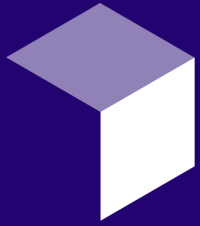
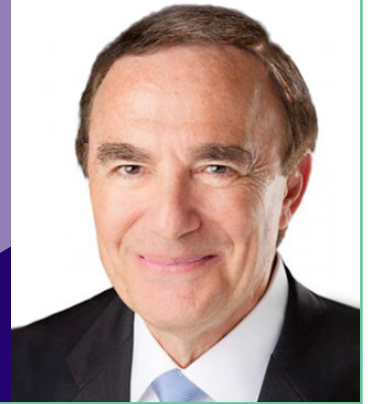


May 2024



Lighthouse Guild

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



Listen to the Audio

Dear Friends,

Focus on Eye Health

According to the American Academy of Ophthalmology, approximately 37 million adults in the U.S. have age-related macular degeneration, cataracts, diabetic retinopathy, or glaucoma, all of which can cause vision loss. **May is Healthy Vision Month**, a reminder that taking care of your eyes should be a health priority year-round to protect your vision. Beginning with a comprehensive dilated eye exam to check for common vision problems and eye diseases, Lighthouse Guild encourages people of all ages to schedule regular eye exams, especially older adults who are at increased risk for eye disease. You can request an **appointment** with one of our vision specialists for you and your family.



Photo: Woman wearing sunglasses and a hat holding an apple.

More Tips to Protect Your Vision

In addition to regular eye exams, other simple practices can help maintain healthy vision, including:

- **Wearing protective eyewear** when playing sports or doing activities such as painting, yardwork, and home repairs.
- **Wearing sunglasses** that block 99-100 percent of ultraviolet A (UVA) and ultraviolet B (UVB) radiation.
- **Quitting smoking.**
- **Eating healthy foods that protect your sight**, such as dark leafy greens and fish high in omega-3 fatty acids.

For more eye health tips, visit our [website](#).

Biosensor Technology: The Future of Diagnostic Medicine

Biosensors, which sense the various pressure levels in our bodies, such as blood pressure, are revolutionizing diagnostic and preventive medicine and making science fiction a reality. The latest episode of **“On Tech and Vision”** focuses on the future of biosensors and the endless possibilities. I speak with Doug Adams, founder of a company called QURA, a pioneering entrepreneur who created a biosensor that can assist in treating glaucoma. QURA’s Chief Business Officer, David Hendren, adds insights into the company’s initiatives. I also speak with co-founder and General Manager of Implants Ophthalmic Products, Max Ostermeier, about his company’s Eyemate system, which includes biosensor technology for patients with glaucoma that gathers intraocular pressure data.



Digital illustration: An outline of a human figure, with arms extended out, in front of a glowing sphere with biological and medical symbols swirling around the edges of the sphere.

Navigating New Depths: Laurie’s Sea of Possibilities

Laurie is an 83-year-old licensed psychoanalyst, art historian, and author. She holds a PhD in Art History and started her career at New York University (NYU) in 1976. Since retiring in 2000, she has continued working as a clinician, seeing patients online and writing books. Laurie’s current book project is titled **The Image of the Female Body in Western Art**. Two years ago, Laurie’s husband of thirty years passed away which she describes as “devastating.”

Adapting to Vision Loss

Laurie didn’t know she had macular degeneration when she started losing her vision. She noticed a gradual difference four to five years ago, and it has worsened with stress. She says to slow the progression, she receives injections every six weeks.

Laurie found it challenging to live in Westchester with her condition, so she moved back to Manhattan for its convenience, musical performances and her friends. With little time, she had to empty her home, sell her house and office, find a new apartment, and move in. Despite all this, she continued her online practice.

“I’m incredibly impressed by the services Lighthouse Guild provides. I think what they do is astonishing, and it’s been amazing for me.”

—Laurie



Photo: A quote, “I’m incredibly impressed by the services Lighthouse Guild provides. I think what they do is astonishing, and it’s been amazing for me,” next to a portrait of Laurie who is smiling.

