

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

KARLY'S NEW "EYES"

July 2010



Karly was better able to enjoy the colorful sights of Easter this year.

Karly was born in February, 2008 after her mother's routine pregnancy, labor and delivery. This beautiful baby girl was a wonderful addition to their family of three. Although healthy in every other respect, it was soon discovered that Karly was born with tiny eyes. Her concerned parents wasted no time in arranging for her to be examined at a prominent eye care facility. Diagnostic surgery was performed resulting in a postoperative diagnoses of microphthalmus, microcornea, and coloboma in both eyes. After several follow-up visits, the parents were told that Karly would never be able to see. Prosthetic or "cosmetic eyes" were suggested to enable Karly's eyes to look more



Karly's Early Intervention teacher engaged her in many activities that have enabled her to catch up developmentally.

normal. Unfortunately, this procedure would banish any chance of Karly's having any amount of useful eyesight as removal of Karly's natural eyes would be necessary for this procedure. Understandably, her parents had some reservations about this recommendation, not wanting to eliminate any chance of her ever being able to see, but also wanting to improve her cosmetic appearance. When they began noticing that Karly seemed to be trying to look at nearby objects, their misgivings about the surgery intensified. While looking for alternative solutions, they were referred by Karly's pediatric doctor to the Early Steps program at the Hardee County Health Department who then referred them to the Lighthouse. After intake, Karly was scheduled for Early Intervention and assigned Gina Mills as her teacher. When Karly was one year old, Ms. Mills visited her and her mother at their home. At that time, Karly was described as timid, uninterested in playing with toys, and appre-

hensive about her surroundings. "She was not crawling, reaching, babbling, or playing the way a typical one year old does," said Ms. Mills. However, as soon as her teacher brought out the lightbox, Karly perked up and took notice. This was her teacher's first clue that Karly may at least have light perception. During the next few home visits, their suspicions about Karly's being able to see at least minimally were intensified. The next step was to determine just how much eyesight she did have and if it could be improved. At the suggestion of her Lighthouse Early Intervention teacher Gina Mills, Karly's mother scheduled an eye exam at the Lighthouse's Low Vision Clinic to see if their suspicions could be verified.

On March 25, 2009, Karly eyes were thoroughly examined by Dr. Petito, the Lighthouse's Low Vision Specialist. Dr. Petito not only confirmed that Karly had substantial eyesight, but determined that she could likely be helped significantly with eyeglasses! A mock-up of thick trial lens were placed in a pair of test frames. As soon as the test glasses were placed on Karly, she became quiet and started looking around the room. Everyone in the room witnessed the sudden, nearly miraculous opening of a whole new world of eyesight for this young child. The clinic then put a rush order on a new set of eyeglasses. Just three days later, Karly received her new "set of eyes" that would forever change her world. Any thoughts of having the

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SUMMER TRANSITION PROGRAM TEACHES LIFE SKILLS TO BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED TEENS

Tampa Lighthouse for the Blind

Tampa • Winter Haven

Contact Information

Tampa

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Transition Services
Rehabilitation Services
Low Vision Clinic
Magnifiers & More Store
AbilityOne Contracts
Technology Services
1106 W. Platt Street
Tampa, FL 33606
Phone: (813) 251-2407
Fax: (813) 254-4305

Winter Haven

Early Intervention
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Rehabilitation Services
Low Vision Clinic
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1106 West Platt Street
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Publix Super Markets has graciously provided our students with work experiences for several summers.

Our Eighth Annual Summer Transition Program provided our teen participants, all of whom are blind or visually impaired, with five weeks of learning experiences designed to prepare them for the challenges of adulthood. This included many experiences that would equip them with the skills and knowledge needed to live independently, manage finances (banking), and work at a job successfully. Activities included mock job interviews, discussions about dos and don'ts of the workplace, discussions about etiquette, and many more. Programs ran simultaneously in our Tampa and Winter Haven facilities with 16 students in Tampa and 21 students in Winter Haven. The schedule included several field trips that were conducted to allow students to practice the skills learned at the facility including visits to the bank, a local mall and retail store, neighborhood restaurants, etc.

