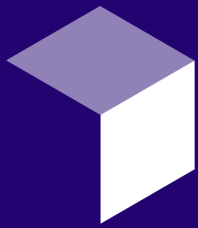


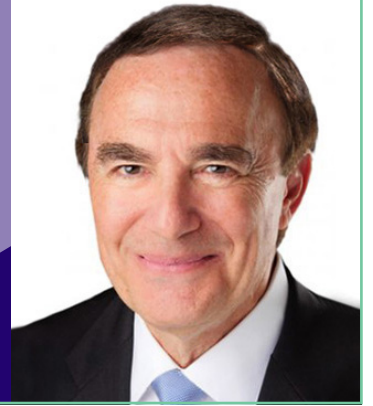
December 2023



# Lighthouse Guild

## Lighthouse Guild In Brief

From Dr. Cal Roberts, President and CEO



### Listen to the Audio

Dear Friends,

### Focusing on Holiday Harmony

The holiday season can bring joy, but it can also be stressful, especially for people who are blind or visually impaired. Everyday tasks like cooking, shopping, and traveling may require extra effort. Social events can be challenging, and those without close connections may feel isolated.



Photo: From left to right, a man tying a bow on a package next to an older woman embracing a young adult male as she presents him with a wrapped gift.

“Being actively involved helps us cope with challenges and strengthens our abilities during the holidays,” says Adrienne Wexler, a licensed clinical social worker at Lighthouse Guild.

Here are some helpful tips:

- **Plan Ahead:** Carefully plan travel and shopping routes. Choose less crowded times for shopping.
- **Acknowledge Feelings:** Feeling sadness or grief during the holidays is okay. Allow yourself to express emotions.
- **Reach Out:** Combat loneliness by seeking support and companionship. Connect with community centers, religious groups, or local organizations.
- **Mind Your Money:** Set a budget for gifts and food shopping. Remember, sometimes simple gifts or meals can be the most meaningful.

If persistent feelings of sadness, anxiety, or physical complaints arise, consider seeking professional help from a doctor or mental health professional. For more tips on avoiding the holiday blues, visit our [website](#). If you, or someone you know, are having difficulty coping, [Lighthouse Guild Behavioral Health](#) professionals are here for you now and throughout the year. We can help you deal with your anxiety, depression, or difficulty adjusting to vision loss and other health conditions.

### Reimagining Visual Arts

Some think of art as a purely visual medium, making it difficult for people who are blind or visually impaired to engage with it. However, recent technological advancements have allowed people to explore new ways of experiencing and creating art. In the latest [On Tech & Vision](#) podcast episode, [Reimagining Visual Arts](#), I speak to El-Deane Naude from Sony Electronics about [Retissa NeoViewer](#), a project developed with [QD Laser](#) that projects images taken on a camera directly onto the photographer’s retina — enabling people with vision loss to see their work more

clearly and easily. I also speak with Bonnie Collura, a sculptor and professor at Penn State University, about her project, **“Together, Tacit.”** Bonnie and her team developed a haptic glove that allows artists who are blind or visually impaired to sculpt with virtual clay — working in conjunction with a sighted partner wearing a VR headset, which helps both to engage with each other and gain a new understanding of the artistic process.



Photo: From left to right, a vase of flowers rendered in blue, yellow and green circles and squares next to a woman facing the vase of flowers, wearing a headset with her hand reaching as if to tactically render what she is viewing. Her hand is surrounded by purple grids and floating pink, blue and yellow bubbles.

We also hear from Greta Sturm of the **State Tactile Omero Museum** in Italy, which provides a fascinating new way for people to engage with the museum’s collection, and painter and makeup artist **Emily Metauten** discusses the usefulness of accessible technology for her career along with the challenges to gaining access to it.

**Shannon is Achieving Her Full Potential**

From early childhood, Shannon grappled with poor vision. She says, “[I was] one of those kids with the thick glasses. I would pay to compress my lenses.” In her mid-30s, a friend recommended an ophthalmologist who detected anomalies in her retina, initiating a series of annual visits to a dedicated retina specialist.

It was in Shannon’s mid-40s when life took an unexpected turn when she was diagnosed with breast cancer during her pursuit of a master’s degree in nursing. While in treatment, her routine retina checkups fell by the wayside. Post-recovery, she noticed a shift in her vision, prompting a return to the retina specialist.

“Lighthouse Guild helped me accept that this was my life and [learn] how I can function at my highest potential.”