Low Vision Services

Laurie had no personal experience with Lighthouse Guild until she lost her vision. Her ophthalmologist recommended Dr. Bruce Rosenthal, former Chief of Low Vision Services. Since his retirement, Laurie has been under the care of Low Vision Specialist Dr. Andrea Zimmerman.

After connecting with Lighthouse Guild, Laurie said, “They keep providing me with new and different things. Vision Rehabilitation Therapist Lilly Harris provided me with all kinds of supplies, including a talking scale and other devices that make my life easier. Orientation and Mobility Instructor Diane Formosa provided me with a cane and the tips I would need when using it with my rollator. Since losing my vision, I feel more cautious when walking outdoors, and these devices give me more confidence. They provide additional balance and stability when I’m crossing the street and walking on the sidewalks. They alert others that I have a vision impairment.”

Technology: A Tremendous Help

Laurie's work heavily relies on visual elements, and her diagnosis of Macular Degeneration has been a significant setback for her. When Dr. Zimmerman introduced Laurie to Occupational Therapist Inna Babaeva, she was able to explore various technology devices at our Technology Center. After trying out several options, Laurie decided to buy two devices that she believes will greatly assist her with her work. Once she completed vision assessment exercises on the computer and iPad, Social Services Assistant Domingo Pascual determined Laurie qualified for technology training. This training will provide her with helpful tips and apps for using her phone and computer.

Laurie has always been a huge fan of the Opera. Once she lost her vision, reading the text of an opera (libretto) was no longer possible. The technology team suggested a device she could place on her glasses or head and read the libretto while watching the performance. Laurie said, "It was amazing that they tried to come up with a device for me to use and that they loaned them to me so I could try them out at the Opera to see if they would work."

Under the Sea

After planning a vacation in the Caribbean, Laurie shared with Dr. Zimmerman her disappointment in how her loss of vision has hindered her hobby of snorkeling. She could no longer see the fish and coral when underwater. Dr. Zimmerman met with one of the opticians, and a pair of prescription snorkeling goggles were made for Laurie to use. Laurie said, "I tested them while on vacation, and I was able to see all the fish swimming around me as well as the beautiful coral. The goggles worked magnificently."

Thoughts on Lighthouse Guild

Laurie credits and is grateful to The New York State Commission for the Blind (NYSCB) for being instrumental in connecting her with Lighthouse Guild. Laurie said, "I'm incredibly impressed by the services Lighthouse Guild provides. I think what they do is astonishing, and it's been amazing for me. They are so unbelievably accommodating, and they keep coming up with new and different ways to help people with vision loss. When I feel desolate or despairing, I know there is a resource out there that is continuously helping lots of people. Because of Lighthouse Guild's assistance, I now know that I will be able to get my book written."

Read more about Laurie's journey on our [website](#).

Mental Health Awareness Can Help with Vision Loss

May is also Mental Health Awareness Month. Mental health awareness and management are vital to a healthy lifestyle and influence thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Some people who experience vision loss later in life are more vulnerable to mental health struggles but are unaware of them.



Photo: An older man wearing glasses speaking to a therapist.

"When anyone receives a diagnosis of vision loss, it can be a shock to the system," Jocelyn Tapia, Clinical Social Worker in Lighthouse Guild's Behavioral Health Clinic, explains. "A lot of people are concerned about their future and living independently." Knowing what resources and support are available can bring positivity and optimism during this journey.

Jocelyn has outlined the key pillars of mental health awareness that can help a person not only recognize signs of mental illness but learn strategies to overcome it. Visit our [website](#) and read more.

Programs that Score Big

Accessible sports and activities provide individuals who are blind or visually impaired with physical, social, and emotional benefits, fostering inclusivity, independence, and personal growth. For participants in our **Youth Programs**, May was a particularly winning month — with a blind baseball clinic in Central Park and a goalball clinic at the **Trinity School**!

Len and Emily Blavatnik, whose **Blavatnik Family Foundation** generously supports the work of our Youth Programs, say, “The foundation is proud to help make Lighthouse Guild’s essential youth programs possible, and fun events like this Clinic help everyone achieve and advance their goals!”