The main emphasis was on the three-week work experience to gain experience in real work environments during weeks two through four. Each of the students was placed at a place of business, working three days per week. They were each paid for these experiences and used the bank visits to cash or deposit their paychecks.

The students were well rewarded for all of their hard work. Even the recreation activities served several useful



Teaching critical life skills to the students involves shopping trips to the mall.



A trip to the Pump House gave the students (and teachers) a chance to unwind after all of their hard work.



Working in the kitchen making rolls

purposes with emphasis on physical fitness, etiquette, self-defense, social skills, and development of healthy leisure time outlets. These activities included bowling; hiking; laser tag; swimming; a day at Treasure Island Beach and a visit to this place called "Pump It Up!" that has gigantic inflatable slides, bounce houses, and obstacle courses.

This program was funded by the Division of Blind Service and United Way of Tampa Bay (Tampa program); and carried out by the Lighthouse in partnership with the Visually Impaired Programs of Hillsborough and Polk County Schools.

Tampa Lighthouse For The Blind

PUBLIX - WHERE WORKING WITH THEM IS A PLEASURE



(L-R) Greta Dupuy, Sheryl Brown (Lighthouse Rehabilitation Services Manager), and Karen Bivens at the Lighthouse's Employer Recognition Breakfast April 30th.

Publix has a long and proud history of having a diverse workforce which we believe is one of the many things that sets them apart from most businesses. Publix has established strong relationships with various organizations to ensure that they are providing opportunities for persons with disabilities. Our partnership with Publix came alive when our Job Development Specialist Rich Petras and Employment Specialist Sherryl Cook met Greta Dupuy, who at the time was a Retail Staffing Specialist for Publix. Later, Greta was promoted to the Diversity Department as the Associate Diversity Development Specialist and Karen Bivens succeeded her as the Retail Staffing Specialist. Greta has, however, continued to work with Karen to promote the hiring of persons with disabilities. Both of these hardworking ladies have made it possible for our teen Transition students in Polk and Hillsborough to have meaningful work experiences at many different Publix stores. Karen and Greta have fostered a positive attitude with the Store Managers who eagerly embrace our students and at times have hired them at the end of the work experience. Several Publix managers attended our Transition program's end-of-summer closing ceremonies. Both Karen and Greta have assisted Rich and Sherryl with

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A Lighthouse Transition student in a work experience at Publix.

work experiences and job placements for our adult population as well. They attend the Mayors Alliance for Persons with Disabilities Luncheon and participate in Disability Mentoring Day. They also support United Way and its activities. Karen and Greta are real assets to Publix, the Lighthouse, and the

KARLY'S NEW EYES

Continued from Page 1

cosmetic surgery suggested earlier were completely put to rest.

"That next home visit will never be forgotten," Ms. Mills fondly reported. "When Karly reached out and touched my arm and looked at me for the first time, I couldn't keep the tears back. I witnessed her watching the dog's tail move, playing with toys she previously ignored, and smiling! It made me appreciate the efforts of the Lighthouse, their Low Vision Specialist, and the many sponsors and funders of the Lighthouse who made it possible." Within only a few months of getting her glasses, Karly began babbling, crawling, and showing her natural inquisitiveness and intelligence. Before long, she was walking completely on her own. Her mother reported that Karly had reacted with delight to seeing food along with her bottle in their refrigerator, and to seeing her older brother. By the time her 2nd birthday arrived, she was fully caught up in all the developmental areas she was behind in. To this day, Karly continues



Work experiences involve three weeks of paid work at the going wage.

community.

As if the above involvements weren't enough, Publix, through its Publix Supermarket Charities foundation, has been generously contributing grant funding to our Tampa and Winter Haven facilities for many years.

to make excellent progress and is interacting fully with the world around her. Her family is now looking forward to a brighter future for Karly.

COLUMBIA RESTAURANT'S 13th 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 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 104th anniversary. Please make a September meal date and designate Tampa Lighthouse for the Blind as your choice to receive this gift.

