

## November 2011 Lighthouse Newsletter

[www.tylerlighthouse.org](http://www.tylerlighthouse.org)

### Saving Sight Tournament a Success

October 3, 2011 Lighthouse Vocational Training Manager Michelle Boyd presented PATH a check for more than \$15,000 raised during the Saving Sight Golf Tournament, bringing the total donated to over \$25,000. During the tournament held at the Cascades, World Blind Golf Champion Jeremy Poincenot led blind and visually impaired students from Region 7 Education Service Center in the Brookshire's Golf Mini Clinic. For many students it was the first time to hold a golf club and a great opportunity to become acquainted with the game.

Master of Ceremonies Blazin' Blake Lindsay spoke during the event luncheon about the need for eye care services. Lindsay was born fully sighted, but had his eyes removed due to cancer at 9 months-old. Lindsay is the Communications Director for The Dallas Lighthouse and is a former DJ who worked in major markets in radio for 22 years. Lindsay said an eye test saved his life and told of the local need.

According to a 2010 PATH Client Survey, nearly 500 Smith County residents are in need of eye exams. These tests are the frontline in diagnosing preventable eye disorders that can ultimately lead to blindness if left untreated. Michelle Boyd is legally blind and thanked event sponsors and golfers for offering hope to the community through the Saving Sight Program. Boyd told how she could have benefitted from the program as a child with undiagnosed juvenile macular degeneration.

Jeremy Poincenot is the 2010 World Blind Golf Champion and will go on to defend his title in Nova Scotia next July. Over lunch he thanked everyone for attending. As a college student Poincenot went legally blind at 19 years-old to a rare genetic disease called Leber's Hereditary Optic Neuropathy. A lifelong golfer, he put down his golf clubs until his father inspired him to get back up again and keep at it by trying Blind Golf. Poincenot's message of overcoming tremendous struggle of blindness through his passion for what he loves is a strong message of empowerment for everyone.

Saving Sight is a partnership between PATH and The Lighthouse to provide no cost eye exams, eyeglasses and low vision aids to those who cannot afford them. The program started September 1 with the donation of \$10,000 in services from the Trinity Clinic Eye Center.

## The Lighthouse, The Mission and You

Listening to World Blind Golf Champion Jeremy Poincenot lead the Brookshire's Golf Mini Clinic for blind and visually impaired students was a turning point for budding journalist Kirsten,16 and totally blind.

“The major inspiration that was number one on my list was how, even though he is legally blind, he has traveled the world,” Kirsten told Tyler Morning Telegraph reporter Phil Hicks. “He has been to England, China and Japan even though he is blind at age 21. From that, I feel I can do anything!”

More students like Kirsten will have a whole new world available to them thanks to the Careers on the Horizon Job Shadowing Program. The program was presented to VI Program teachers on September 7 at Region 7 Headquarters in Kilgore and was accepted with enthusiasm. The 5 day semester long program allows students to work with successful blind or VI employees at Horizon Industries or The Lighthouse to help them determine a future career path.

“It was lucky how I found out about the Lighthouse. I was new in town riding a city bus when the driver pointed out the Horizon Building on Bois D’Arc in downtown Tyler,” said Vice President of Operations Lee Tillson. “I never knew a Lighthouse existed when I was a kid and these student’s futures should not depend on luck!” Tillson invited Region 7 students to tour both Horizon and Rehabilitative Services facilities during White Cane Day activities on October 14th.

Future job shadow mentor and Customer Service Manager Markita Lane called the students fearless with their passion to learn. “I’m not worried about these students. They are not going to let their disability get them down. They are not afraid to ask questions and not afraid of anything.”

As for Kirsten, she connected with Dallas Lighthouse Communications Director Blake Lindsey who served as Master of Ceremonies for the Saving Sight Golf Tournament and worked as a DJ for 22 years in major market radio.

The first job shadowing session will take place November 11th from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Horizon Industries facility in Tyler where students will inspired by the mission will pursue their dreams thanks to the partnership between Region 7 and The Lighthouse.

Keeping an Eye on Technology

Presented by The Lighthouse Low Vision Aids Store

Some 80% of us use computers, staring intently on screens set well between typical distance and reading range, often for many hours each day. Add in laptops, e-readers, smartphones, personal-digital assistants and hand-held video games, each with its own optimum distance and tiny flickering screen, and the demands on human eyes today would baffle even Benjamin Franklin, inventor of the bifocal in the late 18th century.

“The information age has taken a toll on our eyesight,” says Jeffrey Anshel, an optometrist in Carlsbad, Calif., and president of Corporate Vision Consulting, which advises employers on vision issues.

More people are showing up at eye appointments complaining of headaches, fatigue, blurred vision and neck pain, all symptoms of computer-vision syndrome (CVS), which affects some 90% of the people who spent three hours or more at day at a computer, according to the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health.(1)

According to an article published by the Mayo Clinic(2), the recommended distance between your eyes and your computer screen is 20”, however for many this is not possible because of even moderate vision loss. The Lighthouse Low Vision Aids store in Tyler, TX offers a software program called Zoom Text that can help you reduce the effects of CVS. Zoom Text is the leading software on the market for screen magnification, with magnification levels from 1x to 36x. This software is available in three unique versions designed to meet your specific needs; Zoom Text Magnifier, Zoom Text Magnifier/Reader, and Zoom Text Express.

For more information about Zoom Text or other low vision aids please call 903.593.3111, or e-mail Tim Dawson at [tdawson@horizonind.com](mailto:tdawson@horizonind.com).

What are the symptoms of CVS?

