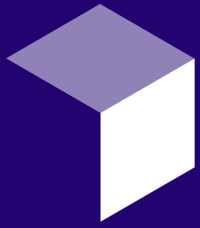


March 2024



Lighthouse Guild

Lighthouse Guild In Brief

From Dr. Cal Roberts, President and CEO



Listen to the Audio

March is Social Work Awareness Month

Social workers are essential in helping people with vision loss manage challenges. From addressing urgent and chronic life issues to ensuring people can get to their appointments, get their medications, and access needed medical equipment, social workers are on hand to offer professional guidance and smooth the way.

“When a person receives a diagnosis of vision loss, it can initially be devastating,” says Jocelyn Tapia, LCSW-R, Clinical Social Worker at Lighthouse Guild. “Social workers coordinate care, connect people with resources, and offer a listening ear. We are licensed to assess biological, psychological, and social situations and make mental health diagnoses.



Photo: A support group with a man and two women out of focus in the background and facing a man, who is in focus in the foreground wearing glasses with his hand raised.

Here are some tips from Lighthouse Guild social workers to help someone coping with vision loss:

- **Understand your condition:** See an eyecare specialist to understand your condition and possible treatments.
- **See a low vision specialist:** Low vision experts can help you maximize your remaining vision with aids, devices, and training. Visit our [website](#) to make an appointment.
- **Seek counseling:** Counseling can help you deal with the emotions of vision loss and learn coping strategies.
- **Join a support group:** Connecting with others facing similar challenges can reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation.

For more tips and how social workers can help, visit our [website](#).

A Visionary Evening

We hosted our annual dinner, “**A Visionary Evening**,” which this year was a “Salute to the Arts.” Lighthouse Guild was pleased to honor 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 also recognized **Maestro Gerard Schwarz**, who magnificently leads the Palm Beach Symphony. Cabaret stars **Billy Stritch** and **Seth Sikes** performed to the delight of a record number of guests. The event’s proceeds will support our programs and services that help people who are blind or visually impaired to achieve their aspirations.



Photo: From left to right, Maestro Gerard Schwarz, Beth DeWoody, Firooz Zahedi

For me, the highlight of the evening was when Kiana Glanton, staff member and client, shared about her journey of becoming a blind baseball all-star and helping Team USA medal. Visit our [website](#) for more photos and details about the event.

Jeff is Fearless

57-year-old Jeff has been blind since birth due to underdeveloped optic nerves. He has also been a client of our GuildCare program in Albany for 22 years – attending twice a week. He says, “I pretty much needed the program for socialization purposes. Otherwise, I would only be sitting at home. Being blind makes it difficult for one to get a job and other stuff. You need a purpose to get out and talk to people.”

“[GuildCare has] been great. We have counseling, social workers, and health education and we are informed about a lot of different things.”

—Jeff



Photo: A quote, “[GuildCare has] been great. We have counseling, social workers, and health education and we are informed about a lot of different things,” next to a portrait of Jeff.

GuildCare Services

Our GuildCare 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 like Jeff and others that may have various levels of disability – physical, cognitive, and visual. Jeff says that GuildCare “[has] been great. [It has] counseling, social workers, and health education ...” He continues, “I receive therapy, nursing, and social work services. I also received physical and mobility services earlier on.”

“Some of [the] skills I have learned and gotten better at [are] being able to talk to other people, my mobility has improved and being able to get around, and I have gotten a lot better at just being a friend and someone that people like,” Jeff says.

GuildCare Activities

GuildCare’s therapeutic and nutritional education activities are designed to help clients maintain their mental and physical health. Jeff says he likes the sports and cooking group, “I enjoy these groups mostly because [they involve] teamwork, and we are all working together... The cooking group is good because they show you how to use different cooking utensils [and] different marks on the stove and other things.”

Another activity Jeff enjoys is a football bean bag toss game. He says, “Since I cannot see the holes, the other participants clap their hands to help me know which direction to toss the bean bag. I have a fanny pack pouch around my waist, and I always try to line up the beanie bag pouch with the sound, so I know where to throw the bag. And sometimes I do win at the competition.”

GuildCare Albany Director Nancy Smith says, “Jeff participates in all activities here and does not allow his [inability] to see to restrict him at all. And he does a great job. Jeff constantly surprises me

with [many] things he can do independently and [what] he has learned throughout the years. And how unafraid of the world that he is. He has no fear.”

Jeff says Nancy is “a nice lady” and the GuildCare staff, “have nice personalities, they are bubbly, outgoing, and they love doing lots of different things.”

Friendships

Jeff shares that he looks forward to coming to the program, talking, hanging out with everybody, and getting a good, healthy meal.

Vision Rehabilitation Therapist Kelly Reed says, “Jeff is a really good friend and always welcoming to the new people that come in [to the program]. He asks people [many] questions about themselves, and he is very patient. [Jeff] is also very patient with new staff when they come on board. He’s one of the first clients willing to show other people the ropes... I have worked with Jeff and he is always willing to try new things... Having Jeff here is great for the staff because we learn new things from our clients every day. One thing I admire most about Jeff is that he has no fear.”

