



Lighthouse News Update

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

TIMELY INTERVENTION PRESERVES HAYVEN'S CHANCES FOR NORMAL DEVELOPMENT

Summer 2013



Hayven has reason to smile following all of the successful efforts to improve her eyesight.

Hayven was a beautiful newborn, born without complications and passing all of her initial health screenings. Her mother was told that vision and hearing normally take a few months to develop fully so there were no concerns initially. However, months passed and Hayven failed to respond to lights or sounds, contrary to how others her age were faring. At her four-month health exam, her doctor expressed the same concern and referred her to All Children's Hospital. Once there, an ophthalmologist assured Hayven's mother that her vision was most likely just a little delayed and that she would soon catch up to her peers. A two-month follow-up appointment was scheduled. Unfortunately, the two months passed



An abundance of developmental training activities including this shapes puzzle has helped Hayven make up for lost time.

with no improvement when Hayven returned for the follow-up. This time, Hayven's mother was given a frightening set of diagnoses – Optic Nerve Hypoplasia (underdeveloped optic nerves), esotropia (crossed eyes) and significant nystagmus (involuntary eye movements). Her outlook was uncertain - the worst case scenario could be total blindness with substantial brain damage. However, there was also the possibility that she could end up with nearly normal vision and no brain damage. There was a full range of possibilities. Thankfully, the tests that were conducted showed no brain

damage or seizure activity, however there were still more questions than answers. Would Hayven ever be able to see? How will she learn everything that she needs to be successful? Hayven's ophthalmologist referred her to the Lighthouse in Winter Haven where she began a lengthy rehabilitation process just after her first birthday.

Hayven's first contact with The Lighthouse was through its Low Vision Clinic to determine if she was eligible for Early Intervention services and to assess her options for visual aids and therapy. She was examined by Dr. Petito, the Lighthouse's Low Vision Specialist, who took the time needed to get to know her and her family. Hayven was determined eligible for Early Intervention, a program for blind or visually impaired infants and children up to the age of six. Early Intervention teachers work with these children and their families to develop the skills needed by each child to develop normally and become prepared for school. A functional vision exam and formal developmental assessment were conducted by her Early Interventionist, Michelle Williams, to determine her use of her remaining vision along with motor skills, language development, and social and cognitive skills. The ultimate goal for Hayven was to work around her visual impairments, overcome any developmental delays and enter a regular Kindergarten

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Contact Information

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A TRIBUTE TO CLIFF OLSTROM



As Director, Cliff Olstrom led Tampa Lighthouse for the Blind from a small single-service agency to a comprehensive rehabilitation facility.

After 42 years as Executive Director of the Tampa Lighthouse for the Blind, Cliff Olstrom is retiring. He will be succeeded by Sheryl Brown who has overseen the Lighthouse's Rehabilitation programs for most of her 28 years at the agency. Sheryl is taking over an organization that is in excellent shape, financially and organizationally. That wasn't the case when Cliff assumed leadership of a languishing Lighthouse in 1971 when there was only one program, a small sheltered workshop. Cliff got right to work adding needed rehabilitation programs to serve the many needs of the agency's target population. In 1975, the Tampa Lighthouse for the Blind became the first private Florida agency to earn NAC accreditation. The physical facilities were expanded with the acquisition of a neighboring building that was completely renovated and updated.

Cliff has always had a clear vision of the agency's mission that was developed early in his administration. In his first five years, the Lighthouse was accepted into the Ability-One program, qualifying the agency for Federal contracts that provided jobs for those in our employment programs. All of our programs continued to expand and Cliff never missed an opportunity to add new programs to address unmet needs of our target population.

Throughout his tenure, Cliff

expanded services from a single county to a multi-county area in West Central Florida, and now statewide with our Rehabilitation Engineering grant and our Jacksonville mailroom service contract. All ages are now served, from blind babies to teens and to all ages of adults. The agency enjoys excellent working relationships with Division of Blind Services, United Way, and many other community, statewide, and national organizations.

Cliff grew up in Okemos, Michigan, graduating from University of Western Michigan with a Masters degree in Blind Rehabilitation, then started out as a mobility instructor at the Florida Rehabilitation Center for the Blind in Daytona Beach. He continued his teaching career in the Hillsborough County School System before accepting the job as Executive Director for the Lighthouse.

