

Lighthouse

Tampa Lighthouse for the Blind

Tampa • Winter Haven

News Update

Maximizing independence and providing employment opportunities for persons who are blind or visually impaired

POPULAR, ACTIVE TRANSITION STUDENT GRADUATES

July 2009



Lonnie (L) enjoying a moment of humor with a couple of his classmates in the Lighthouse's Transition program.

Lamar Coston (who prefers to be called "Lonnie") is a remarkable young man who inspires just about everyone around him. Lonnie is legally blind (sees light only) after losing most of his eyesight in the middle of his teen years, a most difficult time for this to happen. In addition, he is developmentally disabled with various other impairments stemming from birth. However Lonnie never dwells on what he doesn't have – he pursues many varied interests without reservation and has been actively involved with many extracurricular activities at his school. He has chosen to focus on the positive and pursue life with great enthusiasm which has contributed greatly to his likeability. One of his teachers recently said, "Lonnie is a very popular member of the PCHS (Plant City High School) community."

Prior to his recent graduation from Plant City High School, Lonnie was active in Best Buddies (mentoring those with disabilities), Future Farmers of Tampa Lighthouse For The Blind



Lonnie is always eager to help out including these preparations for an upcoming bake sale.

America, and the VIP² Club (Very Important People who are Visually Impaired People) including serving as officers in each. He also made regular appearances on Raider Television, Plant City High School's student-produced television news show. Lonnie was often featured during the sports report announcing upcoming PCHS sporting events, enthusiastically encouraging his classmates to attend, and cheering the team to win.

Lonnie has participated in the Special Olympics for over 10 years, competing in bowling and soccer. He is the only blind soccer player in the Florida Special Olympics. This year he won the Zenay Morales Courage Award at the Special Olympics Area Summer Games held at USF on March 15th."

Among his other interests are WWE wrestling, oldies music, dancing, rock climbing, and kayaking. He has also participated in the Lighthouse beepball

games and served as a base runner for one of the other players who was recovering from a leg injury. He has attended the Lighthouse's Transition program throughout his high school years. The Transition program teaches work readiness and provides work experiences to the participating students, all of whom are blind or severely visually impaired. Lonnie has completed several successful work experiences which enhance his chances of a fulfilling career following graduation. His high school graduation means that he is also successfully graduating from the Transition program and will then attend the Conklin Center in Daytona Beach to further develop his independent living and employability skills.

Because Lonnie doesn't dwell on the challenges he faces in life, he often helps others around him in ways that help them turn a bad day into a good one. "Lonnie is the best person to talk to if you are having a bad day or feeling bummed out" according to Sue Glaser, one of his Transition Teachers at the Lighthouse, who went on to say, "He makes everyone feel better!"

That would certainly explain why he is so popular at school and at the Lighthouse. Lonnie was recently featured on the front page of the Plant City Courier & Tribune for having been chosen as king of this year's EveryBuddies Beautiful Fashion Show at Plant City High School.

SUMMER TRANSITION PROGRAM

Tampa Lighthouse for the Blind

Tampa • Winter Haven

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Learning how to dress for success - an important aspect of preparing for a job interview.



This trip to the mall covers two important daily living skill lessons - learning how to use the bus and also how to shop for one's needs.



The Winter Haven summer Transition Program participants and leaders pose for a group photo.

Our Transition program went into high gear for the summer session with the 14 Tampa students and 13 Winter Haven students attending 5 days a week for an intensive, action-packed five weeks. This summer's activities included trips to a nearby mall to shop for interview and work-appropriate clothes, a laundromat visit to learn proper laundering techniques (with dirty clothes in tow), and apartment hunting (affordability versus extravagance). Students participated in job shadowing experiences to learn firsthand about careers of interest. They spent some time with various professionals (massage therapist, retail store owner, personal trainer) at local businesses. In addition guest speakers (forensic scientist, greyhound rescue association representative) visited the Lighthouse and gave fascinating presentations. Of course, no summer program is

complete without fun activities to reward all of that hard work. These included trips to Hillsborough River State Park for canoeing, swimming, hiking, and biking; the Lions Club beach house at Treasure Island Beach (jointly with the Lighthouse of Pinellas and Lighthouse for the Visually Impaired and Blind (Pasco/Hernando/Citrus); and SeaWorld jointly with Lighthouse for the Visually Impaired and Blind (Port Richey, Brooksville).

COLUMBIA RESTAURANT'S 12th ANNUAL COMMUNITY HARVEST



Harvest days are coming soon. During the month of September, Columbia Restaurant customers may designate a favorite charity on their ballot form at the Ybor City restaurant and their new downtown cafe at the Tampa Bay History Center to receive a donation of 5% of the tab at no extra cost. This year also marks Columbia Restaurant's 103rd anniversary. Please make a September meal date and designate Tampa Lighthouse for the Blind as your choice to receive this gift.

