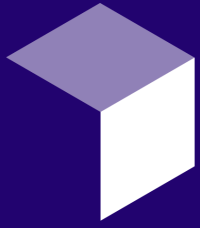
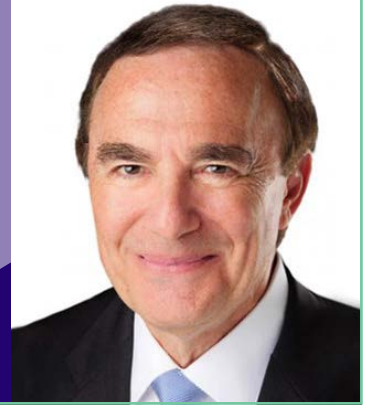


july 2024



# Lighthouse Guild

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



## Listen to the Audio

Dear Friends,

### Celebrating #DisabilityPride and #ADA34

July is **Disability Pride Month** and this year marks the 34th anniversary of the **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**. This important civil rights law prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in many areas of public life such as jobs, schools, and transportation. Its purpose is to ensure that individuals with disabilities have the same rights and opportunities as everyone else.



Photo: A young woman who is visually impaired in a college library using a computer.

The ADA has played a crucial role in advancing the rights and accessibility of people who are blind or visually impaired. It ensures equal opportunities in education, employment, and public services. This month is a powerful reminder to embrace diversity and promote a society that values the unique perspectives and capabilities of individuals with vision impairment. It encourages ongoing efforts to break down barriers, improve accessibility, and foster a more inclusive world for all.

### The Possibilities of Vision Restoration

The latest **“On Tech and Vision”** podcast episode delves into the challenging pursuit of vision restoration. I discuss my work as program manager for a project on eye transplantation called Transplantation of Human Eye Allografts (THEA). Funded by a new federal agency ARPA-H, THEA is bringing some of the country’s finest minds together to tackle the complexities of connecting a person’s brain to an eye from a human donor. Though connecting a donor eyeball to a recipient’s brain has yet to be successful, rapidly advancing technology is bringing us exciting new possibilities to achieve this and restore vision.



Illustration: Colorful digital eye surrounded by numbers on a dark backdrop of circuitry.

The episode also includes my interview with **Dr. Daniel Palanker** of Stanford University, who is pioneering technology for the artificial restoration of sight by replacing photoreceptors in the retina – the cells crucial for translating light into visual signals for the brain.

## Newly Published Study Provides Data on Head-Mounted Display Devices

Advances in hardware and software technologies have led to the development of assistive technology devices that may help people with vision loss achieve their goals, including reading and performing activities of daily living. A recent study published by Lighthouse Guild’s research team in the **Ophthalmic and Physiological Optics, the Journal of the College of Optometrists**, explores the performance, acceptance, and usability of head-mounted display devices.



Photo: A man seated reading a newspaper using a head-mounted display device.

The results found that these devices worked as magnifiers allowing better performance on reading tasks but did not allow for better performance on tasks of daily living. Dr. William Seiple, Chief Research Officer at Lighthouse Guild, emphasized the need for more objective, evidence-based data to help individuals identify the best devices for their specific needs in consultation with their vision health providers. Learn more about this study on our [website](#).

## It’s a Family Affair

Family members play a vital role in the lives of individuals who are blind or visually impaired. They provide essential emotional support and daily assistance, enhancing independence and quality of life. Family members also advocate for necessary services and accommodations, ensuring their loved ones receive the resources they need. Lighthouse Guild recognizes the critical role that family members play in the lives of people with vision loss and is committed to supporting them as well at every step of their family’s journey.

**“... they will go out of their way to help you or your loved one see as well as possible.”**

**—Winston**



Photo: A quote from Winston, “... they will go out of their way to help you or your loved one see as well as possible,” next to a photo of Philomena and Winston wearing sunglasses and smiling.

This month, we are featuring the perspective of the son of a Lighthouse Guild client. He shares about his experience finding care for his mother, who has vision loss.

