



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Mayor Eileen Higgins Presented with “MIA LUV” Artwork by
Miami Lighthouse Academy Students**

Miami, FL – March 4, 2026 – Yesterday, Miami Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired welcomed City of Miami Mayor Eileen Higgins for a special visit, during which talented young artists from the Miami Lighthouse Academy presented her with “MIA LUV,” a vibrant, textured, heart-shaped artwork created in her honor.

The “MIA LUV” piece was crafted by young artists with a vision disability under the guidance of Aaron Hill, Supervisor of Fine Arts & Art Education at Miami Lighthouse. Featuring rich textures and bold colors, the artwork reflects Miami’s diverse and multicultural spirit. The students designed the gift as a warm welcome to Mayor Higgins, the first woman to serve as Mayor of the City of Miami.



A key inspiration behind the project came from Miami Lighthouse Academy Treasurer Karla Richey, whose vision helped bring “MIA LUV” to life. “The artwork represents more than creativity—it symbolizes resilience, inclusion, and the bright future the students imagine for their city,” said Richey.

During her visit, Mayor Higgins spent time with the students, asking about their creative process and how they work with tactile materials. She praised their artistic talent and shared how moved she was by the piece. Mayor Higgins also noted that she plans to display “MIA LUV” at City Hall for residents and visitors to enjoy.

Following the presentation, Mayor Higgins met with Miami Lighthouse President and CEO Virginia Jacko to learn more about the organization’s mission and the impact of early and accessible education for children with vision challenges. Jacko highlighted how early intervention—combined with specialized techniques and adapted curriculum—helps young learners build confidence, independence, and a strong foundation for future success.

“Early intervention makes an enormous difference for children who are blind or visually impaired,” said Virginia Jacko, President and CEO of Miami Lighthouse for the Blind. “When children begin learning braille, mobility skills, and adapted technology at a young age, it builds confidence and independence that stays with them for life. We deeply appreciate Mayor Higgins for recognizing the value of this work—and for showing our students that their talents matter. Her support means a great deal to our entire community.”

Miami Lighthouse Academy offers fully accredited VPK 3, VPK 4, and Kindergarten through 3rd grade programs. The Academy is an Accredited Professional Preschool Learning Environment (APPLE), a national accreditation recognized by the Gold Seal Quality Care Program, demonstrating its commitment to high standards in early childhood education and care.

Media Contact: Jeanmarie Ferrara,
VP External Affairs
Miami Lighthouse for the Blind
jferrara@MiamiLighthouse.org
305-582-0445