22ND ANNUAL BEEPBALL CLASSIC - ANOTHER SHUTOUT FOR THE ALL-STARS



Tristin Hunt at bat for the Lighthouse.

The Lighthouse's 22ND Annual Beepball Classic held May 1ST at the New York Yankees Community Field at George M. Steinbrenner Field continued its tradition of providing abundant entertainment and public education about how well players, blind and sighted who are blindfolded, perform on the ball field. For the second straight year, a highly defensive battle was waged on the playing field with only two runs on the scoreboard by game's end! Once again, the forces of nature were cooperative with fair weather that was warm and slightly breezy.

The Coleman Middle School Orchestra returned for its third year to play the National Anthem before the game. The FRC-sponsored Boy Scout Troop 304 returned for its second year to present the color guard. James Gleason and Troop 304 together raised \$678 in ticket sales and donations for the event!

The game got off to a slow start, but the action kicked into high gear in the second inning when Lighthouse player Jabari Corley scored the first run of the game. During that same inning, All-Star player Jeff Houck, Tribune Food Editor, dramatically dove onto the field, successfully fielding Mike Maltby's scoring attempt. Later in the game, Lighthouse team member Enrique Oliu returned the favor, successfully fielding Jeff's scoring attempt in the fourth inning. All together,



Blindfolded All-Stars player Jeff Houck, Tribune Food Editor, wasted no time locating the beeping ball and thwarting a Lighthouse scoring attempt.



the All-Stars had four potentially scoring hits during the game, but all four were successfully fielded by the Lighthouse team. The All-Star's first scoring attempt, made by WFLA's meteorologist Steve Jerve in the third inning, was fielded by Kayla Long. Their second attempt, made by Quivering Rhythm Hound Pinetop Peterson, was fielded by Enrique Oliu who also fielded the All-Star's third attempt, made by Tribune Food Editor Jeff Houck, both plays occurring in the fourth inning. Lee Kimbrell completed the shutout by fielding the All-Star's last scoring attempt which was made by Frank Robertson, former WTVT TV anchor in the fifth inning.

Lee Kimbrell's third time at bat was the charm, putting the Lighthouse into a more comfortable lead of 2 to 0 during the fifth inning. The deploying of the infamous "Mojo Hand" in the green jar and the accompanying rituals by All-Star's player Pinetop Peterson and Coach Steve Otto in an attempt to jinx one of the Lighthouse's best players were all in vain. Lee, who had come up empty on earlier batting attempts, came through with a solid hit that was almost fielded before he could get to base. By game's end, each of the teams had made a strong showing.

Players for the Media All Stars included All Stars Coach Steve Otto, Columnist for The Tampa Tribune; Walt Belcher, Tribune TV Critic; Joe Guidry,



Kayla Long at bat for the Lighthouse.

Tribune Editorial Board Chief; Tim Guidry of the New York Yankees; Joe Henderson, Tribune Sportswriter; Jeff Houck, Tribune Food Editor; Steve Jerve, Chief Meteorologist for NewsChannel 8; Mike Montes, Beechcraft; Rick Nafe, Tampa Bay Rays Executive; Scott "Pinetop" Peterson of the Quivering Rhythm Hound (and keeper of the Mojo Hand); Alicia Roberts, WFLA TV Traffic Reporter; and Bayard Steele, Tribune Editor. The Lighthouse team included Jabari Corley, Lonnie Coston, Ron Eby, Lyn Hunt, Triston Hunt, Lee Kimbrell, Kayla Long, Mike Maltby, Lori McMillan, David Niver, Enrique Oliu, Lawrence Ross, and Sheri Siegel.

Beepball is patterned after softball with adaptations designed to enable full

22ND ANNUAL BEEPBALL CLASSIC *continued from Page 4*



All-Stars player Steve Jerve, WFLA meteorologist, nearly scored a run.

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 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, All-Stars**



Coleman Middle School Orchestra returned for the third straight year to play the national anthem.

Tampa Lighthouse For The Blind



The All-Stars team with their crazy headwear and the infamous Mojo Hand (green jar held by Pinetop Peterson) fought the good fight.

