



MEET OUR TEACHERS



Miss Stephania with her students

Stephania Desir recently graduated from the University of Miami’s Early Childhood Special Education graduate program. She is interested in helping parents of children with disabilities become knowledgeable about the transition process from Early Steps/early intervention programs to Pre-K exceptional student education settings and their rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004).



Yara Frignani is a Pre-K teacher at our Miami Lighthouse Learning Center for Children™. She obtained her Bachelor’s degree in hotel and restaurant management at the University of Houston. After working 20 years in the industry, she decided to make a change and pursue her passion—education. She went back to school and earned her teaching certification in elementary education. She then moved to Italy where she taught English in public and private schools from 2013-2017.

Ryan and Miss Yara



LIGHTHOUSE LEARNING CENTER FOR CHILDREN™

MIAMI LIGHTHOUSE FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED

Demetrius Morgan is our Pre-K Teacher of the Visually Impaired and is a Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist. She graduated from Florida State University with a Bachelor’s and Master’s specializing in Visual Disabilities and has been teaching for three years.

Miss Demetrius and William



(continued on Page 2)

Mission Statement

To provide vision rehabilitation, eye health services and education that promote independence, to collaborate with and train professionals, and to conduct research in related fields.

MEET OUR TEACHERS



Elliana Golijov is an early childhood education Pre-K teacher. She graduated from the University of Miami last May with dual degrees in Psychology and Elementary/Special Education with endorsements in ESOL and literacy. Her passion for teaching began when she took early childhood development courses in high school. Her high school in Boston has a Reggio Emilia-style preschool on campus, and she was able to gain three years' experience there as an assistant, teaching a class of 25 children ranging from three to five years old. Her favorite part of working with the children is seeing how happy they are to come to school and how naturally they build their own community with their classmates.

Olivia and Miss Elliana

Tobi Elden Weisberg graduated from The Leslie College with a degree in elementary education. She holds a master's degree in the education of the blind and visually impaired and has been teaching blind and visually impaired students for the last 45 years. She loved teaching so much that, after retiring from teaching in Massachusetts, she moved to Florida where she continues working with blind and visually impaired children. Her philosophy is that each skill that can be taught to a sighted child can also be taught to a visually impaired child with adaptations and modifications.



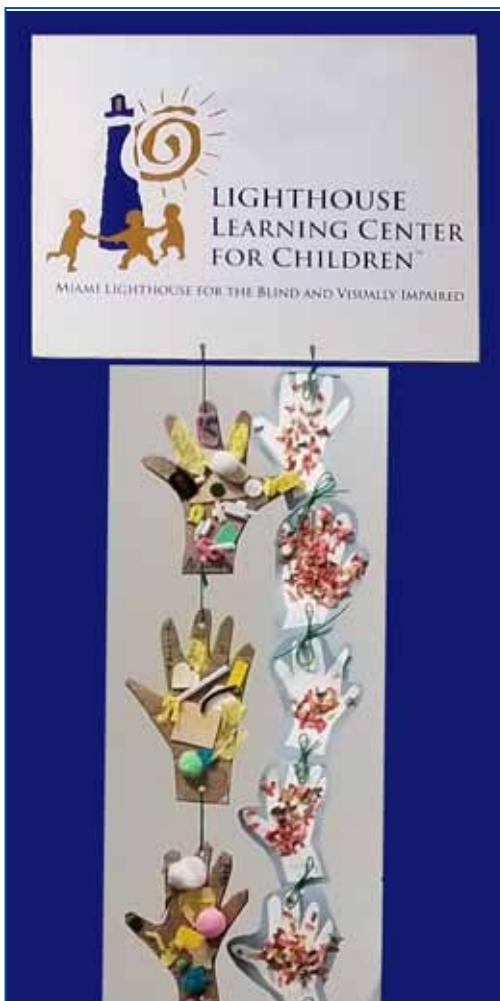
Miss Tobi and Victor

Miami Lighthouse's Learning Center for Children Takes a "Hands On" Approach in Tallahassee

Children attending our new Miami Lighthouse Learning Center were represented at an extraordinary art exhibition held in our State Capitol's rotunda. Titled "Handing of the Hands," it featured tens of thousands of pieces of hand art, including a remarkable submission by our Miami Lighthouse's Pre-K students. Our children's hand prints included various textures and Braille representing our unique Pre-K learning program that is offered for both visually impaired students and their sighted peers.

