

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

CLARA HARMS RESUMES NURSING CAREER AFTER OWN REHABILITATION



Clara takes daily blood pressure readings on her patients

In 2001, a little-known disease called Histoplasmosis robbed Clara Harms of much of her eyesight, leaving her with just enough vision to count fingers held only 3 – 6 inches in front of her. Clara was a registered nurse until blindness interrupted her career.

Clara's adjustment to blindness was difficult. Her concerned children referred her to the Lighthouse's Winter Haven facility where she started classes, but stopped because, as she put it, she wasn't ready. Not a day went by that she wasn't in tears about this devastating change in her life.

Clara eventually decided it was time to move forward and resumed her classes at the Lighthouse. She successfully completed her daily living skills class, then moved on to computer classes. Her main motivation was to resume her hobby of creating custom



She also prepares meals for her patients based on their dietary requirements

calendars, complete with family photos and birthdays to give as gifts to family members. With the help of the computer classes and adaptive technology, she learned how to operate a computer equipped with a speech program and was able to resume her favorite hobby of creating personalized calendars. In addition, she learned how to use a closed circuit TV system (CCTV) to pay her bills and for limited reading.

The skills Clara learned at the Lighthouse enabled her to resume living independently in her own home. While taking the classes, our rehabilitation teacher conducted a home visit and "tabbed" her appliances enabling her to adjust the settings tactually using raised markings placed on the dials or control panels. With the help of our orientation and mobility specialist, Clara learned how to use the local bus system and

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July 2005

A THANK-YOU NOTE

*Dr. Petito,
We appreciate you. Thanks for all you have done for Andrew. Glasses have opened a whole new life for him. He is so excited about learning now.*

*Jeanie Hilton
(Andrew's grandmother)
Odessa, Florida*



Andrew Hall with Dr. Petito before getting his new glasses



Andrew Hall uses his new glasses to see the large globe at MOSI in Tampa

Tampa Lighthouse

for the Blind

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CLARA HARMS (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

became a regular bus traveler. Her old feelings of panic and sense of helplessness vanished with her restored confidence.

Having helped herself, Clara shifted her focus to helping others. As a nurse, she was accustomed to helping others prior to losing her eyesight. Clara joined National Federation of the Blind (NFB) and later became secretary for the group. Having gone full circle with her own successful rehabilitation gave her a strong voice for encouraging others to have hope. She also joined the United Way's speaker's bureau, giving talks on how she was able to put her life together after her difficult adjustment.

While at the Lighthouse, Clara received a battery of tests in their

vocational evaluation program. Her highest test scores further boosted her confidence level, so her next goal was to return to nursing to the extent she was able with very limited eyesight. In late May of last year, she began her current job taking care of a small caseload of residents at an assisted living facility. Her mobility skills were put to excellent use, as she was able to take her more mobile patients on shopping trips and the local senior center using the bus. She currently works three consecutive 24-hour live-in shifts from Thursday to Monday, with one free weekend a month. The owners of the assisted living facility have complete confidence in her, as she is able to carry out her work with little or no supervision. Clara is now looking forward to increasing the number of patients that she provides care for.

LIGHTHOUSE ACQUIRES NEW VAN WITH HELP FROM LOCAL FOUNDATIONS AND OTHER CONTRIBUTORS



The Lighthouse has just replaced its 8-year old high-mileage Honda minivan with a new 2005 Honda Odyssey van with help from Jacarlene Foundation, Community Foundation of Greater Sun City, and various other fund raising efforts. The new van has greater seating

capacity, updated safety features, a strong reputation for reliability, and will have much lower operating costs, especially during the warranty period. It will be used to transport clients in the Independent Living Skills Program to and from the Lighthouse.