Tampa Lighthouse For The Blind

LIGHTHOUSE TRANSITION STUDENTS COMPETE IN BRAILLE CHALLENGE



Competitors represented schools from all over the Tampa Bay area.



Raquel Gaspar, 1st Place - Apprentice Division for second straight year.

A total of 31 students participated in this year's Central Florida Braille Challenge which took place on February 27, 2009 at the Florida Instructional Materials Center for the Visually Impaired. Several of the Lighthouse's Transition students went head to head with the other students from all over the nine-county West-Central Florida region. They competed in categories such as Braille spelling, proofreading, speed reading and comprehension, chart and graph reading, and speed and accuracy. Once again, the Lions Eye Institute Foundation was the major sponsor for the second straight year. The Lighthouse also played a major role as fiscal agent, providing resources and staff support. The DeBartolo Family Foundation was also another big contributor.

The morning pep rally started out with a drum line from Blake High School and inspirational words from Wynne Tye, Hillsborough County's Assistant



Denisha Kirnes (center), Un's the One winner with Wynne Tye (left) and Joyce Wieland (right).

Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction. The students then hastened to their contest rooms and parents participated in a tour of FIMC or took part in several related activities including a mini workshop to create tactile cards, exploration of Braille-related resources available for parents, and technology displays by Freedom Scientific and Florida Reading and Vision Technology (who generously provided t-shirts for all the competitors).

Following the last round of challenges, Steve Turner from Giving Tree Music organized the students into a drum circle. Students and spectators alike loved it and were energized for the awards ceremony that followed immediately afterward. The arrival of some special guests to congratulate the students and stress the importance of Braille literacy was an added treat. Wynne Tye was joined by MaryEllen Elia, Superintendent of Hillsborough County Schools, and Joyce Wieland, General



Matthew Oliver has many talents including Braille, music, and overall scholastic ability.

Director of Exceptional Student Education.

The Braille Challenge is a national program of Braille Institute of America (www.braillechallenge.org), designed to motivate students to improve Braille skills by recognizing and honoring them for their expertise in Braille. It also provides a way for many Braille-reading kids to meet one another and have positive role models. The top 60 finalists from the U.S. and Canada went on to compete in the National Braille Challenge finals in Los Angeles in June. The final winner list is posted on the above website.

Tampa Transition students who competed included Jennifer Roule (1st place Freshman division), Denisha Kirnes (1st place "Un's the One" division), Kayla Long (3rd place "Un's the One" division), Jesus Fuentes, Lonnie Coston, Tony Ferrer, and Paul Martinez. Raquel Gaspar, former Lighthouse Early Intervention student who is now in the 2nd grade won 1st place in the Apprentice division for the second straight year! Her prize was a brand new Next Generation Perkins Braillewriter donated by Perkins School for the Blind. Congratulations and job well done to all of the competitors!

21st ANNUAL BEEPBALL CLASSIC - LIGHTHOUSE SHUTS OUT ALL STARS BUT . . . All Stars Nearly Return the Favor - Lighthouse 1, All Stars 0



David Niver at bat for the Lighthouse.

The Lighthouse's 21st Beepball Classic held May 9th at the New York Yankees Community Field at George M. Steinbrenner Field continued its tradition of providing entertainment and public education about Beepball and how well the players can perform without being able to see what they're doing. What a defensive battle it was, with only one run on the scoreboard by the end of the game! Fortunately, Mother Nature cooperated with a warm, but pleasant spring day which helped attract more spectators.

The Coleman Middle School Orchestra returned for the second straight year and did a wonderful job playing the National Anthem before the game. Rich Nichols, Scout Master; and Rory Gullede, Troop Advisor attended with Boy Scout Troup 304 who presented the color guard. Troup 304 also raised \$141.00 in ticket donations for the event! Once the game started, there was plenty of action but no score on the board until near the midpoint of the game. Lee Kimbrell's second time at bat was the charm, putting the Lighthouse in the lead with the lone score of the game (his first attempt was successfully fielded by Channel 8 meteorologist Steve Jerve). This in spite of Steve Otto's bringing out Pinetop Peterson's infamous "Mojo Jar" designed to jinx the Lighthouse's star batter who was already hampered by a leg injury and couldn't run. Fortunately for us, the "Mojo Jar"



All Stars congratulate the Lighthouse victors after putting up a good fight, resulting in a very close score.

backfired this time as Lee slugged a solid hit into the outfield and his designated runner, Lonnie, made it to base before the ball could be fielded. Enrique Oliu's and Youlanda Daffron's exemplary fielding for the Lighthouse helped shut out the scoring efforts of the All Stars. By the game's ending, both teams had played impressively, especially in the outfield.