– Shannon




Photo: A quote, “[Lighthouse Guild] helped me accept that this was my life and [learn] how I can function at my highest potential,” next to a smiling portrait of Shannon.

Shannon has myopic foveoschisis, a form of macular degeneration where the retina is stretched and distorted, impacting its typical structure and function. In 2018, Shannon underwent surgery on her right eye, which, while stabilizing the situation, failed to improve her vision. Shannon shares, “I can’t read out of my right eye, the condition never went away, and I also developed a permanent obstruction in my eye.”

**Connecting to Lighthouse Guild**

Shannon’s eyes became a constant source of discomfort, marked by swollen glands and the regular use of eye drops. She turned to a dry eye specialist recommended by Lighthouse Guild’s Low Vision Specialist, Dr. Andrea Zimmerman. Shannon says, “Dr. Zimmerman was able to look at the structure of the retina, that sealed the deal to prove that I had low vision.”



“I met with [Accessible Technology Specialist] Cheryl Chung for technology training, who taught me how to really use the computer [such as selecting] high contrast mode, changing the screen, [which] cut down on the glare, and that really was transformative,” Shannon says.

Working with Lighthouse Guild’s Orientation and Mobility and Vision Rehabilitation Therapist Jeff Ambury, Shannon received a home assessment and got different tools to help her cook safely. She says Jeff instructed her on how to use the subways and navigate the streets safely. Shannon uses buses often and subway stations with elevators or escalators. She also uses magnifiers and pocket magnifiers — incorporating colorized lenses into her routine has helped combat glare and brightness.

Shannon says, “Lighthouse Guild helped me realize that even though my vision wasn’t going to get better, they helped me accept that this is my life and [learn] how I can function at my highest potential.”

Active participation in a support group comprised of fellow nurses like herself, led by Social Worker Tamara Greeley, fostered a sense of connection. The group became a space for self-reflection, aiding Shannon in accepting the slower pace of her life. Eager to engage further, she aspires to join a professional group for working individuals, explore adaptive vision technologies at Lighthouse Guild, and contribute as a medical scribe.

**Advocating for Accessibility**

It is due to her journey that Shannon also advocates the pressing need for societal improvements in accessibility for individuals with disabilities. She shares, “I recognize that I am extremely fortunate that I have this flexibility that I can go to work... [As] a society, we have to do better to make things more accessible for people with disabilities.”

Learn more about Shannon on our [website](#).

**Research at Lighthouse Guild**

Through our Research Institute, we conduct studies designed to translate scientific findings and technological advances into useful solutions for people living with vision loss. As the world's only low vision organization with dedicated physical and mental health care facilities, Lighthouse Guild has a history of participation in research trials in an effort to make new treatments available. Visit our [website](#) to learn more about the work we are doing.

**Harmonious Gratitude**

Marc Rosen, founder of the Palm Beach Friends of Lighthouse Guild, hosted a cocktail reception and concert on behalf of Lighthouse Guild. The event was a fun and musical way to thank major supporters for their unwavering support and generosity. Cabaret stars **Billy Stritch** and **Seth Sikes** performed songs from the American songbook to the delight of all in attendance.

To see highlights for this special evening, visit our [website](#).

**Holiday Tea Kickoff**

Lighthouse Guild’s 17th season in Palm Beach began with a festive Holiday Tea hosted by **Jackie Weld Drake** at her Palm Beach home. This season, we are “Saluting the Arts” at our annual **Visionary Evening Dinner** on **February 26, 2024**. We are pleased to recognize the contributions of **Beth DeWoody** and **Firooz Zahedi**, who have been long-standing partners in our work and influential figures in the visual arts community. We will also be honoring **Maestro Gerard Schwarz**, who magnificently leads the Palm Beach Symphony.



Photo: From left to right, Jackie Weld Drake, Dr. Calvin Roberts and Beth DeWoody



For more information or to join us in Palm Beach for our **Visionary Evening Dinner**, contact Mona de Sayve at **561-635-5342** or **[mdesayve@lighthouseguild.org](mailto:mdesayve@lighthouseguild.org)**

### RNIB Was In the House

We were please to meet with representatives of **The Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB)** for an educational exchange on accessible technology.



Photo: From left to right, Chief Development Officer Brian Dever, Development Intern Kiana Glanton, Justin Gold, and Alison Long from RNIB, Chief Operating Officer Paul Misiti and Chief Volunteer Officer Cheryl Pemberton-Graves pose for a picture just before touring the Lighthouse Guild Technology Center.