When Winston conducted an internet search for low vision services, Lighthouse Guild was at the top of the results. He was seeking assistance for his 98-year-old mother, Philomena, a retired operating room nurse who lives independently and has been diagnosed with Macular Degeneration. Philomena, who had once been a voracious reader, reading three to four hours each day, was having considerable difficulty reading and writing as the disease progressed.



## Whirlwind Appointment

During a scheduled appointment at Lighthouse Guild that Winston described as “a whirlwind,” Low Vision Specialist Dr. Rebekah Lin provided Philomena with a complete examination and diagnosed her as having low vision – meeting the criteria for being legally blind. Dr. Lin submitted the required documentation to the New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (NJCBVI) and gave Philomena follow-up contact information.

Winston said, “Dr. Lin was very patient and thorough in my mother’s vision examination, and she fully answered our questions.” He singled out Optician Cynthia Acevedo and said, “Cynthia was helpful in providing my mother with new glasses, a better magnifying light and helpful in explaining their best use application,” and Occupational Therapist Inna Babaeva “was also very patient and thorough – making the extra time to see my mother, even though she did not have a slot for a full normal appointment.”

## Improvement in Daily Life

Before coming to Lighthouse Guild, Philomena was limited to reading a few paragraphs a day, which was a struggle. “The new glasses have allowed her to read several chapters in the Bible each morning and also enable her to use her phone better and to write letters and address envelopes,” said Winston. “The magnifying glass has also been helpful with reading her bank statement and any items with small font.”

## Recommendation

Winston says, “If you or your loved one is dealing with the complexities of loss of vision or low vision, the people at Lighthouse Guild are specialists in this field, highly professional, and efficient, and they will go out of their way to help you or your loved one see as well as possible.”

To read more about Winston and Philomena, visit our [website](#).

## Honoring a Devoted Volunteer

We celebrate the life of Herbert Biern, a dedicated Lighthouse Guild volunteer and esteemed lawyer who practiced in New York and Washington, DC. Herbert’s lifelong commitment to service began in his childhood in Westchester, where he collected donations for Lighthouse Guild instead of candy on Halloween. His legacy of kindness and dedication continues to inspire us all, reminding us of the profound impact one individual can have on their community. Learn more about Herbert’s contributions to our mission on our [website](#).

## The Tempest: A Surround Sound Odyssey

Lighthouse Guild has partnered with [Knock at the Gate](#) to bring a unique experience to individuals who are blind or visually impaired. This collaboration offers the opportunity to enjoy Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* in 3D surround sound from the comfort of home or any preferred location.



Image: Dark background with white text that reads “The Tempest: A Surround Sound Odyssey”

Knock at the Gate’s latest immersive audio experience, “The Tempest: A Surround Sound Odyssey,” is designed for dark environments and headphones. It transports listeners to the mystical depths and shores of Shakespeare’s magical island, immersing them in the heart of his beloved tale of magic and miracles, where a vengeful sorcerer is conjuring his final spell.

“We are thrilled to partner with the Lighthouse Guild in bringing Knock at the Gate’s newest 3D audio adventure exclusively to this wonderful community. We hope listeners will find themselves immersed in a unique sensory experience through Shakespeare’s final play,” says Joseph Discher and Sean Hudock, Co-Founders of Knock at the Gate.

Visit our [website](#) to register and experience The Tempest for free. This exclusive access is available until August 31.

## Events

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

**July 27** | Lighthouse Guild & The MET Virtual Art Workshop for Children and Teens | Online

**August 6** | Seeing AI Workshop | New York City

**August 7** | Tech In-Session: Accessing Digital and Audio Media Platforms v New York City

**August 10** | Blind Baseball Clinic v New York City

**August 15** | Accessing Entertainment & Panel Discussion for People with Vision Loss | New York City & Online

**August 19** | Tele-Support Talk: Returning to Routine with Purpose | Online

**August 20** | Tech Talk: Tech Updates and Community Q&A | Online

**August 21** | Accessible Voting Demonstration and Workshop | New York City

Our vision at Lighthouse Guild is a world in which no person is limited by their visual capacity. With your support, we continue our efforts to break down barriers, improve accessibility, and enable a more inclusive world for all. Please consider **donating, volunteering, referring** people who can benefit from our programs and services, or spreading the word on **X** and **Facebook**.



**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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