Cliff is a longstanding member and officer of Tampa Downtown Lion's Club and has served on the boards of several nationally-based organizations in the field of blindness. He has also authored Undaunted by Blindness, a book that spotlights the lives of 400 high achievers who are totally or legally blind.

FREE iPad CLASS FOR THOSE WHO ARE VISUALLY IMPAIRED

If you are visually impaired and own or plan to own an Apple iPad, the Lighthouse invites you to our new **iPad Accessibility Class**. To qualify, you must have an uncorrectible visual impairment that prevents you from functioning normally in day-to-day activities. You will learn how to use Apple's built-in accessibility features. Our five-day program will cover the VoiceOver screen reader, Zoom screen magnifier, how to download fun and useful apps, accessing the internet, email, and multimedia (books, music, videos, etc.)

Classes Start Soon! For more information, call Becky at (866) 251-2407 (Tampa) or Danielle at (877) 299-3633 (Winter Haven).

RUSTY MUSIC PASSES ALONG HIS MANY BLESSINGS



As Executive Director of the Church Service Center, Rusty's job is very much hands-on, working in the food bank pantry.

Even though he is only in his mid-20's, Rusty Music holds two leadership positions that came about because of his strong faith and desire to help others. He is the Associate Pastor of Wildwood Baptist Church in Bartow and was recently appointed (last December) to the position of Executive Director of the Bartow Church Service Center. Rusty is also legally blind and has never known what it is like to see normally. His strong sense of humanity and caring transcends all of the circumstances that could have served to hold him back. He knows first-hand what it's like to be in need of help – throughout his schooling in the Polk County Schools, Rusty depended on the skills, caring, and support of special teachers who are dedicated to working with those with visual impairments – referred to as “teachers of the visually impaired” or “TVI's.” His teachers succeeded in helping him to graduate and move on to Polk State College. While Rusty was still a teenager in high school, he attended the Lighthouse's first Summer Teen Transition program (in 2003) and came back each summer to develop his job-seeking skills along with all of the other areas of knowledge needed for “transitioning” into adulthood. This program, along with Adaptive Computer Training, further helped

Tampa Lighthouse For The Blind



Rusty has assumed multiple roles dedicated to serving his community including his work here as Associate Pastor of his church.

him refine his already-strong social and leadership skills, leading to a paid position as a Transition Program Aide at the Lighthouse. Soon thereafter, Rusty began working part-time in his church, learning everything he could about its ministry. He also served as Director of Youth and Children, overseeing Sunday School and organizing recreational and other church functions for attending children and teens.

In addition to his extensive church involvement, Rusty has always been available at the Lighthouse to do whatever is needed. When he wasn't working in the Transition program, he often came in to help answer the phone when others were out or needed elsewhere. He rolled up his sleeves and helped with the move from our old building to the newly constructed one in the summer heat in 2011. Rusty is still involved with the Transition program, passing along the knowledge he has gained over the years and always serving as a strong role model.

In his new role as Executive Director of the Bartow Church Service Center, Rusty's main job is to oversee the vast influx of requests for assistance from a large network of affiliated churches in the area. The Church Service Center receives funding from United Way of Central Florida to provide budget classes, tax preparation, and other income-related benefits. The



Rusty with his wife Ginny of only 3 years are still newlyweds. Ginny also serves as Rusty's right hand with his ministries.

Center also serves the network of area churches that refer needy persons and families to receive food, clothing, and community services that help recipients get back on their feet. The centralized nature of this program benefits everyone involved and spares needy individuals the time-consuming and arduous task of “church-hopping” to gather food, clothing, and other needed items. Churches that are part of this network contribute funds that are otherwise set aside for the needy. These churches benefit from the savings of time and the emotional toll brought on by the large number of people requesting assistance. According to Rusty, he and a small staff of four employees, assisted by a half-dozen volunteers, serve about 1500 persons in need every month, directly providing the needed food, clothing, and other necessities. His Assistant Director has 20 years' experience making community referrals in an effort to break the cycle of poverty.

As a recipient of needed services himself, Rusty knows what it's like to be among those being helped. The Lighthouse thereby takes great pride in playing a role in Rusty's remarkable growth into becoming a pillar of his community at such a young age.

25th BEEPBALL CLASSIC - LIGHTHOUSE SLUGGERS STAGE COMEBACK



Sluggers' Lee Kimbrell successfully fields a hit by Gayle Guyardo.



