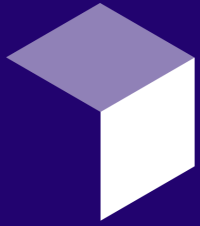


April 2024



# Lighthouse Guild

**Lighthouse Guild In Brief**  
From Dr. Cal Roberts, President and CEO



## Listen to the Audio

Dear Friends,

### Focusing on Women's Eye Health

Women are at increased risk for eye diseases such as glaucoma, cataracts, and macular degeneration, that can lead to vision loss if left unchecked. Pregnancy and menopause can also impact vision.

Women of all ages need to pay attention to their eye health.



Photo: A woman receiving an eye exam from an eyecare professional.

“The most important step every woman can take to protect her eye health is to get regular, comprehensive, dilated eye exams to identify potential early signs of eye disorders,” says Dr. Susan Weinstein, a Low Vision Specialist at Lighthouse Guild. “If you notice sudden changes in your vision, you should seek care immediately.”

Dr. Weinstein offers some tips to help women take care of their eyes:

- **Pregnancy.** Physiological changes during pregnancy can impact vision, leading to changes in prescriptions for glasses and contact lenses.
- **Menopause.** Vision changes are common with aging. For women, the fluctuations in hormones during and after menopause can cause dry eyes. The risk of glaucoma, cataracts, and macular degeneration all increase with age, but these disorders may be effectively treated if found early.
- **Dry Eye.** Medications, hormonal changes, and aging can cause dry eyes. An eye specialist can recommend the appropriate treatment.
- **Get UV-protected sunglasses.** Proper quality eyewear that provides both UVA and UVB coverage is essential to protect your eyes.
- **Take Care Applying Makeup.** Avoid applying makeup, such as eyeliner, foundation, or cover-up, so close to the eyes that it gets into your eye.

For more tips on women's eye health visit our [website](#).

### New Manhattan GuildCare Director

We are pleased to announce that Mordecai Erps has joined Lighthouse Guild as Director of **GuildCare**, Manhattan. With his extensive experience in healthcare and nursing administration, Mordecai will be responsible for daily operations and overall management of our Manhattan program. He previously served as director of nursing services for the Jewish Board of Family and Children Services in New York.

**“As I step into this role, I am deeply honored to join the compassionate and dedicated GuildCare team.”**

**– Mordecai Erps  
Director of GuildCare, Manhattan**



Photo: A quote, “As I step into this role, I am deeply honored to join the compassionate and dedicated GuildCare team,” next to a smiling portrait of Mordecai Erps.

“As I step into this role, I am deeply honored to join the compassionate and dedicated GuildCare team. I look forward to working collaboratively to enhance the quality of life for our participants and their families,” said Mordecai.

Welcome aboard, Mordecai! Visit our [website](#) to learn more about Mordecai.

## **Immediate Open Spots in Our GuildCare Programs!**

Do you care for adult patients, clients, or loved ones who have chronic health conditions? Need assistance with activities of daily living? Have functional vision problems?

**Our GuildCare Adult Day Health Care program** offers comprehensive healthcare and a full day of activities. With centers in New York City, Albany, Buffalo, and Niagara Falls, we will provide a safe, comfortable, and attentive environment. Our expert team provides nursing care, diabetes care, physical, occupational and speech therapy, medication management, vision rehabilitation therapy, social work services, and structured therapeutic activities. Services and activities are specially designed and adapted for individuals with all levels of disability – physical, cognitive, and visual.

**Our GuildCare team** is ready to provide your patient or your 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](#).

## **Danielle Never Gives Up**

Danielle was born prematurely with Retinopathy of Prematurity, resulting in zero visual acuity. She originally hails from Texas and moved to New York with her family when she was five years old. At 15, they moved back to Texas, and then returned to New York when she turned 18.

### **Danielle’s Persistence**

In 2005, Danielle embarked on an 18-year journey to obtain her High School Equivalency (HSE) diploma. She underwent training with various agencies, including Lighthouse Guild and the Catholic Guild for the Blind, and faced numerous challenges. These challenges included a pandemic and recovery from an infection that required brain surgery. She also gave birth to two beautiful children, caring for them while also working on her mobility, vision rehabilitation, and adaptive technology skills. Through it all, Danielle remained determined and persistent in achieving her educational goal. This spring, she passed the final subject area of the GED exam, Math, and earned her HSE diploma. Her Math Instructor, Theresa Chinheya, was instrumental in helping her master this subject. Danielle received her HSE diploma on March 13, 2024. Danielle said, “The feeling of completing and passing the exam is overwhelming. I actually surprised myself, and I feel relieved.”