Players for the Media All Stars included All Stars Coach Steve Otto, Columnist for The Tampa Tribune; Phil McNiff, Executive Vice President of The New York Yankees; Jeff Houck, Food Editor for The Tampa Tribune; Ted Hull, Retired District Administrator of the Division of Blind Services; Sharon Taylor, Radio Personality for WFLA; The Mysterious Scott "Pinetop" Peterson of the Quivering Rhythm Hounds; Bayard Steele, Editor for The Tampa Tribune; Dave Hughes; Nolia Murphy, Tampa Tribune Executive; Mike Montes; Leigh Spann, Meteorologist for NewsChannel 8, Steve Jerve, Chief Meteorologist for NewsChannel 8; and Jose Patino, Investigative Report for The Tampa Tribune.

The victorious Lighthouse team included Bryon Bewster, David Niver, Lee Kimbrell, Youlanda Daffron, Sherry Siegel, Denisha Kernes, Kayla Long, Mike Maltby, Lucas Langsford, Enrique Oliu, Noe Villeda, Roger Hensley, Tony Ferrer, Tracey Sidlaski, McKenna



So close, yet so far away! Jeff Houck hears it beeping but . . . "Where the heck is it?!"



NewsChannel 8 Meteorologist Steve Jerve successfully fields a center field hit by Lighthouse slugger Lee Kimbrell.

Murphy, TJ McCormick, Lonnie Coston and Joseph Patrick.

In addition to entertainment, the Beepball Classic demonstrates the abilities of people who are blind or visually impaired. It also demonstrated how normally sighted players who are blindfolded learned how to adapt quickly to playing this game without the use of their eyesight.

Beepball is patterned after softball with modifications designed to enable full participation by the blind players. Players on both teams are required to wear blindfolds unless they have no useful eyesight. The softball has a beeping device that enables batters and fielders to locate it by sound. Bases are foam rubber columns that are equipped with loud buzzers, enabling the players to locate them by sound and run into them without injury. Only one of the two bases (1st or 3rd) is used after a hit. The buzzer in the base farthest from the ball in play is activated to prevent noise

Tampa Lighthouse For The Blind



Boy Scout Troup 304 presented the color guard. They also raised \$141 in advance ticket sales/donations.



Mike Maltby at bat for the Lighthouse.



Coleman Middle School Orchestra returned for the second year straight to play the National Anthem.

interference with the sound of the beeping ball. A run is scored when the batter who makes a legal hit gets to base before the ball is fielded. If a fielder locates the ball, picks it up, and raises it above his/her head before the batter gets to base, the batter is out. There are six fielders: two in right field, two in center field, and two in left field. In each section of the field, one fielder plays the infield and the other plays the outfield.

We wish to thank everyone who came out to watch, participate, or assist with this event. Special thanks again to **Steve Otto, Coach of the All Stars** for his active coaching role throughout most of our event's history. We also wish to thank **James Gleason, Marine Raider and Director of the Friends of the Tampa Bay Marines; Marine Raiders Lunch Bunch; The Coleman Middle School Orchestra** led by its **Director Edward Thanz** for their outstanding rendition of the National Anthem; Lighthouse Staff and family members for organizing and carrying out this event; **Richard Bower**, our announcer and his wife **Terri** who ran our concessions; **Dave Kelsey** for umpiring, and **Phil McNiff** with the **Tampa Yankees**, and **George Steinbrenner** with the **New York Yankees** for providing the use of the Community Field along with their

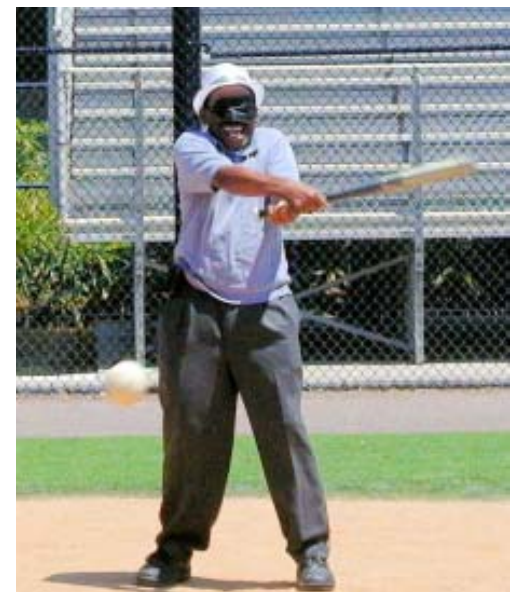
support staff.