Jeff shares, “Kelly is a nice person, and I always look forward to seeing and interacting with her.”

“I have met a lot of good friends here [who] are really nice,” Jeff says. “I sit next to [another GuildCare client], and we talk quite a bit about different things like all the different organizations for people who are blind and such. He and I both love the Magic 590 radio station.”

Why GuildCare?

When asked why others should consider the GuildCare program, Jeff says, “It’s a really good idea because they have a lot of great activities such as exercise and sports programs, they have arts and crafts, cooking groups, and they have Bingo once a month, which is everyone’s favorite.”

To learn more about Jeff, visit our [website](#).

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](#).

Teens Ace the Sound of Tennis at Court 16!

Our **Saturday Youth Transition Program** teens experienced **The Sound of Tennis** at Court 16 in Manhattan. This adaptive sport provides an opportunity for people who are blind or visually impaired to enjoy tennis with audible cues. Everyone had a fantastic time, and we look forward to incorporating tennis into our expanding list of adaptive athletics at Lighthouse Guild!



Photo: Participants of the Youth Services Program, Lighthouse Guild staff and Court 16 staff line up at the end of a tennis court holding rackets.

Mental Health and Care for People with Vision Loss and Blindness

We are pleased to announce that an article co-authored by Lighthouse Guild Director of Health and Behavioral Health Services Edward Ross and Chief Psychiatrist Dr. César A. Alfonso has been published in **Psychodynamic Psychiatry**, the official journal of The American Academy of Psychodynamic Psychiatry and Psychoanalysis. Titled **Psychodynamic Psychiatry and the Care of Persons with Vision Loss and Blindness**, the article is also a result of years of collaboration between our Behavioral Health, Health Center, and Rehabilitation Services experts. The article focuses on the importance of understanding how mental and physical health can affect each other in people with vision loss. By considering their emotions and experiences when treating individuals who are visually impaired, the approach can aid in dealing with challenges like depression, anxiety, and negative self-perceptions. Visit the Guilford Press Periodicals [website](#) to read this highly insightful article.

Academic Milestones

We celebrated four students who met their milestones on their journey to achieve a high school equivalency diploma. Our dedicated Academic Services team rejoiced with the students and their families during a special recognition ceremony. One of the students, Danielle, successfully ended her 18-year journey and earned her diploma! To learn more about Lighthouse Guild's Academic and Career Services that help people who are blind and visually impaired prepare for college, land internships, and thrive at work, visit our [website](#).



Photo: From left to right, Rehabilitation Instructor Monica Torres; Academic Instructor Gabriella Oldham; Keyboarding Instructor Dennis Farro; students Frdous, Veronica, Amanda, and Danielle; Academic Instructor Teresa Chinheya; and Senior Academic Instructor Jacque Suh.

Gear Up! Team #NoLimits Practice Rides

Riders are needed! Join our team, Team #NoLimits, 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 join our team or support our riders!

Practice with us! Whether you've already joined Team #NoLimits, are interested in joining, or want to stay active and healthy, everyone is invited to practice with us on Saturday mornings **beginning March 30** in Central Park! Learn about the tour, the best ways to train, and general tips on cycling followed by a 6-mile loop through the park. Visit our [website](#) to register for our practice ride.

Events

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

March 30, April 6 & 20 | Team #NoLimits Bike Practice Rides | Central Park, New York City

Through March 31 | Lighthouse Guild Scholarship Program: Applications Open | Online

Through April 4 | 2023 Tax Preparation Program | New York City

April 15 | Tele-Support Talk: Exploring the World of Adaptable Sports | Online

April 11 | Tech In-Session: Zoom Accessibility | New York City

April 16 | Tech Talk: Cyber Safety: Passwords and Scams | Online

Make a Difference and Receive Benefits

Now is a great time to establish a charitable gift annuity (“CGA”) with Lighthouse Guild, through our affiliates Lighthouse International or Jewish Guild for the Blind as rates have increased. A gift annuity is a simple contract in which, in exchange for your contribution, you and/or your loved ones receive fixed payments for life. And you receive a charitable income tax deduction for a portion of your gift. The amount remaining after the payment term helps Lighthouse Guild carry out its mission. See our website for current **Gift Annuity Rates**.

To learn more about ways to make a planned gift at Lighthouse Guild, please visit our **website** or contact Donna Lippman, Director of Gift Planning, at **dlippman@lighthouseguild.org** or 646-874-8443.

Thanks to your support, our clients, patients, and students can receive the services, programs and resources they need to fearlessly achieve their goals! Please consider **donating, volunteering, referring** people who can benefit from our programs and services, or spreading the word on **X** (formerly Twitter and **Facebook**).

Be well and stay safe,



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

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Share: X @lighthousegl | Facebook @lighthouseguild



Dedicated to providing exceptional services that inspire people who are visually impaired to attain their goals.
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