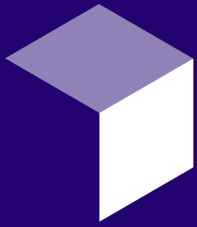


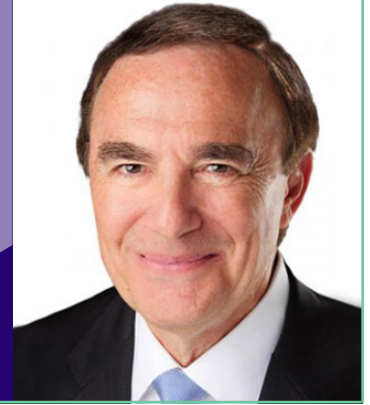
September 2022



Lighthouse Guild

Lighthouse Guild In Brief

From Dr. Cal Roberts, President and CEO



Dear Friends,

Healthy Aging: Includes Eye Care

September is Healthy Aging Month, and as we think about what we can do to maintain our general health as we get older, it's also important to include what we can do to protect our eye health.



Photo: Older adults walking arm and arm in a park smiling

As we age, we are at increased risk for eye diseases such as age-related macular degeneration, glaucoma, and cataracts. These disorders can lead to low vision and impact our ability to perform daily activities and enjoy leisure pursuits. Systemic health problems such as diabetes can also affect eye health.

"Many eye diseases and conditions have no warning signs, but they can be detected in their early stages during a comprehensive eye exam," says Dr. Susan Weinstein, Low Vision Optometrist at Lighthouse Guild. "The key to saving sight is early detection and treatment."

In addition to regular comprehensive eye exams, which can detect problems before noticeable vision loss occurs, many lifestyle factors can play an important role in protecting vision.

Following these recommendations will support eye health:

- Eat a balanced diet including dark, leafy greens and fish high in omega-3 fatty acids.
- Get enough sleep to rest your eyes.
- Quit smoking.
- Keep diabetes under control.
- Wear sunglasses and a brimmed hat outdoors.
- Wear protective eyewear during activities such as sports and construction work.

“Protecting our eyes is important at every age, but particularly as we get older — it’s doing our part in helping to maintain quality of life,” Dr. Weinstein says.

For more tips, visit our [website](#). You can also schedule an appointment for an eye exam with one of our [vision experts](#).

Mayor Adams Visits Lighthouse Guild!

We were honored to host New York City Mayor Eric Adams and the Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD) Commissioner Christina Curry for a tour and discussion on our shared goal of continuing to make the city as accessible as possible for all New Yorkers. The tour included our Behavioral Health Center, our Adult Day Health Care program GuildCare, and our Technology Center with hands-on demonstrations of the latest in assistive tech. We look forward to partnering with the Mayor and Commissioner Curry to help New Yorkers with vision loss access the services and technology they need to live the lives they aspire to.



Photos, left to right: Chief Operating Officer Paul Misiti, Honorable Mayor Eric Adams, Chief Program and Services Officer Maura Sweeney, President and CEO Dr. Calvin W. Roberts and MOPD Commissioner Christina Curry; Mayor Adams listens to Lighthouse Guild client Fitzville Martin demonstrate an assistive tech device.

“The work that the Lighthouse Guild does to service individuals who are visually impaired is truly inspiring.”

Nicole Hart



Photo: A quote, “The work that the Lighthouse Guild does to service individuals who are visually impaired is truly inspiring,” next to a portrait of Nicole Hart.

Welcome Nicole Hart

We are pleased to welcome Nicole Hart as our new General Counsel and Chief Compliance Officer at Lighthouse Guild. In this capacity, Ms. Hart is responsible for coordinating the legal, compliance and regulatory activities of the organization and its affiliates.

Ms. Hart joins Lighthouse Guild with experience in trusts and estates and nonprofit law. She was most recently Managing Director of the Trusts and Estates Department at Wealthspire Advisors, LLC. She previously held positions at Davis & Gilbert, LLP and White & Case, LLP, where her responsibilities included advising high net worth individuals on complex tax and estate planning matters and advising charitable organizations regarding corporate formation and tax-exempt status.

“The work that the Lighthouse Guild does to service individuals who are visually impaired is truly inspiring. I’m honored to join an organization with such an important mission,” Ms. Hart says. To learn more about Ms. Hart, visit our [website](#) and contact her at hartn@lighthouseguild.org.

Lighthouse Guild is Cooking!

“The Cooking Without Looking TV Show” is an online show on YouTube focusing on the capabilities of people who are blind and visually impaired from the perspective of an interactive cooking show.