We wish to recognize our sponsors and other contributors who were key to the event's financial success: **Major League Sponsor (\$1,000 +)** Lee Kimbrell; **Player Sponsors (\$250)** including Jim and Debbie Brown; MetLife; PAR, Inc.; Willis HRH; and Bern's Steakhouse; and **other cash contributors** including Jeremy and Jana Chaffin, Jose Guzman, Donna Soulam, Maxi Aids, LS & S, Frances Ellison, Tampa Thermaprint, Irwin and Shirley Dawley, Gladys and Carl Barth, Rafael Ruiz, Ovidio Perez, Herbert and Sharon Berman, Frank Rosen, Anna Hunley, Gloria and Arnold Nieuwendam, Ed and Freyda Cohen, Balbina Ruiz, Rosalie Myers, Molly Emmons, and Robert and Mary McClelland.

In-kind donations were contributed by American Stage Theatre Company, Antonio's Pasta Grill, Bok Tower Gardens, Busch Gardens, Clearwater Country Club, Delaware North Companies Parks and Resorts-operators of Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex, Explorations V Children's Museum, The Florida Aquarium, G Elliot's Brunchery Restaurants, Green Meadows Petting Farm, Grand Hyatt Tampa Bay, InterContinental Tampa Hotel, Lee and Sally Kimbrell, MOSI, Muvico The-

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The Lighthouse raised just over \$6,000.00, all of which will benefit our Tampa-based programs serving persons who are blind or visually impaired.



Al Mccray, Editorial Writer for The Tampa Tribune, swings with the same gusto that he puts into his commentaries.

WWII VET, ARTIST, RETIRED SIGN MAKER, POWER POINT EXPERT



Carl's modified computer features a bright yellow large print keyboard and screen enlargement software.

World War II veteran Carl Barth, 86, has lived a most interesting life and is still going strong. When he developed macular degeneration about 30 years ago, he continued living pretty much as he had, including working as a sign designer and pursuing art as a realistic painter as his hobby. He was no ordinary sign designer – he designed large, complex electrical and neon signs, then oversaw their manufacture and installation. Many of his signs were widely recognized landmarks on major attractions, restaurants, hotels, and bowling establishments. During an economic downturn in the 1960s, Carl lost his sign designing job forcing him to turn to his pastime to support himself and his family. During those three years, Carl sold hundreds of his paintings before resuming his career as a sign designer once the economy recovered.

While serving in the U. S. Navy during World War II, Carl served as a signal man, a communications specialist. He was stationed on the USS Atherton, a destroyer escort ship designed to protect supply and troop ships organized into convoys. He was cross trained as a quartermaster, a navigator's assistant position in the Navy. He talks about how the Navy employed various forms of advanced technology (for the era) to deceive the enemy.

After serving 9 years in the Navy,



Carl created this visitors greeting card for his church.

Carl returned to civilian life, taking up sign-designing as a trade. He also continued with his artwork as his primary avocation. In 1976, Carl's artwork won a contest and was chosen to represent the state of Florida during its bicentennial. His exhibit, titled "Flying with Eagles" traveled about the state and



This is a CD Carl created that features many of the events of World War II.

was part of an overall display representing the bicentennial. Another of his historic masterpieces is a three-section mural painting with the sections titled "The Wilderness," "Frontier," and "Progress" respectively. "Progress" depicted various industries around Tampa

Later in life when macular degeneration began to take its toll, Carl was no longer able to drive but continued to work as a sign designer by riding in to work with coworkers until retiring at age 65. He continued with his art, but that became increasingly difficult over time. In 2004, Carl contacted the Lighthouse



One of Carl's award-winning historical aviation paintings.

and made an appointment with the Low Vision clinic. While at the Lighthouse's clinic, he learned a technique known as "eccentric viewing" to maximize use of his remaining visual field. He also contacted the VA to find out what low vision devices were available. The VA provided Carl with a closed circuit TV (CCTV), a pocket-size electronic video magnifier, and a computer equipped with screen magnification. The VA made arrangements with the Lighthouse to install his computer and software in his home office. The standard keyboard was exchanged for a bright yellow large print keyboard with bold black characters for optimum contrast. The VA also contracts with the Lighthouse to provide ongoing technical support on an as-needed basis.

Carl put his computer to immediate use by mastering Power Point and using it to create several slide presentations on CD/DVDs including historical presentations on World War II including the attack on Pearl Harbor, a presentation of the terrorist attacks on 9/11/2001, a biblical presentation titled "The Greatest Story Ever Told," a tour of his garden, a family wedding, and others, all complete with musical accompaniment. He also designs and prints welcome cards for his church, the Henderson Boulevard Church of Christ.

Carl lives with Gladys, his wife of over 50 years, in their south Tampa home where he also enjoys gardening (he also has a slide presentation on CD of his beautiful garden).

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September 7
Labor Day (closed)

October 15
United Way Day of Caring -Tampa

November 26-27
Thanksgiving holidays
(closed)

December 4
Graduation/Holiday Party - Tampa

December 11
Graduation/Holiday Party -
Winter Haven

December 24 & 25
Christmas holidays (closed)

January 1
New Years Day (closed)