Coach for his active coaching role throughout most of our event's history, and all of the All-Stars players. We also wish to thank **James Gleason, Marine Raider and Director of the Friends of the Tampa Bay Marines; The Coleman Middle School Orchestra** led by its **Director Edward Thanz** for performing the National Anthem; the Lighthouse team which has been on a winning streak from 1993 on; Lighthouse Staff and family members for organizing and carrying out this event; **Richard Bower**, our announcer and his wife **Terri** who ran our concessions; **David Kelsey** for umpiring, and **George Steinbrenner and Phil McNiff** with the **New York Yankees** for providing the use of the Community Field along with support staff.

We wish to recognize our sponsors and other contributors who were key to the event's financial success. **Major League Sponsors (\$1,000)** include Lee Kimbrell, The New York Yankees, Tampa Yankees and The Tampa Tribune. Our **Inning Sponsor (\$500)** is Marsha Weisse. **Player Sponsors (\$250)** include Debbie and Jim Brown, Philip Dinkins and Ed Lally, and PAR, Inc. A special thank you to our **beverage, food and gift donors** which include The New York Yankees, Center Plate Concessions, Sweet Tomatoes Catering, and Regions Bank. Finally, we wish to thank our many **door prize and chance-to-win** sponsors including American Stage Theatre, Antonio's



The Lighthouse team, undefeated from 1993 on, shut down the All-Stars offense.

Pasta Grill, Applebee's, Arabian Nights, Busch Gardens, Caspers Company, Gardens of Bok Tower, Explorations V Children's Museum, Florida Museum of Photographic Art, MOSI, Muvico Theaters, Olive Garden Italian Restaurant, Orlando Science Center, Pin Chasers, H. B. Plant High School Fellowship of Christian Athletes, PRP Wine International, Publix Super Markets, Inc., Ripley's Believe It or Not, Sea World/Aquatica, Side Splitters Comedy Club, Skippers Smoke House Restaurant, St. Petersburg Little Theatre, Straz Center for the Performing Arts, Sweet Tomatoes Catering, Sweet Tomatoes Restaurant, Tampa Bay Buccaneers, Tampa Bay Storm, The Florida Aquarium, The Tampa Improv Comedy Club, Tradewinds Grand Island Resorts, Wet 'n Wild Orlando, and Wright's Gourmet House.

The Lighthouse raised just over \$4,000.00, all of which will benefit our Tampa-based programs serving persons who are blind or visually impaired.



FRC-sponsored Boy Scout Troup 304 returned for the second straight year to present the color guard.

LIGHTHOUSE HOSTS EMPLOYER RECOGNITION BREAKFAST



Representatives from Sweet Tomatoes Catering, the contributor of the breakfast.

The Lighthouse held its inaugural Employer Recognition Breakfast April 30th at its main facility near downtown Tampa. Because the Lighthouse depends so heavily on the willingness of local employers to employ our job placement clients, it was only fitting to have a special event to recognize these employers.

We were pleased to recognize many local employers (listed in the last paragraph). Everyone in attendance was treated to a catered breakfast donated by Sweet Tomatoes Catering from Brandon, Florida. Special thanks go out to Sweet Tomatoes for its generous contribution to this event. We were also honored to have two-time Super Bowl winner and former Tampa Bay Buccaneer Anthony “Booger” McFarland present the keynote address.

A special mention goes out to Publix Supermarkets for their superlative efforts to employ persons with disabilities through their Diversity Department.

The employers who were recognized included Verizon, McDonalds, Aramark, Busch Gardens, Sunshine Thrift, Freedom Scientific, Gulf Coast Enterprises (at MacDill AFB), The Brunchery, AAFES.com, Sykes Enterprises, Grow Financial Federal Credit Union, Amerigroup, Village Inn Restaurant, Time Customer Service, Diners Reef (at MacDill AFB), Hyatt Regency Hotel,



Anthony McFarland (in back) joined by Transition students (L-R) Tony Ferrer, Damarkis Dickens and McKenna Murphy.