Henry Oliu adds a run to the scoreboard for the Sluggers with a solid hit.



All-Stars Coach Steve Otto proudly shows off his souvenir Beepball award from the Lighthouse.

The Lighthouse Sluggers avenged last year's loss with an impressive 5 – 2 comeback! This was a fitting victory for this event's 25th Beepball Classic. The All-Stars, who fought to add a second win to their record, were hitting balls out to our fielders who relentlessly scooped most of them up. This was an exciting, fast-paced game, keeping spectators on the edges of their seats.

To commemorate the 25th Beepball Classic, the Lighthouse requested and was granted a move of the game to the main Steinbrenner ball field with a later time so that ticket holders could attend the Tampa Yankees vs Clearwater Threshers evening game followed by fireworks at no extra cost.

Lighthouse Slugger Lee "Grand Slam" Kimbrell scored the game's first run in the first inning, followed quickly by another run in the 2nd inning scored by Henry "He's Everywhere" Oliu. Things continued to go south quickly for the All-Stars with two more runs scored in the third inning by Keith "The Amazing" Ambrose and "Gallant" Greg Lindsey. It wasn't until the 4th inning when "Pinetop" Peterson finally put the All-Stars on the scoreboard after invoking the powers of that "Mojo Hand" (that severed hand-looking thing in a green jar) he's been bringing each year to supposedly bring good luck to the All-Stars and bad luck to the Lighthouse Sluggers. However, Pinetop's run was quickly countered

by the Lighthouse's 5th and final run scored by Marquan "Gutsy" Gunter (so much for the Mojo Hand's evil powers). The final run of the game was scored by Lawrence "Black Jack" Fineran for the All-Stars. There were several successful fielding efforts by each team that kept the scores from spiraling into double digits adding a great deal of action and drama to the game.

WFLA 970 AM Radio Personality Tedd Webb did a superb job in his second year as the game's announcer.

Players for the Media All-Stars included: The Mysterious Dr. Doom; Sgt. Major Lawrence "Black Jack" Fineran, USMC Marine Force Central Command; Tim "Yankee Doodle" Guidry, Foundation Administrator for the New York Yankees; Gayle "We'll Be Right Back" Guyardo, Co-Anchor, WFLA News Channel 8; Patrick "Mojo" Harpe, Quivering Rhythm Hounds; Jeff "Food Truck" Houck, Food Writer, Tampa Tribune; Dave "Heroic" Hughes, Producer, WFLA News Channel 8; Steve "ThunderBoomer" Jerve, Chief Meteorologist, WFLA News Channel 8; Leslee "Backseat" Lacey, Traffic Reporter, WFLA News Channel 8; Johnny G "The Legend" Lyon; Lisa "Bonita Bomber" Montelione, City of Tampa Councilwoman; Hillsborough County Commissioner; All-Stars Coach Steve "Wait'll Next Year" Otto, Columnist, Tampa Tribune; Albert "Bucified Bert" Owens; Scott

"Pinetop" Peterson, Quivering Rhythm Hounds; Leigh "Giggles" Spann, Meteorologist, WFLA News Channel 8; and Mike "Super Suave" Suarez, City of Tampa Councilman.

Players for the Lighthouse Sluggers team included: Keith "The Amazing" Ambrose; Dale "Bellicose" Barefoot; Vanessa "Florida Flash" Coleman; Lonnie "Leadoff" Coston; Youlanda "Daring" Daffron; Marsha "Go for Broke" Gibson; Marquan "Gutsy" Gunter; Cindy "Hot Shot" Hedinger; Lee "Grand Slam" Kimbrell; "Gallant" George Lindberg; "Zealous" Zach "All That" Lower; Elwin "Mad Dog" Merrill; David "Fresh Prince of Plant City" Nivers; Henry "He's Everywhere" Oliu; and Tim "Reckless" Ray.

Beepball is a modified form of the popular game softball that enables full participation of players who are blind or visually impaired. Players who are fully sighted readily participate wearing blindfolds. Players who are visually impaired with any useful vision also wear blindfolds. The softball has a built-in beeper that allows batters and fielders to locate it by sound. Bases are foam rubber columns, about 4 feet high, covered in blue plastic. They are equipped with loud buzzers that enable the players to locate them by sound and are soft enough to run into them without injury. Only one of the two bases (1st or 3rd) is used after a

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25th BEEPBALL CLASSIC *continued from Page 4*



All-Stars Gayle Guyardo makes a solid hit but, alas, is fielded out by Slugger Lee Kimbrell.