MODEL EMPLOYEE NEHEMIAH JENKINS SETS HIGH STANDARDS FOR HIMSELF AND OTHERS



Nehemiah at work fielding calls from many ICT customers and accessing a database from his modified computer workstation

Nehemiah Jenkins has been associated with the Lighthouse since 1991 and has consistently served as an excellent role model in the wide variety of roles he has been involved with. He was one of our first blind employees to work in our Lakeland Industries program, which operated from April 1991 to May 2001. During that ten-year period, Nehemiah worked on an assembly line packaging powdered foods for the State's prisons. He was consistently a top producer, maintaining an excellent employment record throughout the entire period. He was also known as a very personable individual by fellow team members and Lighthouse staff alike and was a joy to work with. In 1997, he was named "Employee of the Year" and won an all-expenses trip to the 1998 annual conference of the then General Council of

Industries for the Blind in Washington DC. After the closing of the Lakeland Industries program, Nehemiah transferred to our Tampa Industries program and continued to work in the pen assembly area until that program closed in late 2002. Before working at the Lighthouse, Nehemiah had worked for several years at a local aircraft company and had also worked as a camp counselor during some of the summer months. Following his stint in the Tampa Industries program, Nehemiah wasted no time enrolling in the Lighthouse's computer training program and quickly acquired valuable computer skills that led to his next job opportunity in a completely different line of work. He had no prior computer experience when he signed up for the computer class, but Nehemiah has never been one to shy away from a new challenge. As he mastered the skills, he helped his classmates do the same, serving as an unofficial teacher's assistant. His friendly and helpful traits were well received by his classmates and any negative attitudes they may have possessed were quickly dispelled by his encouragement and no-excuses approach.

Nehemiah learned his lessons well and now spends his days in ICT's call center fielding calls and assisting the company's many customers since May 2004. In front of him is a state-of-the-art computer system equipped with the latest in adaptive software and hardware enabling him to carry out his job fully despite having no useable eyesight. The one program most responsible for eliminating the barrier to operating a computer for individuals without eyesight is referred to as JAWS, which stands for Job Access With Speech. JAWS serves

as a translator of printed words appearing on a computer screen into words that the user listens to through the computer's speakers or headset.

Nehemiah's current job didn't come about without the assistance of the Lakeland office of the State Division of Blind Services (DBS) and the Tampa Lighthouse for the Blind. ICT employs several other people with disabilities with the help of the State's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR). All of ICT's employees are expected to perform at the same level as employees with no disabilities. The Lighthouse also played a significant supportive role by providing a computer specialist to install the needed adaptations to Nehemiah's workstation. Before he was able to start work, Nehemiah had to learn how to get to and from his job, including crossing a busy street on his way to work. An orientation and mobility specialist from the Lighthouse's Winter Haven facility helped Nehemiah learn the way to work including the safest way to cross the busy street on his own.

The story does not end, however, with the successes of Nehemiah and his fellow employees with disabilities. The technology responsible for keeping Nehemiah and others employed must be regularly upgraded just as all computer programs are required to be periodically upgraded and updated. Again, the technical support provided by Division of Blind Services and the Lighthouse is ongoing. Nehemiah, however, continues to inspire everyone around him with his positive, upbeat attitude, and his ability to turn challenges into opportunities.

SUMMER TRANSITION PROGRAM FOR TEENS WITH VISUAL DISABILITIES HELPS PREPARE STUDENTS FOR THE WORLD OF WORK



Trip to grocery store provides lesson in shopping smart

Our Third Annual Summer Transition Program provided our teen participants, all of whom are blind or visually impaired, with 5 weeks of highly substantive learning experiences to prepare them for the real world of work. This included many learning opportunities to gain both knowledge and hands-on work experiences in the community. Examples of activities include mock and actual job interviews; training in organizational skills, do's and don'ts of the workplace, personal hygiene, assistive technology, appropriate business attire, and other daily living skills. Programs ran simultaneously in our Tampa and Winter Haven facilities where we had 15 students in our Tampa program and 9 students in our Winter Haven program. Several field trips were conducted to allow the students to practice the skills learned at the facility included shopping trips, dining in local restaurants, bus trips, and visits



Work experience in a pizza restaurant



Classroom instruction was provided in job seeking skills

to the bank to cash their work experience paychecks.

One of our students interested in a career in law who already has a scholarship had a work experience at the State Attorney's office. Another interested in veterinary work had a work experience grooming animals. Each of the students received a work experience as close to their areas of interest as possible.

It was not all work and no play as there were several fun activities interspersed with the learning and work activities. Some lessons incorporated a game format and the students enjoyed some fun outings including go-karting, a picnic, movie, and a graduation trip to a theme park.