Headaches

Loss of focus

Burning/tired eyes

Double/blurred vision

Dry eyes

Neck and shoulder pain

Lighthouse Employees Empowered by White Cane Day Walk & Events

More than 100 Lighthouse employees took Rose City streets Friday October 14, 2011 to observe White Cane Day. After a barbeque lunch, lighthouse workers gathered in the Horizon Industries parking lot with white canes and guide dogs before making the mile long trek around downtown Tyler and back.

“You’ve heard the phrase the blind leading the blind. Now thanks to the cane, that old adage is outdated as we travel safely and independently down city streets. We go to grocery stores, restaurants, shopping and it also allows us mobility on the job at work. For many of us, it’s given us direction and the ability to keep moving,” says Horizon’s Financial Analyst and Controller Chris Ledding.

The white canes serve as a symbol of empowerment as the tool allows the blind and visually impaired to travel safely throughout the community. The canes are lightweight and durable with extra length to give the user more reaction time as they tap along their path using it as their eyes to maneuver around obstacles. White Cane Day was first observed in 1964 after a proclamation by President Lyndon B. Johnson. The observance is officially recognized October 15th and the first “White Cane Safety Day” served as a safety reminder to promote courtesy and special consideration to people who are blind. All 50 states have White Cane Laws which not only address pedestrian safety for the blind but also guarantee civil rights protection. The Texas White Cane Law also ensures the rights of individuals traveling with a guide dog to have equal access to all public places.

“As a large part of the blind and visually impaired community in East Texas we appreciate what this day means. It’s the opportunity to promote blind pedestrian safety represented by the white cane,” says Horizon Vice President of Operations Lee Tillson.

## Lighthouse Spotlight

### CERTIFICATION

Lighthouse Graphics Supervisor Charles Coleman III earned certification in Effective Supervision through NIB's Business Leaders Program. The 12 month program is designed to keep business operations running smoothly to meet customer needs and fulfill management requirements. Coleman was awarded his official certificate at the NIB Conference in New Orleans.

### AWARD

Carolynn Aldridge was named Lighthouse 2011 nominee for the Texas Industries for the Blind and Handicapped Artie Lee Hinds Award. Each year, CRP’s from across Texas nominate an employee for this award based on their exemplary work performance and nominees are recognized at an annual awards dinner held in September in Austin, TX. Horizon Vice President

of Operations Lee Tillson says she was chosen for her great attitude, perfect attendance and excellent performance evaluations. The leadership Carolyn shows each and every day is much the same as the leadership Artie Lee portrayed in starting the “State Use Program” for the State of Texas.

## RECOGNITION

2011 Employees of the year Olivia Abrams and Marilyn Petty attended the NIB conference in October where they were recognized for all of their hard work at The Lighthouse. Olivia received the Milton J. Samuelson Career Achievement Award which is given to the top blind indirect labor employee of the Lighthouse.

Marilyn was awarded the Peter J. Salmon Direct Labor Employee of the Year Award which is given annually to the top blind direct labor employee. Marilyn received a promotion not long after being presented the award and now works as a purchasing agent.

### Lighthouse at Senior Expo

Rehabilitative Services Senior Programs Coordinator, Olivia Abrams and Independent Skills Trainer Cathy Hooper greeted a record number of participants at the Tyler Chamber of Commerce’s 2011 Senior Expo event Thursday, November 20th, 2011.

Tyler Chamber CEO Tom Mullins visited the Lighthouse booth to say the event was a huge success with 1000 people expected to attend the one day expo held at Harvey Convention Center.

Abrams and Hooper spent the day greeting seniors and vendors with information about programs available to the blind through Rehabilitative Services located at 727 E. Front Street. Attendees also got a chance to test drive the latest adaptive equipment from the Low Vision Aids store housed inside Rehabilitative Services.

### National Disability Employment Awareness Month

A recent Gallup poll indicates 92% of consumers think favorably of companies who hire the disabled while 87% of those polled say that is a reason they currently choose one company’s product over another. Further, 40% of today’s American families include at least one member who is disabled with total income earned collectively at about a trillion dollars per year.

“I love seeing these percentages. It is beneficial for everyone to employ persons with disabilities. It is great for the economy, to empower disabled people who were previously dependent on others for monetary and physical assistance, and allows them to just get out of the house and interact with other individuals in their community,” says Lighthouse Human Resources benefits agent Matt Hart.

Hart recently attended a recruitment event to discuss how to target disabled workers. “Breaking the Mold” was held October 17th at Tyler’s Rose Garden Center to reflect National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

Hart and his events team did a slide show presentation showing a blind worker producing graphic apparel for Lighthouse Graphics. Hiring managers attended from local and national businesses.

"Employment opportunities for disabled people allows for independence and confidence to form in those individuals, which benefits everyone in the grand scheme of things," said Hart.

Lighthouse Employees at Work- New Faces

Jesse McNeil- Production Packer

Jan Lynch- Manager of Assistive Technology

Richard Rivers- Saw Operator

Monica Vargas- Quality Coordinator

Ann Phillips- Director of Rehabilitative Services

Timothy McGuire- Operations Manager

GIVE THE GIFT OF SIGHT THIS

HOLIDAY SEASON

MAKE A DONATION TO THE SAVING SIGHT PROGRAM

Go to our website and press the Donate Now Button

[www.tylerlighthouse.org](http://www.tylerlighthouse.org)

#### Upcoming Events

NOV 4 - DEC 9 U.S. MARINES TOYS FOR TOTS TOY DRIVE

NOV 17 - THANKSGIVING LUNCHEON FOR EMPLOYEES

DEC 16 - CHRISTMAS BANQUET

JAN 1- HAPPY NEW YEAR!

#### Contact Us

1-888-565-ETLB

For a Lighthouse tour call Melissa at 903-352-9311

#### SAVE THE DATE

2012 Saving Sight Golf Tournament

September 24 at the CASCADES

#### 2011 Board of Directors

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