The January event, which was held in honor of Florida Children's Week and celebrated Florida's commitment to children and their advocates.

Our Miami Lighthouse Learning Center for Children™ submission hanging in the Capitol rotunda for Children's Week



Miami-Dade County School Board Honors Virginia Jacko

On November 15th, 2017, the Miami-Dade County School Board presented a proclamation to CEO Jacko recognizing her creation of the Miami Lighthouse Learning Center for Children™. Our new Miami Lighthouse Learning Center, offered in collaboration with Miami-Dade County Public Schools and the Early Learning Coalition, is a first-of-its-kind inclusion Pre-K program offered by a vision rehabilitation institution for three- and four-year-old children with 50% visually impaired and 50% typically developing sighted children.

Miami Lighthouse Board Director Dr. Stephen Morris, who has a long tradition of collaboration with Miami-Dade County Public Schools and with our Florida Heiken Children's Vision Program, attended the presentation.



Miami Lighthouse Vice President for External Relations Cameron Sisser, CEO Virginia Jacko, School Board Member Mari Tere Rojas presenting the M-DCPS proclamation and Miami Lighthouse Board Director Dr. Stephen Morris

IN THE NEWS

Links to the below-listed articles are available on our website www.miamilighthouse.org under the News and Events tab, "In the News."

- *Miami Herald* Letter to the Editor, March 14, 2018
"Brake for Florida's White Cane Traffic Law"
- *South Dade NewsLeader*, February 8, 2018
" 'Sighting' New Possibilities"
- *Miami Herald*, Letter to the Editor, January 26, 2018
"Bravo to Delta for new guide dog rules"
- *BusinessWire*, January 19, 2018
"Students with Visual Disabilities Learn to Code at TechLaunch at Florida Vocational Institute"
- *Miami Today*, December 26, 2017
"Audio from recognition glasses helps the blind 'see' faces"
(see related article on page 9).
- *Curbed Miami*, December 14, 2017
"There are now invisible murals in Wynwood"
- CGTN America, December 12, 2017 - "Miami Art Week's 'UnSeen' shows how visually impaired interpret art"
- *University of Miami News and Events*, November 29, 2017
"A Pre-School that Strives to Make a Difference"
- *Miami Herald*, November 23, 2017
"She was bullied in Cuba for being blind. Now in Miami, she faces new challenges."

Chairman's Letter

Dear Friends of Miami Lighthouse,

It is with great pride that I announce that the Miami Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired has received its tenth consecutive 4-star rating from Charity Navigator, a distinction achieved by only 1% of the more than 9,000 charities rated annually in the United States. We are the only not-for-profit organization in Miami-Dade County attaining this highly coveted status.

Charity Navigator's President & CEO Michael Thatcher wrote in his announcement of the rating:

This exceptional designation from Charity Navigator sets Miami Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired apart from its peers and demonstrates to the public its trustworthiness.

This consistent record of recognition by America's premier evaluator of charitable organizations reflects Miami Lighthouse's long-term commitment to providing the highest level of service to our 16,000 program participants and the highest degree of value to you, our stakeholders.

Since our founding in 1931, our mission has been to provide vision rehabilitation, eye health services and education that promote independence, as well to as conduct research in related fields. Our services to the people of Miami-Dade County cover all ages ranging from early intervention for blind babies and Pre-Kindergarten for three- and four-year-olds to low vision rehabilitation for seniors. Our subsidiary, the Florida Heiken Children's Vision Program, a blindness prevention program, provides eye care at no cost to underserved children throughout Florida.

We could not have achieved this recognition without you. Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,



Louis Nostro
Chairman, Board of Directors



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Board of Directors News

In Memoriam • Owen S. Freed

While Owen Freed spent his early years helping Cuban exiles when they began arriving in Miami in the early 1960s, he spent his later years helping Miami Lighthouse. Owen served on our Board of Directors in various capacities continuously for 11 years starting in 2006: as a Board Member, Chairman, Immediate Past Chair, and most recently as Secretary of the Board. In addition to Owen's Board governance leadership, he provided pro bono legal counsel enabling us to purchase adjacent property.