### **Danielle’s Advice**

Danielle’s advice: “It’s never too late, and it’s important to never give up and to keep pushing forward.” When asked about the **Lighthouse Guild Academic Program**, Danielle said, “Senior Academic Instructor Jacqueline Suh has been wonderful at putting all the accommodations together, and she extends our training for us when necessary.” Senior Academic Instructor Jacqueline Suh said, “Danielle never lost sight of her goal, and finally, her persistence has paid off.”

**“I would recommend Lighthouse Guild to anyone who is blind or has low vision because they offer pretty much every service you might need.”**

**- Danielle**



Photo: A quote, “I would recommend Lighthouse Guild to anyone who is blind or has low vision because they offer pretty much every service you might need,” next to a portrait of Danielle wearing her graduation cap and holding her certificate of achievement.

### **Mobility, Vision Rehabilitation, and Adaptive Technology Skills**

Danielle is grateful for the mobility, vision rehabilitation, and adaptive technology brush-up training she’s received from Lighthouse Guild while preparing for the HSE. She shares that staff has helped familiarize her with her local neighborhood, provided her with safety tips when using her cane, how to safely cross the street, tips on cooking, laundry, and sewing, keyboard training, training with the JAWS screen reader, and how to use a computer touch screen. Danielle said, “The mobility and vision rehabilitation training was important because it helped build my confidence, gave me more independence, and made me stronger.”

### **Danielle is Grateful to Her Lighthouse Guild Team**

Danielle also praises Adaptive Technology Specialist Cheryl Chung, saying, “Cheryl Chung was great at providing me with helpful tips and tricks when using the computer and helping me with all the updates on the new tricks that I did not know.” Regarding Vision Rehabilitation Therapist Monica Torres, Danielle says, “Monica Torres knows my situation because of previous training sessions with me over the years, and she has been a great help to me with brushing up on cooking tips.

Danielle says about **Lighthouse Guild’s Behavioral Health** services, “The therapy sessions available at Lighthouse Guild are key because they offer experts who are specifically trained to work with individuals with vision loss.”

Danielle says, “I would recommend Lighthouse Guild to anyone who is blind or has low vision because they offer pretty much every service you might need.”

### **Danielle’s Plans**

Once Danielle’s children are enrolled in the Head Start program, she’s looking forward to getting a work-from-home job in customer service. Learn more about Danielle’s journey on our [website](#).

### **Successfully Navigating the Tax Season**

Tax season can be stressful. Preparing documents and filling out forms can be extra challenging for people who are blind or visually impaired. To help mitigate these challenges, Lighthouse Guild again this year aided about 125 individuals with filing their 2023 federal, state, and city income tax returns through a partnership with the IRS and the Food Bank for New York City.

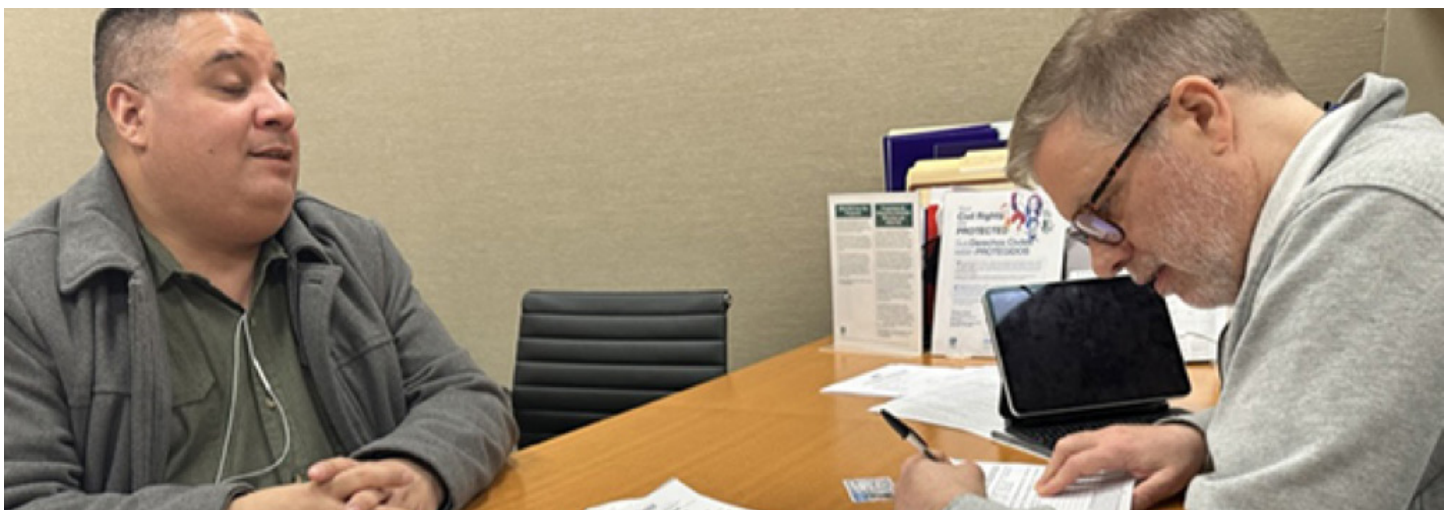


Photo: From left to right, a man who is visually impaired sitting across another man who is filling out tax documents.