Crystal Bay Café, DACCO, HRRC, Sweetbay Supermarket, Paperclips,



(L-R) Harriet Jordon with Amerigroup joined by Sherryl Cook (Lighthouse), Geri Kressin (DBS), and John Reynolds (DBS).

Marriott Waterside Hotel, and Publix Supermarket.

TWO-TIME SUPERBOWL WINNER ANTHONY MCFARLAND SPEAKS AT BREAKFAST



Anthony McFarland (R) with Lighthouse Employment Specialist Sherryl Cook.

We were honored to have Anthony “Booger” McFarland here to present the keynote address at our April 30, 2010 Employer Recognition Breakfast. Anthony McFarland is perhaps best known for having played on the winning teams of two Super Bowls, the first with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers in Super Bowl XXXVII, and the second with the Indianapolis Colts in Super Bowl XLI where he pulled off the only quarterback sack of the game. That one play helped stop the Bears in their tracks, giving the Colts momentum that led them to win the Super Bowl 29 - 17. His pro career as a defensive tackle started when he was drafted in 1999 by the Tampa Bay Bucs. Before that, he

played for Louisiana State University as a four-year starter. He graduated from LSU with a degree in Business Management. Anthony was born in Winnsboro, Louisiana and is a free agent at this time.

Anthony has been involved with several philanthropic efforts over the years including the “I Can Wait” Foundation which works with Hillsborough County Middle Schools to educate kids on the importance of making informed decisions about issues such as smoking, drinking, relationships and using drugs. Each year, Anthony adopts two middle schools where he makes presentations to the students, passes out informational material, and helps them deal with decision-making in a responsible manner. The program works because it presents information in a format that appeals to adolescents and encourages them to get the facts before they act.

Anthony lives here in Tampa and enjoys family time with his wife, Tammie, and two-year old daughter, Alexis. He is a member of the First Baptist Church of College Hill and enjoys a good game of golf in his spare time.

CONTRIBUTORS

Tampa Lighthouse for the Blind truly appreciates all of our donors. All contributions 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, 2010 and June 30, 2010. If we have inadvertently omitted or misspelled your name, we apologize and ask that you please let us know by calling (813) 251-2407.

Amount Unlisted (Donor Request)

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\$10,000 and up

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\$5,000-9,999

Children's Board of
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\$2,500-4,999

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Wright's Gourmet House

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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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Robert Cannon

Gene Davis

Kathleen Betancourt

Patricia Bond

Mr. & Mrs. Brian

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In Honor of

My mother Alberta Bell

Linda McNabb

WH Division of the Blind

Alice (Mickey) Kilroy

MACDILL AFB SWITCHBOARD CLOSES

The Lighthouse's telephone switchboard service contract ended July 21st, after over ten years, with the consolidation of USAF switchboards across the country to a single location at Travis AFB in California. The Lighthouse's nine legally blind base operators who were displaced by this closure are all expected to be placed into similar jobs in the community.

MAJOR FUNDING SOURCES

City of Tampa

City of Winter Haven

State of Florida, Department of

Education/Division of Blind Services

Hillsborough County BOCC

Polk County BOCC

United Way of Central Florida

United Way of Tampa Bay

AFFILIATIONS

**Association for Education and Rehabilitation
of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER)**

Florida Association of Agencies Serving the Blind (FAASB)

**National Accreditation Council for Agencies Serving
People with Blindness or Visual Impairment (NAC)**

National Industries for the Blind (NIB)

Upcoming Events

Monthly - 2nd Thursday, 11:00 a.m.

Polk County Blind Veterans
Fred's Restaurant -
2120 Harden Blvd.
Lakeland, FL 33803

Monthly - 4th Saturday, 12:00 noon

Polk VIP/ACB
Clara's Butterfly Café
1533 S. Combee Road
Lakeland, FL 33801

July 5

Independence Day observed
(closed)

September 6

Labor Day (closed)

November 25 & 26

Thanksgiving holidays (closed)

December 3

Graduation/Holiday Party
Winter Haven

December 10

Graduation/Holiday Party
Tampa

December 23 & 24

Christmas holidays observed
(closed)

December 31

New Years Day observed
(closed)