Honorary Board Director Pam Garrison who served on our board during 2009-2010 while Owen was our Chairman eloquently expressed how we all felt about Owen: "He was the quintessential gentleman with the kindest heart and the intelligence to make a difference in the world around him."

Tribute gifts in Owen's honor can be made to Miami Lighthouse earmarked for the Owen S. Freed Job Placement Fund which was started by his wife Sheila in honor of Owen's 80th birthday. Gifts received to date are listed under "Memorials" in the "Donors and Grantors" section of this newsletter on page 14.



Presentation of Miami Rotary tribute check in honor of Rotarian Owen Freed: Rotarian Phil Seipp, Miami Lighthouse CEO Virginia Jacko and Vice President for External Relations Cameron Sisser, Miami Lighthouse Board Director and Rotarian Scott Richey

Dr. Alfred G. Smith passed away on March 25, 2018. He served as Chairman of our Board of Directors in 1976 and continued thereafter as a crucial community supporter. Dr. Smith was one of pediatric ophthalmology's pioneers. We express our condolences to Dr. Smith's family.

Board Kudos

Board Director and former Board Chair **Ramon Casas**, President, Wragg & Casas, received the 2018 South Florida Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Hispanic Leadership Award in the Public Relations Category.

At the 2018 Miami International Boat Show, Board Director **Alfred Karram, Jr.**, owner of AKJ Design Concepts, LLC, presented his award winning architectural interior design for the Benetti F125/01 D2P Superyacht "M/Y IRONMAN."

At its December 7th meeting, our Board of Directors recognized Kent Benedict and Dr. Sander Dubovy, who completed their terms of office at the end of 2017.



Kent Benedict, CEO Virginia Jacko and Dr. Sander Dubovy

McDonald's Welcomes Blind Teenagers



Pre-Employment Transition Services Program students Adriel and Jean with McDonald's store owner/operators Milly and Jose Montes

Despite being blind or visually impaired, 20 of our Pre-Employment Transition Services Program teens age 14 to 22 recently enjoyed a “hands on, back of the house” tour of a McDonald's restaurant kitchen thanks to the Montes Family, owners of the McDonald's located just a few blocks from Miami Lighthouse.

Students got to assemble and eat their favorite McDonald's meal and learn the process of food preparation through touch and interaction. The experience reinforced Miami Lighthouse's motto that “it's possible to see without sight™.”



We are grateful to the Florida Department of Education, Division of Blind Services and the State of Florida for supporting our Pre-Employment Transition Services Program.

Lions Clubs International Foundation Grant Supports Our Florida Heiken Children's Vision Program

With the help of Project Manager Lion Alan Campbell, in 2017 the Lions Club International Foundation awarded our Heiken Program a three-year SightFirst grant, its only funding to a U.S. applicant. Volunteers recruited by South Florida Lions in District 35-N (which covers Port St. Lucie to the north all the way to Monroe County in the south) will be trained to use new Adaptica 2Win Screener equipment to conduct vision screenings for thousands of low-income schoolchildren, increasing referrals of children with no other resources for eye care to our Heiken Program for no-cost eye exams. Lions wishing to volunteer for this innovative project should contact Lion Martin Murphy at 305-301-6712 or santiana1@excite.com. Training on how to use the Adaptica 2Win screening device and the Heiken referral process takes about 30 minutes. Screenings will be performed throughout District 35-N and volunteers commit two to three hours at their convenience.

Since 1992, the Florida Heiken Children's Vision Program has provided a dilated eye exam at no cost to nearly 120,000 financially disadvantaged children with 95,000 of those children requiring and receiving free prescription glasses. To prevent blindness, 3,000 children have been referred for medical intervention for underlying vision problems with the potential to cause vision loss since we started tracking this data in 2012.



Lions from District 35-N will assist with vision screenings for our Florida Heiken Children's Vision Program thanks to a SightFirst grant from the Lions Clubs International Foundation

Miami Lighthouse Students Take South Florida Regional Braille Challenge by Storm

Students from our Braille and Technology Literacy Children's Program took part in the South Florida Regional Braille Challenge. The event was held in February in Fort Lauderdale and is the only Braille literacy competition of its kind in the country specifically designed to challenge and reward blind students for their study of Braille, which is essential to their academic success and future employment.