Pinetop (or is that Corn-Top?) Peterson hit this pitch for one of two runs scored by the All-Stars.

hit. 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 and raises it above his/her head before the batter gets to base, the batter is out. There are six fielders, each with a numbered position, two in each section of the field. In each section, one fielder plays the infield and the other plays the outfield. Sighted field callers, positioned near each fielder, shout the number of the fielder closest to the travel of a legally hit ball. This is to give the fielders a quick heads-up of rapidly approaching or stationary balls. The pitcher and catchers are the only sighted players who do not wear blindfolds during the game.

The weather for Beepball Game # 25 cooperated fully with a pleasant sunny day. The Coleman Middle School Orchestra returned for its sixth year to play the National Anthem and baseball-themed music before the game. The FRC-sponsored Boy Scouts accompanied the Marine Force Central Command Color Guard.

An awards presentation took place on the field just before the game, Tim Guidry, New York Yankees Foundation Administrator presented a \$2500 contribution plus an additional matching contribution to Lighthouse's Assistant Executive Director Sheryl Brown. Tampa Tribune Columnist Steve Otto who has coached the

All-Stars since 1993 was given a souvenir Beepball award in a custom holder. James Gleason, Marine Raider and Director of the Friends of the Tampa Bay Marines, was also presented with a Beepball award.

Many thanks to everyone who came out to watch, play, or assist with this event. Special thanks go out to Steve Otto, All-Stars Coach for his coaching role throughout most of our event's history, his entertaining columns that promote this event, and his role in recruiting the All-Stars players. We thank each of the players of both teams for coming out to participate. Special thanks go out to James Gleason, Marine Raider and Director of the Friends of the Tampa Bay Marines for selling hundreds of tickets each year and for providing other support of this event. We also thank Coleman Middle School Orchestra led by its Director Edward Thanz for performing the National Anthem (6th straight year); the Lighthouse team for one of the longest winning streaks for any sporting event in history (from 1993 through 2011); Lighthouse Staff and family members and friends for organizing and carrying out this event; Dave Kelsey for volunteering again to umpire, and the Tampa Yankees and New York Yankees for letting us use the Main Steinbrenner Field along with support staff for this special anniversary.

We wish to recognize our sponsors

and other contributors who were key to the event's financial success. Major League Sponsors (\$1,000+) included Lee and Sally Kimbrell, New York Yankees Tampa Foundation, and Tampa Tribune. Inning Sponsors (\$500) included Kuhn Honda Volkswagen and Antoinette Wheat, CPA. Player Sponsors included Philip Dinkins and Ed Lally; Par, Inc.; Publix Super Markets, Inc.; and Jim and Judy Stefan. Finally, we wish to thank our many Inkind Sponsors that included Albert Perez, Applebee's, Arabian Knights, Bahama Breeze (our Door Prize Sponsor), Bok Towers, Brighthouse Networks, Busch Gardens, Cason Photography, Chalet Suzanne, Clarion Hotel, Clearwater Marine Aquarium, Courtyard by Marriott, Donatello Restaurant, Enhanced Vision, Explorations V Children's Museum, G. Elliott's Brunchery, Hooters, Inprov Tampa Comedy Club, Jay Forry, Kennedy Space Center, McDonald's Restaurant, Mel's Hotdogs, MOSI, Mr. Empanda, Muvico Theaters, Orlando Science Center, PRP Wine International, Rebecca Radford, Ruth Eckerd Hall, Sea World/Aquatica, Shell's Seafood, St. Petersburg City Theatre, St. Petersburg Museum of Fine Arts, Starbucks Store # 14316, Starlite Cruises, Tampa Bay Lightning, Tampa Bay Rays, Tampa Theatre, The Florida Aquarium, Theatre Winter Haven, U.S. Airways, Vigo Importing Company, Walmart, Weschase Golf Course, Willie's "The Place for Seafood," WonderWorks Orlando, and Wright's Gourmet.

Finally we thank the Hillsborough County Commission for the 25th Beepball Anniversary Proclamation presented at a recent public commission meeting.