### That’s A Wrap!

Santa enlists his helpers, and in a similar spirit, we collaborated with the **Goldman Sachs** corporate volunteers to skillfully wrap holiday gifts for the clients in our GuildCare programs.



Photos: From left to right, a volunteer assembling gift bags seated next to festive bags filled with holiday gifts; Nine members of the Goldman Sachs corporate volunteer team pose together before they begin their work.

### Holiday Cheer at GuildCare

Our GuildCare programs are a glow with holiday celebrations for their members. From delicious treats to thoughtful gifts and festivities with our compassionate GuildCare team, our clients had a truly joyful experience.



Photos: GuildCare Buffalo clients, from left to right, an older woman wearing glasses smiles as she holds her gift of a knitted blanked; An older woman wearing a blue Santa hat, glasses and festive blue sweater smiling; An older man wearing glasses, a red Santa hat with a shirt that reads “My favorite people call me Grandpa!”





Photos: GuildCare Buffalo clients, from left to right, two smiling older women wearing bright red festive sweaters and hats pose on either side of a volunteer Santa Claus; GuildCare Buffalo’s Elizabeth Rivera, CNA, located in the upper right portion of the photo, wearing a Santa hat, poses with three joyful clients.

With centers in New York City, Albany, Buffalo, and Niagara Falls, 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 to schedule a tour, visit the GuildCare section of our [website](#).

**Notice of Digital Accessibility Settlement Concerning [www.ifit.com](http://www.ifit.com)**

A proposed settlement has been reached that would resolve the class action lawsuit Douglass v. iFIT Inc., No. 2:23-cv-917-MJH (W.D. Pa.). The lawsuit alleges that iFIT Inc. violated the Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 12101, et seq. by failing to take the necessary steps to ensure its websites, **NordicTrack**, **Pro-Form**, **Freemotion Fitness**, and iFit and its mobile app, **iFIT At-Home Workout & Fitness**, do not discriminate against blind or visually disabled consumers who use screen reader auxiliary aids to access digital content. Under the settlement, iFIT Inc. agrees to take additional steps to make these and other websites and mobile apps, including any new website or mobile app it develops or acquires, accessible to blind or visually disabled consumers. For a more complete summary of the terms of the proposed settlement, please visit the **iFit ADA Settlement** website. If you have questions, visit the **East End Trial Group** website.

Events

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

- December 19** | Tech Talk: 2023 Tech in Review | Online
- December 20** | Envision Webinar: A Year In Review with Dr. Bryan Wolynski | Online
- January 10** | Tower of David Jerusalem Museum Free Audio Descriptive Guided Tour | Online
- January 15** | Tele-Support Talk: Employment Tips to Empower People with Vision Loss | Online
- January 24** | Eye Opening Conversations: The Latest in Vision Tech | Palm Beach, Florida

For information about Eye Opening Conversations: The Latest in Vision Tech event, email: [events@lighthouseguild.org](mailto:events@lighthouseguild.org)


Gifts with Profound Impact

Have you ever gifted someone something that had a profound impact on their life? What if that gift allowed them to pursue their dream job, travel the world, or stay connected with their loved ones through a smartphone? By supporting Lighthouse Guild, you can make all this possible. Please visit our [website](#) to give that gift! With your help, we can offer the services and programs that inspire people who are blind or visually impaired to reach their full potential... and even beyond!

Just like gifts, giving comes in countless ways. Visit our website to learn about two special ways you can provide support: establishing a **Charitable Gift Annuity (CGA)** or making an **IRA Rollover gift**. To learn more about how you can help Lighthouse Guild, please call Donna Lippman, Director of Gift Planning, at 646-874-8443 or email at **[dlippman@lighthouseguild.org](mailto:dlippman@lighthouseguild.org)**.


Please also consider **donating, volunteering, referring** people who can benefit from our programs and services, or spreading the word on **X (formerly Twitter)** and **Facebook**.

On behalf of all of us at Lighthouse Guild, we wish you and your family a happy holiday season and healthy new year!



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

**Donate:** [lighthouseguild.org/donate/](https://lighthouseguild.org/donate/)  
**Volunteer:** [lighthouseguild.org/volunteer/](https://lighthouseguild.org/volunteer/)  
**Share:** X @lighthousegld | Facebook @lighthouseguild



**Lighthouse  
Guild**

Dedicated to providing exceptional services that inspire people who are visually impaired to attain their goals.  
800-284-4422 | [lighthouseguild.org](https://lighthouseguild.org)