



# LIGHT LINE™

A MONTHLY BLOG FROM MIAMI LIGHTHOUSE FOR THE BLIND

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## Look Up! Our New 4th Floor is Nearing Completion.

Not yet ready for prime time. . .that's scheduled for October 7th at 6pm. . . the Miami Lighthouse's new 4th floor is entering its final construction period and already working on finishing touches. A recent hard hat tour of the construction site, under the guidance of Facilities Manager Jeff Rabalais, revealed floor-to-ceiling windows, spacious, light-filled work areas, and 10 ft. high ceilings. In short, the Sash A. Spencer Educational Empowerment Center, the area's official name, is looking sensational!



Envisioned to function as the site for empowering our teenage and young adult clients to become independent, confident and productive members of society, the area will also provide classes for adult clients to help get their GED or diploma. Towards this important end, we are increasingly collaborating with the Miami Dade School System by expanding our training.

One of the most exciting and important areas of our new 4th floor will be the Jan & Dan Lewis Braille Homeroom where a variety of Braille literacy programs will take place. The Carmella Witt Technology Laboratory will offer the latest technology has to offer to the blind and visually impaired. In addition, The Marta Weeks Wulf Suite has been designed in such a flexible manner that there will be instant ability to change the dimensions of the rooms.

## Feel the Heat: It's Summer Camp Time at Miami Lighthouse

Approximately 20 blind pre-teenage students will attend a week of Braille literacy at the Miami Lighthouse beginning June 9th, before joining with all visually impaired students, ages 5 to 22, for ongoing summer camp classes beginning June 16th. A total of some 150 students of all ages will be attending classes this summer, thanks to about eight transportation vans that will be picking up clients throughout the County, as far south as Florida City, and as far north as Broward.

## Congratulations Natalia Sulca!

Miami Lighthouse is proud to announce that Natalia, a graduate of our Better Chance Music Production Program™ and the first recipient of our Spencer Educational Empowerment Scholarship, has just graduated from the prestigious Berklee College of Music in Boston. Two of our other recent graduates, Matthew Smith and Alex Piralta, have just been accepted to Berklee and will soon be following in Natalia's successful track.



## Profile Of The Month

### Meet Jeff Rabalais, Facilities & Transportation Manager



"Basically, I keep the building running," says Jeff Rabalais with a smile, when asked by the writer for his job description. In actuality, that means overseeing a wide variety of operations, including, but not limited to, landscaping, space planning, pest control and transportation. He's also the Miami Lighthouse's "man in charge" of the new 4th floor addition, working closely with outside contractors on the important project.

On the transportation scene, Jeff oversees the Miami Lighthouse's growing corps of vans and drivers who facilitate the arrivals and departures of visually impaired clients throughout the week. He has been with the Miami Lighthouse since 2006, after first working as a stage designer and project manager for a special events firm. A native of Louisiana, he is a graduate of Lafayette University with a 5 year Bachelor of Architecture, the equivalent of a Master's degree.

Jeff's understanding and affinity for working with the visually impaired comes naturally. His mother, who still lives in Louisiana, suffers from retinitis pigmentosa. She was especially delighted when he came to work at the Miami Lighthouse. When not working, Jeff can be found antiquing, trying his hand at interior design, and just enjoying all kinds of music, from pop to classical.

*Contributed by Joan Spector*

## High-end Auction Item Available

Indulge in a Masterpiece Portrait from Kramer Portraits!

Enjoy a hand-detailed Masterpiece Portrait (20" wall portrait) on canvas for up to eight (8) people. The package includes a one-night stay for up to four guests at the Pierre Hotel in New York City, where the masterpiece is to be created, for the night of the portrait session. Note: Portrait is unframed and non-transferrable. Does not include transportation, food or beverages, gratuities or other extras.

2014 Available Dates:  
July 12th, 13th  
August 16th, 17th  
September 13th, 14th  
October 18th, 19th  
November 8th, 9th  
December 6th, 7th, 27th, 28th, 29th.

Value: \$6,500  
**Donation Price: \$1,000**  
*Item is available on a first-come, first-served basis.*



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