at Miami Lighthouse for BPEI residents and holding a yearly reception for interns, residents and faculty to acquaint them with services available for their patients with uncorrectable vision loss. Miami Lighthouse Chief Program Officer is participating in weekly grand rounds at BPEI.
- Executed an agreement with the University of Miami Department of Psychology Early Learning faculty of our one- and two-year-old preschoolers and pre-kindergarten students in the Miami Lighthouse early learning inclusion program. They will be followed until they enter first grade as part of a four-year longitudinal study funded by The Children's Trust. The primary goal is to examine effects of implementing the Lighthouse Learning Center for Children™ inclusion model on participating children, parents, and teachers.

### **Pursue National Health Care Strategic Partners**

- Became a provider of Medicaid HMO services for children through iCare Health Solutions
- Became an authorized Medicare provider for occupational therapy low vision services through a third-party administrator
- Contracted with CompuLink for implementing electronic medical records
- Received \$50,000 Florida Blue Sapphire award in recognition of our excellence in community health.



Reaccredited by the National Accreditation Council for Blind and Low Vision Services 2014 through 2019. Accreditation is an indication of our agency's leadership in the field of vision rehabilitation and dedication and commitment to improving the quality of life for people who are blind or require low vision services. Miami Lighthouse has been continuously accredited by NAC since 1978.



At our 2016 See the Light Luncheon, The Wildflower Foundation announced a generous one-for-one matching challenge to our donors. This \$150,000 annual challenge over four years will raise \$1.2 million in *unrestricted program support*. This challenge will help us meet the ever increasing demand for our services.



Miami Lighthouse continues to demonstrate it is worthy of our donors' philanthropic investments having received our ninth consecutive 4-star rating, the highest rating possible, from Charity Navigator, the national nonprofit evaluator, based upon our sound fiscal management and responsible use of donor dollars. Of the 8,000 organizations evaluated annually by Charity Navigator, we are now among the top 39 nonprofits in the entire nation and are currently the only nonprofit in Miami to have achieved nine consecutive 4-star ratings.

### **Significant Awards and Recognitions Since 2013**

2015 Florida Blue Sapphire - The Sapphire Awards recognize excellence among organizations, programs and individuals that have made a significant, positive impact on health-related outcomes for Florida's at-risk people and communities.

2015 Beacon Council Distinguished Industry Award for outstanding contributions to Education.

2014 CEO Jacko honored as a Community Champion by Molina Health Care of Florida honoring unsung heroes who work in our communities and inspire others through their selflessness, extraordinary service and contributions, which positively affect the lives of those around them.

2014 CEO Jacko honored as AXA Advisors Businesswoman of the Year in the Public Servant/Nonprofit Professional category.

2013 Switchboard of Miami Most Valuable Nonprofit

2013 Mockingbird Foundation grant for our Miami Lighthouse Music Program. Ten grantees were selected for among 1,303 initial applicants from throughout the United States.