Photos left to right: Lighthouse Guild client Cathy holds up her apple crisp she prepared while Case Manager Dierdre Saleh shows the fried chicken that client Laura demonstrated.

We were thrilled to have three guests from Lighthouse Guild join virtually hosts Allen Preston and Annette Watkins from Lighthouse Guild's Smart Home kitchen. Clients Cathy and Laura demonstrated two wonderful fall recipes and shared how Lighthouse Guild's home-based training in independent living skills has impacted their daily living. Deirdre Saleh, Case Manager in Rehabilitation Services, provided a comprehensive overview of Lighthouse Guild services and tips for cooking safely. To see the show, visit our [website](#).

An Evening of Discovery

The historic Explorers Club was the setting for a cocktail reception that raised over \$200,000 for Lighthouse Guild's exceptional services. James Dubin, Lighthouse Guild Board Chairman, expanded on how cutting-edge technology and Lighthouse Guild's expert training ensure individuals who are blind or visually impaired can live independently and productively. Guests were able to meet Lighthouse Guild Tech Ambassadors to see first-hand how technology is changing lives. Dr. Andrea Lendaris, Lighthouse Guild client and new advisory board member, motivated the crowd with her compelling story of her experience with vision loss, hearing loss, and the challenges she overcame on the path of her impressive career.



Photos, left to right: Dr. Andrea Lendaris motivates the crowd by sharing her story. Tech Ambassador's Bob Roehm of Envision and Lighthouse Guild client Fitzville Martin.



Photos, left to right: President and CEO Dr. Calvin W. Roberts, Advisory Board member Christine Miller and Board member Ann Thivierge; Advisory Board member Peter Slatin, Heidi Holterbosch and Board member Thomas Gimbel.

A Physician, A Client, An Inspiration

We are pleased to announce that Dr. Andrea Lendaris is joining the Lighthouse Guild Advisory Board. This dedicated group of advisors share their expertise, provide strategic insights, and serve as ambassadors for our organization.

Dr. Lendaris is a physician who understands all too well what her patients experience as she has vision and hearing loss. She also has been connected to our organization for a long time, including receiving services. In this issue of **Lighthouse Guild in Brief**, we are sharing some of her compelling story about her experience with vision and hearing loss, and the challenges she overcame while pursuing her impressive career.

Dr. Lendaris has Usher's Syndrome, a rare genetic disease affecting hearing and vision. It causes deafness or hearing loss and an eye disease called retinitis pigmentosa (RP). She describes her vision as "different in the day, and it's different at night." It is extremely focused central vision, and at night that is even narrower, which makes seeing more difficult.

Since Dr. Lendaris was born in the 70s, genetic panels for testing did not exist, so she was not diagnosed with hearing loss until she failed a hearing screening in second grade and didn't know about her vision until high school.

When she found out about her diagnosis of RP, it was devastating. She remembers thinking not only is the physician telling her that she is losing vision, but they are not sure when and that there is no treatment. Maybe if she took vitamin A, it might slow it down. There was no clear answer.

"It's more than just the tools that they can offer you, but the support and the people that help you get that confidence to achieve it."

Dr. Andrea Lendaris



Photo: A quote "It's more than just the tools that they can offer you, but the support and the people that help you get that confidence to achieve it," next to a portrait of Dr. Andrea Lendaris.

She said a physician told her, "You may just want to go down the vocational route instead of college." Dr. Lendaris loved science and math. At the time, she was already in advanced calculus and a sophomore in high school, and she just felt like her world had crashed. Thankfully, her mother didn't listen to that physician, and Dr. Lendaris continued her academic path.

Pursuing Medicine

Dr. Lendaris believes the challenges she faced going to school were part of the reason she took a longer road to pursue medicine which takes a lot of attention and concentration.

In college, she realized how much she loved speech pathology. Dr. Lendaris says, "It was learning how to work with people, and I think probably some part of me healed in just how you integrate into a world whether you are at school age or adults, and you acquired communication difficulties or swallowing difficulties, and I just found that very meaningful. And I enjoyed it. I knew if I wanted a career in that area, I had to go straight through and get a master's degree, and that's what I did."

After she completed her master's, she moved to San Francisco and lived there for five years. It was there that she completed her fellowship in speech pathology. She also met her husband.

