



# LIGHT LINE™

A MONTHLY BLOG FROM MIAMI LIGHTHOUSE FOR THE BLIND

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## Mayor Eileen Higgins Presented with "MIA LUV"

Miami Lighthouse Academy students recently welcomed Miami Mayor Eileen Higgins—the first woman to hold the office—for a special visit, during which the young artists presented her with “MIA LUV,” a vibrant, textured, heart-shaped artwork created in her honor.

The piece was crafted by young artists with visual impairments under the guidance of Aaron Hill, Supervisor of Fine Arts & Art Education at Miami Lighthouse. A key inspiration for the project came from 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 our 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 art materials. She praised their artistic talent and shared how moved she was by the artwork. 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 visual impairments. 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.



*From left to right: Karla Richey, Mayor Eileen Higgins, President and CEO Virginia Jacko, and Aaron Hill join Academy students in front of the vibrant "MIA LUV" artwork crafted in the Mayor's honor.*



*Miami Mayor Eileen Higgins with "MIA LUV"*

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## **What Losing my sight taught me about vision; an article by CEO Virginia Jacko in Exceptional Parenting Magazine**

The March edition of *Exceptional Parent Magazine* features an article by Miami Lighthouse CEO Virginia Jacko titled "What Losing My Sight Taught Me About Vision: The Challenge of the Invisible World." In it, Jacko uses her personal journey to offer guidance and encouragement to families raising children with visual impairments.

Drawing on her lived experience, she highlights why early, “intentional learning” is so critical—helping children build confidence, independence, and strong foundational skills long before adulthood, when catching up can be far more challenging. Her reflections aim to empower parents and caregivers with insight, reassurance, and practical perspective as they navigate the path of raising a child with vision loss.

Jacko’s story serves as a reminder that with the right support, early intervention, and high expectations, children with visual impairments can thrive and reach their full potential.

[Click here to read the full article.](#)



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## Students Enjoy Annual Beeping Easter Egg Hunt

Miami Lighthouse Academy students celebrated the beloved Annual Beeping Easter Egg Hunt on March 19. Held on the Owen S. Freed Playground on the school’s campus, the event brings excitement, independence, and holiday fun to children with visual impairments through an accessible, sensory-rich experience.

Sponsored by the South Florida Police Benevolent Association, the event features colorful beeping eggs made by the Miami-Dade Sheriff’s Department Bomb Squad. The eggs emit sound, enabling students to locate them by listening rather than by sight—reinforcing Miami Lighthouse’s mission that “it’s possible to see without sight.”

“Our partnership with the South Florida PBA and the Miami-Dade Sheriff’s Department Bomb Squad makes this joyful experience possible each year,” noted CEO Virginia Jacko. “We are deeply grateful for their continued commitment to ensuring that our children can fully participate in the magic of Easter.”



*Miami Lighthouse Academy students take part in the Annual Beeping Easter Egg Hunt, a cherished tradition powered by the Miami-Dade Sheriff's Department and Bomb Squad, whose specially made beeping eggs ensure every child can participate independently.*

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**Save the Date: Music Under the Stars Returns on May 13,  
to Honor School Board Chair Mari Tere Rojas**

Miami Lighthouse for the Blind is pleased to announce the nineteenth annual Music Under the Stars: Bon Appétit Miami, taking place on May 13 from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

This special evening will honor Miami-Dade County School Board Chair Mari Tere Rojas, whose longstanding support for our Miami Lighthouse Academy, White Cane Day events, and our Florida Heiken Children's Vision Program has made a profound impact on countless children and families.

Additionally, we will recognize the dedicated optometrists whose partnership has enabled nearly 200,000 MDCPS students to receive dilated eye exams and prescription glasses through the Florida Heiken Children's Vision Program.

Guests will enjoy live musical performances and culinary delights from outstanding Miami-area restaurants—all under the stars at Miami Lighthouse.

Please mark your calendars and plan to join us on May 13 for this meaningful and memorable celebration.

Don't miss out on this delightful evening. [Buy your tickets today.](#)



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[Music Under the Stars 2026](#)

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*Contributed by Joan Spector*

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