Miami Lighthouse students at the South Florida Regional Braille Challenge

The main categories in the Braille Challenge include reading comprehension, writing speed, accuracy, proofreading, and reading tactile charts and graphs. All of our students who attended were award winners, and we are proud to share their achievements with you. In collaboration with M-DCPS, our year-round Braille and Technology Literacy Program helped these children hone their Braille skills to successfully compete and win awards.



Nathaniel

January 3, 2018

Dear Miss Virginia and staff of the Miami Lighthouse,

Thank you for everything you do for us! We love to come to Miami Lighthouse for all the fun activities that you plan for us. Please continue to help us become better people, and to make us more helpful and friendly to others.

Thank you again for everything!

Sincerely,
 Nathanial
 Bryan
 Samiah
 Khalil
 Diandra



LuHanna



Diandre



Khalil

Thank you letter from students participating in the Winter 2017 session of our year-round Braille and Technology Literacy Program for children ages 5 to 13



Bryan



Thanks to Our Generous Give Miami Day Donors, The Miami Marlins and Walgreens

Thanks to our generous donors who support the Miami Lighthouse mission, we are delighted to report that Miami Lighthouse ranked sixth among the hundreds of nonprofits that participated in the most recent Give Miami Day.

We also extend our appreciation to the Miami Marlins and Walgreens. The Miami Marlins Ayudan Team “Excellence” volunteered with our Heiken Children’s Vision Program optometrists at Citrus Grove Middle School conducting 441 vision screenings and 99 dilated eye exams.

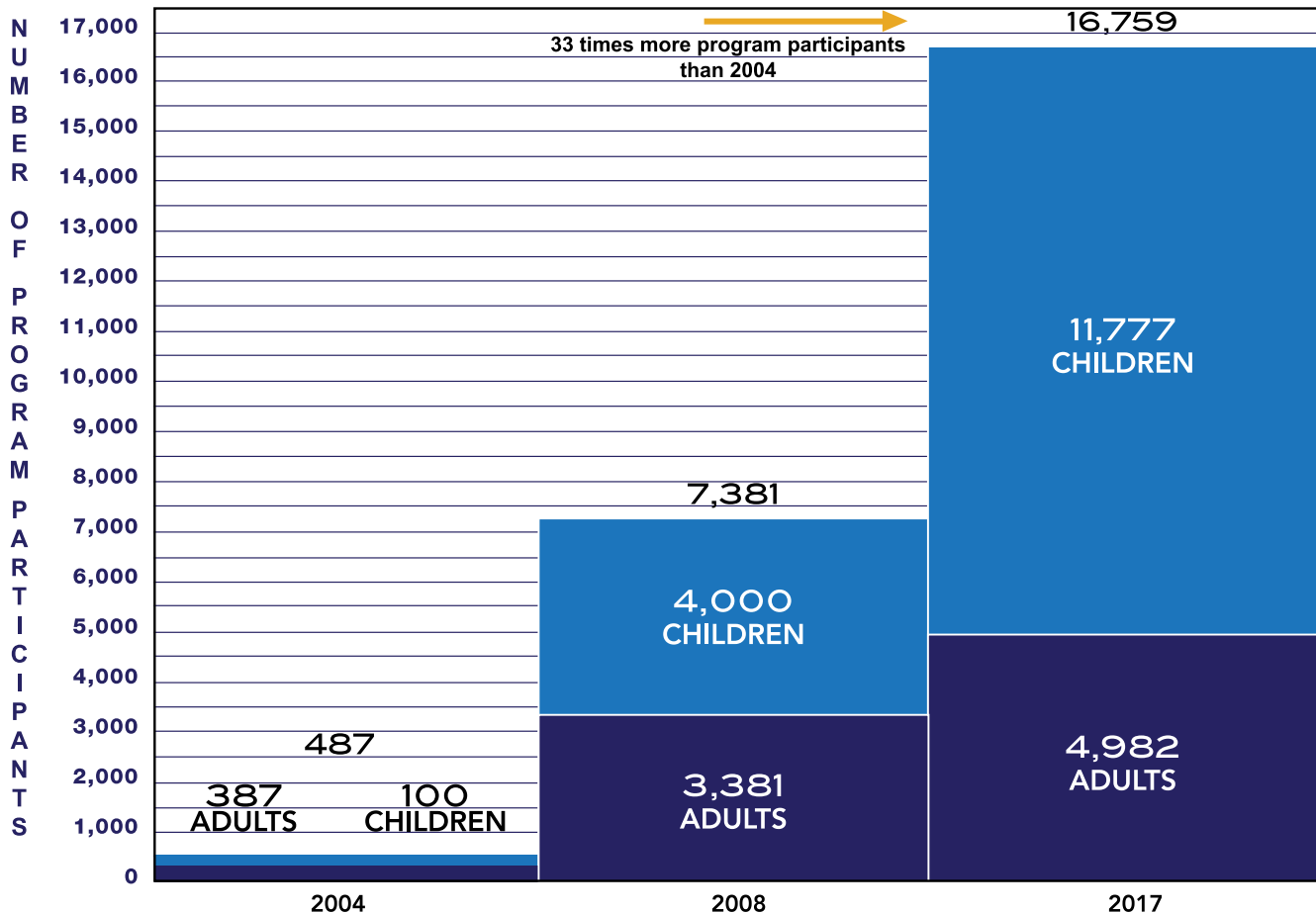
Seventy low-income students received a pair of prescription glasses at no cost. Citrus Grove Middle School recently moved from a “D” school to a “B” school on the state report card.

