



MIAMI LIGHTHOUSE ALTERS 56-YEAR WHITE CANE DAY TRADITION TO COMPLY WITH COVID-19 SAFETY PROTOCOLS

MIAMI -- The COVID-19 pandemic has forced Miami Lighthouse for the Blind & Visually Impaired to forego a 56-year tradition by substituting its annual White Cane Day Procession with an inspiring virtual program on Thursday, October 15, beginning at 9 a.m. The public is invited to participate in this year's celebration by visiting www.MiamiLighthouse.org/VirtualWhiteCaneDay2020.asp.

White Cane Day is a national observance established by President Lyndon Johnson in 1964. The day was set aside to celebrate the many achievements of the blind and visually impaired, and their important symbol of independence, the white cane. In the past, Miami Lighthouse has celebrated the occasion with a walk through the streets of Little Havana, including hundreds of its blind and visually impaired program participants, as well as local political and civic leaders.

Miami Lighthouse has chosen to cancel the traditional procession this year to comply with social-distancing protocols associated with the current COVID-19 pandemic. Instead, the organization will present a virtual program, featuring performances by Miami Lighthouse Music Program students, pupils of the Miami Lighthouse Learning Center for Children™ and participants in the Senior Group and Health Activities program. Speakers will include Miami-Dade County Commissioner Eileen Higgins, Penny Shaffer Market President of Florida Blue, the signature sponsor of White Cane Day and Florida Division of Blind Services District Director Pamela Ortiz.

Virginia Jacko, President and CEO of Miami Lighthouse said, "White Cane Day is an occasion of tremendous pride and an annual observance that we cherish. It also is an opportunity to create public awareness about the significance of the white cane, and the need to respect the rights and needs of the blind and visually impaired."