Dr. Lendaris moved back to New York when she and her husband wanted to start a family. At the time, she was working in speech therapy and wanted to take the next step: advocate for patients and get involved with healthcare. She says, "I think it's a fundamental right, if you will, to be able to take care of yourself, being able to take care of your family, for your health, and I like the idea of advocating and seeing someone more as a whole person."

To Be a Patient and to Treat a Patient

She and her husband sat down and discussed her new path toward medicine. Dr. Lendaris shares, "I didn't think I could do medicine, and I had a lot of angst — is it ethical, is this something I can do, can I be a patient and treat a patient, will my patients trust me, will I be a good doctor, all those insecurities." She talked with doctors at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and new specialists and asked everybody, "do you think I can do this, is it okay?"

She wanted to do it but was concerned she would not be able to do it the same way as somebody else. Thankfully, the doctors taking care of her felt just the opposite. They said no, you would never be in a situation alone, and things are structured so patients can be cared for properly.

For Dr. Lendaris, becoming a physician with a visual and hearing impairment has enabled her to use her presence with her patients. She says, "I step into a room, and before I even start looking or listening, I'm observing and feeling the energy in the room. I try to remember when I walk into a patient's room that this is not a high moment in their life. It is a serious situation and a tragic time for them, and I enter the space where I am sensitive to that, and then I listen. And even though I am hard of hearing, I use all my communication skills. Am I sitting in an optimal space for them, am I at their level, or am I sitting in a chair? I try to connect with people through my communication. Then we hear each other beyond just the logistics over the bells and alarms going off. Can I connect with them, and do they feel heard and respected? That is a major bottom line for me as a doctor."

She continues, "And with the vision, yes, I'm a neurologist, and what if I don't see their reflexes? I had all these insecurities about whether I can check my reflexes or what if I didn't see their reflex response. I learned how to reposition my hands and use certain markers on the body, such as where certain bone prominences are and where the tendons are, so I don't need to look there. I can look for where I'm going to see the reflex response. That is how I learned to tweak myself. But within that, I think my patients are really getting a more comprehensive assessment."

Connecting with Lighthouse Guild

Lighthouse Guild has been a presence slowly threaded through Dr. Lendaris' life. In the first year of college, around 1995, she learned about Lighthouse Guild when she applied for and received a Career Incentive and Achievement Award. Receiving such an award made her realize a community exists that supports people with disabilities. She shares that "[It] was one of those moments that lifted my mom. Maybe reassured that I will be all right and that there will be success for me. I think the award did a lot on that emotional front and gave me confidence."

When she returned to New York in 2006, she began looking for resources, and that's when she connected with Dr. Bruce Rosenthal, Chief of Low Vision Services. They tried different lenses for her vision. Dr. Lendaris says he was willing to be creative with whatever technology was available and would tell her to let him know what she needed.

Dr. Lendaris says, “Dr. Rosenthal was always of the mindset of, just find another tool. Think of it like a tool. You must think of what will help you get the input of information you need. And I felt that was it. That gave me this permission to start looking for tools that will help with the input. There is nothing wrong with me. I just have a different input system. And that’s where the strength that made this shift come from.”

Dr. Rosenthal helped her register with the New York State Commission for the Blind (NYSCB) as legally blind. This would enable her to get the services to help maximize and possibly improve her visual function.

Mobility and Independent Living Skills

Lighthouse Guild came to Dr. Lendaris’ home to provide mobility training, teaching her how to navigate using a white cane. She also received training to help her safely cook in her kitchen. She says, “I learned to always place the handles of the cooking pots inward and not outward, so I don’t bump into them. Little things you wouldn’t normally think of gave me that confidence and boosted me to feel I can do this.”

She continues, “One of the important things to someone who is visually impaired is the acceptance that you are not going to find something that will take it away. It’s about how I can interact and function in this environment as safely and independently as possible.”

Technology

Dr. Lendaris also met with an occupational therapist, Inna Babaeva, who introduced her to all the state-of-the-art possibilities in the Technology Center. She plans to check it out more closely soon. Dr. Lendaris says, “I’m wondering if there is a voice dictation that I can use. Even if just to make myself more efficient at work. A lot of my work requires using the computer and electronic medical records, and I cannot see the entire screen at the same time either. Knowing where the information is or where to look for things, such as trying to find the mouse or what you are looking for, becomes low-level energy things that require me to spend time doing my job.”

Shine the Light

Dr. Lendaris says Lighthouse Guild is where you can get medical care and have the measurements and objective things sorted out for you. And more complimentary are all the other programs and resources that help you rise to the optimal person you can be. You become engaged in your environment most independently and efficiently. She says, “It’s more than just the tools that they can offer you, but the support and the people that help you get that confidence to achieve it. It’s not just your medical care. It’s looking at you as a whole person. And it’s not just for people who are completely blind, and I think that’s important to share and accept that the circle is bigger than that.”

