



LIGHT LINE™

A MONTHLY BLOG FROM MIAMI LIGHTHOUSE FOR THE BLIND

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19th Annual Music Under The Stars: Bon Appétit Miami is a huge success!

Wednesday, May 19th marked another wonderful evening with unforgettable entertainment by our nationally recognized Miami Lighthouse Band along with guest performances by Grammy Award-winning jazz guitarist Leo Quintero, saxophone extraordinaire Jeff Zavač, Miami Lighthouse alumnus Silvio Plata, Miami Lighthouse CFO Richard Fernandez, and emerging Miami talent Daliany Camacho.



Miami-Dade Schools Chief of Staff, Marlene Hernandez with CEO of Miami Lighthouse, Virginia Jacko



Miami-Dade Optometric Physicians Association guests, Dr. Adrianna Perez Negro and Dr. Henar Albertos with CEO of Miami Lighthouse, Virginia Jacko

The very special event recognized Miami-Dade School Board Chair Mari Tere Rojas and also recognized the Miami Dade Optometric Physicians Association for their continue support and commitment to our mission. Board Director H. Angela Whitman announced a new \$50,000 matching challenge to support our dilated eye exams and glasses when prescribed as part of our Heiken Children's Vision Program. Donations will be doubled, allowing support to have twice the impact.

To participate in this matching challenge please click on the below donation button.

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We extend our sincere thanks to our generous sponsors and food and beverage sponsors for their commitment to our mission and for helping make this special evening possible, including: Publix Super Market Charities, GrayRobinson, The George and Luisa Foyo Foundation, Rotary Club of Miami, H. Angela Whitman Foundation, Grove Bank & Trust, Walgreens, Bizitss, Monster Sound, Susan Conroy Design, Perry Ellis International, Miami Kids Magazine, Affiliated Healthcare Centers, Inc., Bank United, Choice Waste, SFM Services, Biz Solutions, Chocolate Fashion, Ad Maiora, Chef Gio, Season's 52, Eagle Brands, Milam's Markets, Batch, The Cheesecake Factory, Roasters and Toasters, and more.



From left to right picture are some of our generous sponsors: Dr. Barry Burak from Affiliated Healthcare Centers, Inc., Steven Solomon of GrayRobinson, Sharon Quarters of Choice Waste, Angel Rodriguez of Rotary Club of Miami, Mark Banens of Bizitss, and George Foyo of The George and Luisa Foyo Foundation

Miami Lighthouse alumnus story featured on Channel 10 News

Silvio Plata came to the Miami Lighthouse at two months old. As he grew, our programs provided the support he needed from early intervention, through our children's programs, and into our teen programs where he received one-on-one musical training with our excellent house instructors and special guest instructors.

Silvio's journey is a testament to the importance of Miami Lighthouse's lifelong support system for individuals with visual impairment. We are proud to share that he will now go on to pursue his law degree on a full scholarship and will be a voice instructor in our Youth Music Program this summer!

To view Silvio Plata's story featured on Channel 10 News, [CLICK HERE](#).



After losing both eyes to cancer, Silvio Plata, MLB Alumnus, turns adversity into achievement

Miami Lighthouse Academy is Expanding

Effective this Fall, the Miami Lighthouse has been authorized to add 4th Grade to our current early learning and early elementary learning programs. The new addition will include Florida licensed classroom teachers and Teachers of the Visually Impaired. As a partner of Miami-Dade County Public Schools, students with vision impairment will be able to attend our Academy as early learners in our pre-school and continue on through 4th Grade.

The important goal for these students will be the ability to compete with their sighted peers when they attend their community school beginning with the 5th Grade.

Donate today to help support our growing Academy, please click on the donation button below and click on general support and in the description box enter 4th Grade.

[**Click Here to Donate Now**](#)

Miami Lighthouse CVI Collaborative

Miami Lighthouse CVI Collaborative invited panelists at the Envision/Vision Serve Conference in Columbus, Ohio, included Principal Investigators: Virginia A. Jacko M.S., Carlos Mendoza-Santiesteban M.D., Ph.D., François Sainfort, Ph.D., and Michael Berger, TVI Miami Lighthouse Academy, LLC. The presentation highlighted the partnership between Miami Lighthouse for the Blind, the University of Miami Bascom Palmer Eye Institute, Nova Southeastern University, and Nicklaus Children's Hospital to address Cortical Visual Impairment (CVI), the leading cause of bilateral visual impairment in children in the developed world.

Over the past two years, the collaborative has focused on improving early screening, diagnosis, and intervention strategies for children with CVI. As Phase 1 concludes in August 2026, the project has completed 21 functional assessments and 50 visits to the University of Miami clinical study site involving 34 children with CVI or suspected CVI. The team also evaluated 17 assessment tools identified in current literature to support the development of validated

diagnostic indicators and standardized rehabilitation strategies in Phase 2. In addition, the collaborative celebrated two peer-reviewed publications and invitations to present the research findings at two international conferences. Funding is being sought for phase 2 of the research which will focus on suspect CVI in young children.

To support Phase 2 of our CVI Research Project and help advance early diagnosis, intervention strategies, and support services for children with Cortical Visual Impairment, please click on the donation button below and click on general support and in the description box enter CVI.

[Click Here to Donate Now](#)

Miami Lighthouse Chief Program Officer Receives National Leadership Award

We are proud to announce that our **Chief Program Officer, Carol Brady-Simmons**, has been selected as the recipient of the prestigious Cathy Holden Excellence in Managerial Leadership Award. Presented by VisionServe Alliance, this award recognizes exceptional managerial leadership and outstanding contributions to the field. Carol will be honored during the awards luncheon at the **Envision 2026 Conference on May 29**.

We congratulate Carol on this well-deserved recognition and thank her for her continued dedication, leadership, and impact on our venerable mission.

3rd Annual Bouldering for Blindness event raises funds for Miami Lighthouse

Sean Murphy, a student from Christopher Columbus High School, created a unique fundraising event in two years ago, "Bouldering for Blindness", as his service project in honor of his Uncle, Michael Harries who has Usher Syndrome. Now in its third year, the event raised funds for Miami Lighthouse's services and programs. We thank The Edge Rock for hosting the event, The Harries Family, 305 Hive® Media, and other sponsors and supporters who participated in making the event a success.

Contributed by Joan Spector

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