After volunteering at Citrus Grove Middle School, the Marlins Ayudan team visited local Walgreens and raised money for our Heiken Program. The money raised will enable students to improve academically and have a better quality of life with new prescription glasses provided by our Heiken Program.



Miami Marlins Ayudan Team “Excellence” with Major League Baseball and Miami Marlins branded Heiken mobile unit at Citrus Grove Middle School

History of Program Participants 2004-2017



Breakthrough Wearable OrCam MyEye 2.0 Artificial Vision Device Empowers People Who Are Blind and Partially Sighted to Achieve Increased Independence

On February 9th our Vision Solutions Center hosted a day-long demonstration to show how OrCam can help visually impaired clients be more independent. A representative from OrCam, our licensed dispensing optician and our certified low vision therapist were available to answer questions about the device and about our rehabilitation services.

Pioneered in Israel, wireless, lightweight and compact, about the size of a finger, the next generation OrCam MyEye 2.0 magnetically mounts on the wearer's eyeglasses or sunglasses frame. Weighing less than an ounce, OrCam MyEye 2.0 is the only wearable artificial vision technology that is activated by an intuitive pointing gesture or simply by following the wearer's gaze allowing for hands-free use without the need of a smartphone or Wi-Fi. OrCam MyEye 2.0 communicates visual information to the wearer in real time through a tiny speaker positioned toward the ear, thereby delivering increased independence to blind and visually impaired users.

OrCam instantly reads text aloud from any surface and recognizes faces and currency in real time. Our Vision Solutions Center is the licensed distributor of OrCam in South Florida. For more information call 786-362-7489.

Young Professionals of the Lighthouse "Visionaries of Tomorrow" Speaker Series

On January 12th Miami Lighthouse's Young Professionals hosted their inaugural "Visionaries of Tomorrow" event featuring guest speaker and Miami Lighthouse Board Director, Donna Abood. Donna is also Past Chair of the Beacon Council and Managing Director of Avison Young, a global real estate firm. She talked to our Young Professionals about her own experiences building a successful career in commercial real estate and the importance of following your dreams, staying in balance with who you are, and building strong relationships.



Young Professionals of the Lighthouse with featured speaker and Board Director Donna Abood and President and CEO Virginia Jacko

On March 5th Apollo Bank hosted Miami Lighthouse's Young Professionals "Visionaries of Tomorrow" speaker series featuring guest speaker Eddy Arriola. Mr. Arriola is the Chairman of the Board & CEO of Apollo Bank. Mr. Arriola talked to our Young Professionals about the importance of community engagement, public service and learning how government works. He also stressed the importance of building a good team around you to be successful and the 80/20 rule which states 80 percent of your outcomes come from 20 percent of your inputs.