Today Dr. Lendaris shares, “I am very much in an ongoing process of learning how to manage my vision and hearing impairments. It was only in the last five years that I found the right mobility cane and the confidence to use it on a routine basis.”

This summer, Dr. Lendaris began interviewing for an attending physician position. For the first time, she walked into each of these interviews with her mobility cane and spoke openly about the tools she uses to enable her to be a physician. She says, “It was empowering to say the least.” Dr. Lendaris hopes to shine a light on the spectrum of visual impairments and how the Lighthouse Guild is a place that can provide the medical, emotional, and technological support needed for success.

To learn more about Dr. Lendaris and her amazing story, please visit our [website](#).

Dr. Alan R. Morse Lecture in Advocacy for People with Vision Impairment Recipient

We are pleased to announce that noted human rights lawyer and disability justice advocate Haben Girma is the first recipient of The Dr. Alan R. Morse Lecture in Advocacy for People with Vision Impairment. The Morse Lecture in Advocacy was established this year to honor those who have demonstrated leadership, raised awareness of low vision, addressed barriers, and are working to make a world where no person is limited by their sensory capacity.

The first Deafblind person to graduate from Harvard Law School, Haben Girma believes that disability is an opportunity for innovation, and she teaches organizations the importance of choosing inclusion. She speaks frequently about accessibility, diversity and leadership and is the author of the memoir *Haben: The Deafblind Woman Who Conquered Harvard Law*, which has been featured in *The New York Times*, *Oprah Magazine*, and the *TODAY Show*.

Learn more about Ms. Girma and The Dr. Alan R. Morse Lecture in Advocacy for People with Vision Impairment on our [website](#).

Haben Girma Recipient of the Dr. Alan R. Morse Lecture in Advocacy for People with Vision Impairment

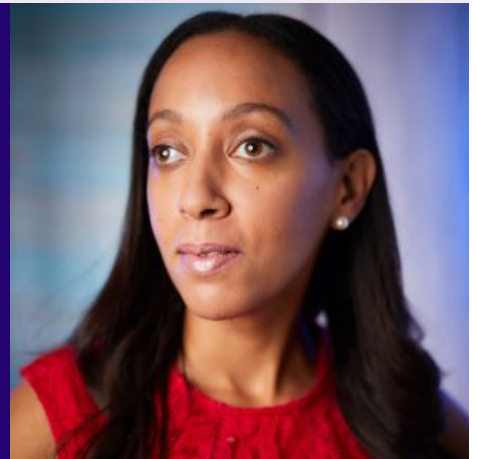


Photo: "Haben Girma, Recipient of the Dr. Alan R. Morse Lecture in Advocacy for People with Vision Impairment" next to a portrait of Haben Girma, Photo Credit: Darius Bashar

GuildCare Buffalo Celebrates 30 Years

Buffalo GuildCare celebrated its 30th Anniversary. Members enjoyed a special lunch, entertainment and, of course, cake. Director of GuildCare Buffalo Jeannine Palazza shared, "The program means even more to the members and staff especially after being closed during the pandemic. Which is why the celebration ended with a special musical request of, "We are Family" — it is exactly how we all feel."



Photo: GuildCare Buffalo members recognizing the 30-Year Anniversary with a prom theme celebration! From left to right, Kristyn, Elmore, Marie, JD, Wayne, and Roz with Vision Rehabilitation Therapist Pamela Scinta in the center displaying the festive cake.

Lighthouse Guild's GuildCare program offers comprehensive healthcare and a full day of activities. With centers in New York City, Albany, Buffalo, and Niagara Falls, we provide a safe, comfortable, and attentive environment. Our GuildCare team is ready to provide your patient or loved one with the daily care that meets their medical and social needs. For more information, to make a referral, or schedule a tour, visit the GuildCare section of our [website](#).

At Lighthouse Guild, we believe there is no limit to what a person with vision impairment can attain. With you your help, we can ensure the opportunities for success are endless. Please consider **donating, volunteering, referring** people who can benefit from our services, and spreading the word on **Twitter** and **Facebook**! For the latest on technology for people with vision impairment, listen to our podcast **"On Tech and Vision."**

Be well, and stay safe!

Calvin W. Roberts, MD
President and CEO, Lighthouse Guild
Twitter: @EyeDrCal

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