Volunteer Dorothy Delayo, who has assisted in our tax preparation program for the past 3 years, says “Places such as Lighthouse Guild are not only able to help scan documents to ease the process of filing taxes, but they are also more equipped to work with specific unique situations that other financial institutions might not have experienced in the past. [Our] preparers are more inclined to go through all documents slowly, answer questions to the best of their knowledge, and ask the right questions to help ensure information is accurate and accounted for.”

## A Visionary Collaboration

Lighthouse Guild’s Rehabilitation Team was thrilled to welcome over 30 counselors and other staff members from **New York State Commission for the Blind (NYSCB)**, part of New York State Office of Children and Family Services, to learn more about the exceptional services that NYSCB participants can access. Together, we can help more people with vision impairment lead the lives they aspire to.



Photo: Youth Services Coordinator Jaydan Mitchell speaks in front of an audience of NYSCB counselors and staff members.

## More Support!

Lighthouse Guild’s national **Tele-Support Groups** enable parents of children with vision impairment as well as teens and adults with vision loss to connect with their peers to share resources, experiences and support. Led by licensed facilitators, the groups are a social and emotional lifeline.

We are excited to announce the launch of two new groups to help **parents who are visually impaired** and **partners of people with vision loss**. Check out these new groups and the rest of our groups — including our **Virtual Book Club** — that help people and their families and loved ones cope with vision loss.



Photos: Left to Right, man wearing glasses holding a baby; An older man wearing glasses next to an older woman wearing glasses.

## Avoid Sports-Related Eye Injuries

April is also **Sports Eye Safety Month**. Every year in the U.S. 100,000 eye injuries are related to sports activities. And around 13,500 of these injuries lead to some degree of permanent vision loss. What is important to note is that 90 percent of sports-related eye injuries can be prevented with the use of protective eyewear. Visit our **website** for safety tips to protect your eyes when playing sports.

## Practice with #NoLimits

Our **Team #NoLimits** practice ride was a huge success! After a brief warm-up, team members rode a 6-mile loop around Central Park. Co-Captain Kiana Glanton and **Bike New York** CEO **Ken Podizba** were interviewed by ABC7NY about the importance of having a team where people who are blind and visually impaired can ride safely in the upcoming TD 5 Boro Bike Tour. Check out the **interview** with ABC.



Photo: From left to right, Bike New York's Ken Podizba, Lighthouse Guild CDO Brian Dever, CMO Jaine Schmidt, Marc Goldstein, CVO Cheryl Pemberton-Graves, Marketing Manager Jeremy Morak, Development Fellow Kiana Glanton, Robert Casellas, Yuchen Liu, Miriam Cruz and her daughter Isabella.

## Ready to Ride on May 5!

**Team #NoLimits** is gearing up to ride in **New York City's TD 5 Boro Bike Tour** and help make a difference in the lives of people with vision loss. Riders will raise awareness and funds that will directly support the services of Lighthouse Guild and Foreseeable Future Foundation while crisscrossing all five boroughs with over 32,000 other cyclists. Visit our **website** to support our riders across the finish line!

## Events

Don't miss some of our upcoming virtual and in-person events:

**May 1** | Tech In-Session: Using AI Apps for Scene and Description | New York City

**May 5** | Team #NoLimits in the TD 5 Boro Bike Tour | New York City

**May 9** | Ask the TVI: Staying Active During Summer Months | Online

**May 16** | Volunteer Recognition Celebration | New York City

**May 20** | Tele-Support Talk: Trailblazing Success with Vision Loss | Online

**May 21** | Tech Talk: iPhone versus Android | Online

**May 21** | Lighthouse Guild at AARP Senior Planet: Smart Phone Apps | New York City

As Danielle taught us, persistence is key to overcoming challenges. Equally important is your support to ensure Lighthouse Guild is always there to help those who are visually impaired achieve their dreams. Please consider **donating, volunteering, referring** people who can benefit from our programs and services, or spreading the word on **X** and **Facebook**.

Be well and stay safe,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Calvin Roberts, MD".

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

**Donate:** [lighthouseguild.org/donate/](https://lighthouseguild.org/donate/)

**Volunteer:** [lighthouseguild.org/volunteer/](https://lighthouseguild.org/volunteer/)

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