CEO of Beacon Council Visits Miami Lighthouse



*CEO of The Beacon Council Michael A. Finney,
CEO of Miami Lighthouse Virginia Jacko and Vice
President for External Relations Cameron Sisser*

Newly appointed President & CEO of The Beacon Council Michael A. Finney toured Miami Lighthouse for the Blind's programs. Mr. Finney visited our new Miami Lighthouse Learning Center for Children™ Pre-Kindergarten, the Music Program and our Electronic Information Accessibility Department.

Mr. Finney learned about services Miami Lighthouse can offer members of the Beacon Council, such as website consultation that will assist them in achieving maximum compliance with Section 508 of the Americans with Disabilities Act and world-wide-web consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (W3C/WCAG) standards and best practices.

Let Us Help You Make Your Website ADA Compliant

The Miami Lighthouse for the Blind offers website auditing by highly qualified computer science instructors to ensure website accessibility by users with disabilities. Recommendations can be provided for making website content accessible for all users of assistive technology.

Why Web Accessibility is Important

The Web is an increasingly important resource in many aspects of life: education, employment, government, commerce, health care, recreation, shopping and more. It is essential that the Web be accessible in order to provide equal access and equal opportunity to people with disabilities. An accessible Web can also help people with disabilities more actively participate in society.

Request your Free Website Accessibility Consultation Today:

Email vjacko@miamilighthouse.org or call 305-856-4176. We will answer your accessibility questions and discuss your needs and requirements with no obligation to you.

Holiday Thanks!

We extend special thanks to everyone who contributed toys or made a donation to ensure a happy holiday season for our children. Special thanks to Scott and Belinda Sime for hosting their annual holiday toy drive and to everyone who participated in it. Your gifts put smiles on our children's faces at our holiday party for parents and children in December:

The Cobb Family Foundation
Florida International Bankers Association
Keiser University Student Occupational
Therapy Association
LBS Special Angels
Palmetto Middle School Junior Honor Society
La Poderosa Radio Station
Ms. Anita Prospero
Ms. Nina Perdomo
Scott and Belinda Sime
Ms. H. Angela Whitman



Milagros



Elijah

Honoring Our President's Club Donors

On March 21 Miami Lighthouse paid homage to our President's Club Donors at an event held at Northern Trust. Northern Trust President John Fumagalli welcomed our guests, and Northern Trust Vice Chairman and former Miami Lighthouse Board Chair William Morrison spoke about the community's legacy of support for Miami Lighthouse. President's Club member and Board Chair Louis Nostro announced President's Club honorees and presented to them commemorative tiles. President's Club donors are recognized on a plaque in our reception area. To become a member of our President's Club or to include Miami Lighthouse in your estate planning contact CEO Virginia Jacko at 305-856-4176 or vjacko@miamilighthouse.org.