This year's Beepball Classic netted over \$7,500 for the Lighthouse which will benefit both of our Tampa and Winter Haven-based programs serving persons who are blind or visually impaired.

SUMMER TRANSITION - *Preparing Teens for What Lies Ahead*



These students are taught meal preparation and basic kitchen survival skills.

During this year's summer program, our teen Transition students focused on adaptive computer technology, money matters, career building and exploration, job interviewing, keeping a job, meal preparation, daily living skills, social/recreation, orientation and mobility, community involvement, and self-advocacy. Adaptive computer technology included screen enlargement and screen reader (speech) programs, accessing the internet, and use e-mail

and MS Word. Money Matters included money identification and counting, currency folding, banking, and cashing paychecks. Career Exploration involved career research using the Internet, job shadowing to experience jobs first-hand, education and training requirements, working conditions, job duties/responsibilities, and what various jobs pay. College Week was included for the second straight year, providing a comprehensive orientation to college life.

Job interviewing included dressing properly, types of interviews, answering interview questions, eye contact (important even for visually impaired persons), poise, handshakes, dress and appearance, speaking clearly, and displaying self-confidence. Mock interviews were conducted and feedback provided.

All students participated in paid work experiences to gain a realistic idea of the working world. They were placed in grocery stores, restaurants, state offices, nonprofit agencies, and office supply stores. Students were expected to be punctual, properly dressed, productive, and interactive with others. They had to submit weekly timesheets and evaluations to receive paychecks which they cashed at the bank.

Students learned basic meal preparation, went on instructional field trips, learned how to ride the bus and travel about the community and went to a local gym that offered a free summer pass for teenagers so they could work out under proper supervision.

This year, we had five graduates: Damarkis Dickens, Jennifer Roule, Nicole Sorenson, Ricardo Mullings, and McKenna Murphy.

HAYVEN'S TIMELY INTERVENTION

Continued from Page 1

classroom with her sighted peers. To ensure that this goal was achieved, her Early Interventionist conducted weekly home visits with Hayven and her family. One of Hayven's biggest struggles was getting both of her eyes to work together, as her esotropia caused her right eye to turn inward – this affected her depth perception and binocular vision. Dr. Petito prescribed patching of her left eye to strengthen the muscles in her right eye, then prescribed glasses with a special prism lens that would force her right eye to straighten. By this time, Hayven was one and a half years old which presented a challenge getting her to keep her glasses on. Fortunately her teacher and her family successfully worked together to overcome this challenge. Therapeutic activities included completing puzzles, identifying pictures in books, sorting colors/shapes/other objects, all while keeping it fun and entertaining for her.

Soon, Hayven began walking and never slowed down, trusting her vision more and more with each passing day. With all the hard work, Hayven was able to expand her visual field and can now see objects several feet away that she once held close to her eyes. Hayven's Early Interventionist continues to attend her Low Vision Clinic appointments with the family and coordinates with her school on common goals. Through hard work and determination on the part of Hayven and her family, Hayven has far exceeded all of her goals, inspiring her mother never to give up. She has learned visual compensation measures with head positioning to stop the involuntary eye movements and improve visual functioning. Her eyes are now much better aligned as evidenced in her very first preschool photo that shows perfectly straight eyes.

Now three years old, Hayven is functioning at an above average level

in almost all areas including cognitive, social and language development. Hayven's determination is considered extraordinary, according to the team of professionals that has been working with her. She continues to use her eyes together more effectively and is expected to enter a regular Kindergarten classroom along with her sighted peers on schedule.

It cannot be emphasized enough how important it is for a visually impaired child to learn how to use his/her vision properly for optimum development. Failure to do so can lead to irreversible impairment to the child's vision and can lead to other developmental delays. In Hayven's case, the outcome could have been vastly different. Instead, her future appears to be very bright and we look forward to following Hayven's progress through her school years.

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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, 2013 and June 30, 2013. 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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- Polk County BOCC CDBG, funded by HUD
- United Way of Central Florida
- United Way Suncoast

Upcoming Events

- September 2
Labor Day (closed)
- October 3 - 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Tampa Day of Caring Picnic
- October 24 - 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Winter Haven Day of Caring Picnic
- November 28 & 29
Thanksgiving holidays (closed)
- December 6
Graduation/Holiday Party
Winter Haven
- December 13
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- December 24 & 25
Christmas holidays (closed)
- January 1, 2014
New Years Day observed
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