This program was initiated and funded by the Division of Blind Service;



Trip to laundromat to teach clothing care



Time was set aside for some fun activities such as carting on a guided track

and carried out by the Lighthouse in partnership with the Vision Programs of Hillsborough and Polk County School Systems. Thanks also go out to our job placement team for arranging the work experiences.



Horseback riding was among the other fun activities

COLUMBIA RESTAURANT'S 8th ANNUAL COMMUNITY HARVEST

During the month of September, Columbia Restaurant customers may designate a favorite charity to receive a donation of 5% of the tab at no extra charge. This year also marks Columbia Restaurant's 100th anniversary. Please make a September meal date and designate Tampa Lighthouse for the Blind as your choice to receive this gift.

RECORD TURNOUT AT 17TH ANNUAL BEEPBALL CLASSIC THANKS TO THE EFFORTS OF A LOCAL VETERANS GROUP

It was a beautiful day for the Lighthouse's 17th Annual Beepball Classic, held April 30th. There was plenty of action on the ball field as the Lighthouse handed the Media All Stars another 4-0 shutout to demonstrate that persons who are blind can prove their capability on the playing field as well as with life's major challenges. This important fund-raising event additionally put the Lighthouse in the winning column with approximately \$8,800 raised after expenses. The proceeds will go for our Tampa-based programs serving persons who are blind or visually impaired.

Beepball is a modified form of softball that enables blind or blindfolded players to play the game by sound versus sight. The ball is equipped with a special beeper and the bases are tall sponge-rubber columns that contain loud buzzers. The soft spongy columns are specially designed so that a player is able to run into it at a full sprint without risking injury.

The Lighthouse lineup included Sue



The Military Order of the Purple Heart Color Guard conducted the pre-game color guard ceremony.

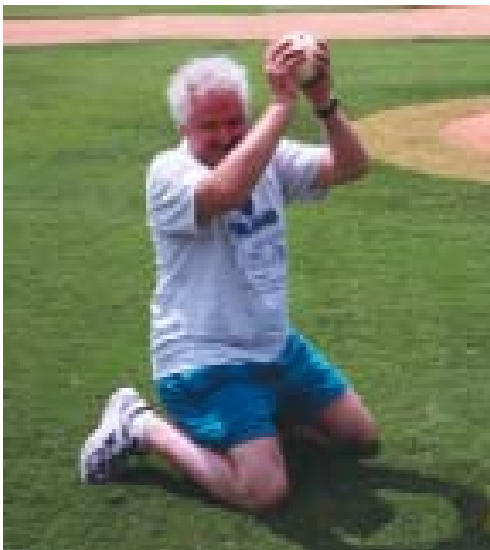
Coyle, Jim Davis, Jay Forry, James Grasso, Lee Kimbrell, Michael Maltby, Richard Morales, David Niven, Michael Randall, Lawrence Ross, Enrique Oliu-Smith, Elisa Terrill, and Mercedes Terrill. Lee Kimbrell, accomplished Beepball player, scored three of the four runs. Michael Randall scored the other Lighthouse run.

The lineup for the All Stars included Walt Belcher, Lynn Carson, Hal Jeffrey, Jackie Kelsey, Phil McNiff, Steve Otto (Coach), Pinetop Peterson, Bob Ross,



Enrique Oliu-Smith successfully fields an out for the Lighthouse team, helping shut down the All Stars offense.

and Siara Taylor. Some of the All-Stars were back after having played last year or in a previous year. Most of the players were blindfolded, even several from the Lighthouse team which consisted entirely of players who were severely visually disabled or blind. This was to ensure that no single player had any advantage of even the smallest amount of partial vision. Although the Lighthouse team outplayed the All Stars, there were several near hits and some impressive fielding attempts on the part of some of the individual All Stars' team players. This demonstrates how rapidly a fully sighted person is able to adjust to



Jay Forry on the Lighthouse team successfully fields the ball and helps shut down the All Stars' offense



Michael Maltby at bat for the Lighthouse



Michael Randall hits a homer, scoring one of the four runs earned by the Lighthouse

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17th Annual BeepBall Classic, continued from Page 5

a temporary state of sightlessness, giving hope to those who lose their eyesight after many years of normal vision.