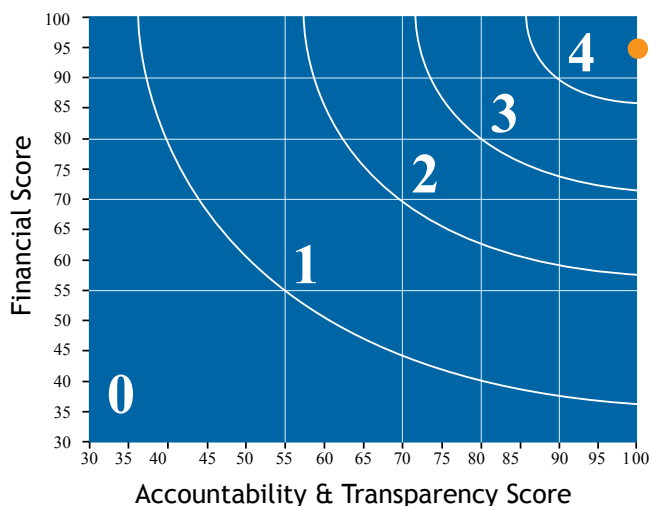


President's Club Honorees

Left to right, front row Alicia Celorio, Do Unto Others Trust; Board Director Anne Helliwell, Helliwell Family Foundation; Norma Jean Abraham, Anthony R. Abraham Foundation; Board Director Angela Whitman, H. Angela Whitman Foundation; District Governor Lion Betty Barrera; CEO Virginia Jacko; Christine Stiefel, The Wildflower Foundation; Susan and Robin Shelley, The Rotary Foundation of Miami Florida; Carla Richey and Board Director Scott Richey, Northern Trust; Paul Stokes, Samuel E. and Mary W. Thatcher Foundation; Murray Levin, The Saul and Teresa Esman Foundation. Rear: John Fumagalli, Florida President, Northern Trust; Steven Marcus, Health Foundation of South Florida; Honorary Board Director and former Chair William Morrison, Northern Trust; Honorary Board Director Bill Beckham, JM Private Insurance; Alan Alvarez, Marlins Foundation; former Board Director Anna K. Rentz; Board Director and former Chair Ramon Casas, Wragg and Casas; Dan Bell; Kim Greene, Dr. John T. McDonald Foundation; Trish Bell; Olga Nielson and Board Director Charles Nielson; Craig Rickert, Calvin and Flavia de Camp Oak Foundation; Honorary Board Director J. Megan Kelly

DID YOU KNOW?

Miami Lighthouse is currently the only nonprofit in Miami with ten consecutive 4-star ratings from Charity Navigator and is rated nationally in the 99th percentile of the over 9,000 charities rated by Charity Navigator. In other words, we are among the elite 38 charities in the U.S. that have received 10 consecutive 4-star ratings from the nation's premier independent nonprofit evaluator Charity Navigator, reflecting our sound fiscal management, responsible use of donor dollars and financial strength.



	SCORE (out of 100)	RATING
OVERALL	96.67	★★★★
• Financial	95.30	★★★★
• Accountability & Transparency	100	★★★★



Source: Miami Lighthouse listing on Charity Navigator website www.charitynavigator.org

DONORS AND GRANTORS

Miami Lighthouse (Federal Tax ID #59-0637847) is a 501(c)(3) organization. We are grateful for program funding from The Children's Trust, Florida Department of Education Division of Blind Services, Miami-Dade County, City of Miami, the School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida and the Early Learning Coalition for partially supporting the following programs: Early Intervention, Pre-kindergarten, Summer Camps, Vocational Rehabilitation, Pre-Employment Transition, Music, Independent Living Adult, Independent Living for Older Blind and Senior Group Health and Activities Program and the Florida Department of Health and The Children's Trust for partially supporting our Florida Heiken Children's Vision Program. We rely on the generosity of our donors, many of whom are shown below, to help with the remainder of our funding needs. The following list reflects gifts and grants of \$100 or more and all honors and memorials received between **November 1, 2017 and March 31, 2018.**

\$100,000 - \$999,999

Anonymous Charitable Trust
The Batchelor Foundation, Inc.
Trish and Dan Bell
Lions Clubs International Foundation
Miami Lions Club Foundation
Lions for the Blind
Lions District 35-N
Estate of Beatrice T. Sahn
and William L. Sahn
Spencer Trust

\$50,000 - \$99,999

Anthony R. Abraham Foundation
Micky and Madeleine Arison
Family Foundation
Mr. Anthony F. Malafronte

\$10,000 - \$49,999

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and Arnold S. Blaustein, M.D.
Delta Gamma Fraternity,
Beta Tau Chapter

\$5,000 - \$9,999

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Sara H. Woodruff Foundation



Andre with his
puppet pet friends

\$1,000 - \$2,499

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November 1, 2017 - March 31, 2018

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**“Engaging the Low Vision Community
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Saturday June 9, 2018
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Legislative Luncheon

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Noon - 1:30 pm at Miami Lighthouse

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Thursday, October 25, 2018
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Miami Lighthouse Lantern Newsletter

Publisher: Virginia A. Jacko
Editor: Sharon Caughill



Pre-K students on our Trish and Dan Bell East Terrace singing “Wheels on the Car” as a tribute to Irma and Norman Braman and their daughter Debra Braman-Weschler during their visit to our Miami Lighthouse Learning Center for Children™



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