An Afternoon of Home Runs

Early in May, nineteen students ages six to thirteen from our **Youth Skills Program** gathered in Central Park to participate in a clinic for the adaptive sport of blind baseball. Players and coaches from the **United States Blind Baseball Association (USBBA)** provided their expertise, guidance and support while cheering the students on as they learn about playing the sport. Partners for the fun-filled event included Lighthouse Guild’s blind baseball team the Lightning, the USBBA, and **Peperino West Side** who stepped up to the plate by providing lunch, which was a home run with the students. Check out our students enjoying the clinic on our **website**.



Photo: Students of Lighthouse Guild Youth Skills Program, USBBA coaches and players, Lighthouse Guild staff and volunteers pose together at a Central Park baseball field.

Attaining Goals

In mid-May, twenty-five students ages fourteen to twenty-one from our **Youth Transition Program** participated in an exhilarating goalball clinic. The sport, devised for individuals who are blind or visually impaired, was played at the Trinity School in New York City. This inaugural clinic was co-hosted by **The New York Association of Blind Athletes (NYABA)** and our **Stephen T. Pearlman Volunteer Center**.



Photos: Left to right, Manuel Puma, a player with the NYABA, shows a student the proper stance; A student in mid-throw of a goalball.

The game of goalball originated in 1946 and over the years has become the premier team sport for blind athletes, played competitively in 112 countries. For some of the students, this was their first experience playing the sport. The teens left the clinic with the key message that adaptive sports enable everyone to participate and that there are no limits to what people who are blind or visually impaired can do. For more about this game-changing event, visit our **website**.

One Tour, No Limits

On Sunday, May 5, Lighthouse Guild and the **Foreseeable Future Foundation** joined forces by forming Team #NoLimits and riding in the **2024 TD Five Boro Bike Tour** — the largest cycling event in the country and one of the most popular athletic events in New York City with approximately, 32,000 cyclists participating. As a charity partner of the bike tour, Team #NoLimits raised over \$75,000 to support vision health and rehabilitation services, as well as sports and recreational programs for people who are blind or visually impaired.

Team #NoLimits included 37 cyclists, sixteen of whom rode in tandem on bicycles built for two. The team included cyclists who are blind or visually impaired, staff, family members, friends, and volunteers. In addition to increasing awareness about the importance of eye health, Team #NoLimits encourages a healthy and active lifestyle through accessible sports for people who are blind or visually impaired. Check out our **website** for highlights and interviews from this extraordinary day! There is still time to support the team by visiting our **website**.



Photos: Left to right, Team #NoLimits co-captains, Griffin Pinkow, Founder of Foreseeable Future Foundation and Kiana Glanton, Development Fellow of Lighthouse Guild; Group photo of some of Team #NoLimits members at the starting line.

Funding to Study Assistive Devices for People with Vision Impairment

One billion people worldwide have vision impairment that could be helped with assistive technology. While numerous assistive technology devices are now available, many people with vision impairment experience difficulties in finding the right device for their specific needs. It is against this backdrop that Lighthouse Guild is honored to receive the American Macular Degeneration Foundation (AMDF) Thrive Award of \$75,000 to study the effectiveness of various assistive technology devices. The goal is to provide objective information that will help people with vision impairment determine which devices will work best for them.



Photo: A man using a wearable adaptive device to read a bus schedule.

“AMDF is as committed to improving quality of life for those living with AMD as we are to driving the development of new treatments that can preserve or restore sight,” says Matthew Levine, Director of Grants, Partnerships and Advocacy at AMDF. “The findings from this study will ripple across the entire AMD community, helping patients quickly find assistive technology that meets their unique needs, while allowing providers of low vision services to optimize their consultations.”

Learn more about this prestigious award on our [website](#).

Events

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

June 5 | Tech In-Session: Smart Glasses | New York City

June 11 | Lighthouse Guild at AARP Senior Planet: Electronic Magnification Devices | New York City

June 13 | Ask the TVI: Summer Reading | Online

June 17 | Tele-Support Talk: The Critical Role of Pediatric Vision Screening | Online

June 18 | Tech Talk: Exploring Meta Smart Glasses | Online

With your support, Lighthouse Guild can help individuals who are blind or visually impaired maintain their careers, revel in the arts, travel, engage in sports, and even explore the sea! 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,



Calvin W. Roberts, MD

President and CEO, Lighthouse Guild
X: @EyeDrCal

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