Special thanks go out to Steve Otto, Coach of the All Stars for his participation over most of the 17 years that the Lighthouse has held this event. Thanks also go out to the following groups that greatly assisted with this event: Friends of the Marines for selling so many tickets and boosting the game day attendance; The Military Order of the Purple Heart Color Guard for the pre-game color guard ceremony; the First Reformed Church Amaranth Youth Group for helping the fielders and escorting players to bat, field, or return to the dugout; Lighthouse Staff and family members for organizing and carrying out this event; Richard Bower, our announcer and his wife Terri who helped with concessions; and Bausch & Lomb for adopting this event as their United Way Day of Caring and assisted with collecting tickets, selling T-shirts, and handing out programs.

We wish to recognize our many



Players for both teams and the volunteers from the First Reformed Church Amaranth Youth Group and Bausch & Lomb line up together.

sponsors who were key to the event's financial success. Our Major League Sponsor (\$1,000+) was Lee Kimbrell. Banner Sponsors (\$650) included Carlton Fields and MetLife. Inning Sponsors (\$400) included Bern's Steakhouse, HRH Insurance, and USAA. Player Sponsors (\$250) included Jim and Debbie Brown, Busto Plumbing, Camatron Sewing Machine, and Philip Dinkins. Drawing prizes were donated by Antonio's Pasta Grill, Applebees Restaurant, The Brunchery Restaurant, Caspers Company, The

Childrens' Museum, Comfort Inn, Ferg's Sports Bar & Grill, Grand Hyatt Tampa Bay, Holiday Inn, Kid City, Kojak's House of Ribs, Lowry Park Zoo, Magnifiers & More Store, Renaissance Vinoy, School of Massage, Shell's Seafood Restaurant, Si Simond Florist, Side Splitters Comedy Club, Starlight Cruises, Strike & Spare Bowling Center, The Tampa Theater, USF Men's Basketball, Walden Lake, Walgreens, WQYK Radio Station, and Wrights Gourmet House. In-Kind Donors included The Friends of the Marines, Hartline, The New York Yankees, Pepsi Bottling Group, Publix Super Markets, The Tampa Tribune, and Weyand Foods. Other contributors included A-1 Temps; Mr. & Mrs. Kermit Arnold; Adeline Bailey; Barbas, Koenig, Nunez, Sanders & Butler, PA; Mr. & Mrs. John Barroso; Marjorie Blank, Carolyn Crenshaw; Col. Lonnie M. Davidson; Helen T. DePaolo; Benigno Estevea, Folsom Construction, Freedman's Office Supply, Integrated Employer Resources (formerly West Coast Employers Association), Maxi-Aids; Mr. & Mrs. Gordon Millar; Mr. & Mrs. Richy Palmer; Claire Palmerino; Par, Inc.; John Russell; Mr. & Mrs. James Stefan; Tampa Chemical; Tampa Printing, Tampa Thermoprint; and SMSGT. John R Wertz.



Most of the young volunteers shown above are from the First Reformed Church Amaranth Youth Group. Two who joined in are children of volunteering Bausch & Lomb employees. They assisted the fielders and escorted the blind and blindfolded players to and from their respective fielding and batting positions

CONTRIBUTORS

Tampa Lighthouse for the Blind truly appreciates all of our donors. All contributors support programs and services at Tampa Lighthouse for the Blind. Although we can only list contributors who give gifts totaling \$50 or more, we are grateful for each gift. The names listed below include those whose contributions were received between January 1, 2005 and June 30, 2005. If we have inadvertently omitted or misspelled your name, we apologize and ask that you please let us know by calling (813) 251-2407.

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We thank the following contributors for choosing Tampa Lighthouse for the Blind as a means of expression to honor or memorialize a friend or loved one

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Mr. & Mrs. James Santo
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In Memory of

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Florence Miller
Sandra Marshall
Hilda F. Holtsclaw
My Mother
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Carlos Z. Ramos
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National Industries for the Blind (NIB)

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August 11
United Way Day of Caring
(Tampa)
September 5
Labor Day
(closed)
November 24-25
Thanksgiving holidays
(closed)
December 2
Graduation/Holiday Party
(Winter Haven)
December 9
Graduation/Holiday Party
(Tampa)
December 23-26
Christmas holidays
(closed)
January 2
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