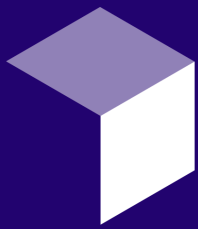


November 2023



# Lighthouse Guild

## Lighthouse Guild In Brief

From Dr. Cal Roberts, President and CEO



### Listen to the Audio

Dear Friends,

### Diabetes Risks: Be Aware and Take Care

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), about 38 million Americans have diabetes. That's 1 in 10 people in the U.S. One of the most common diabetes-related complications is vision loss. Fortunately, you can help reduce the risk and preserve eyesight. Check out the Lighthouse Guild [website](#) for tips.

"The most important step is to have regular physical exams and comprehensive dilated eye examinations," says Dr. Laura Sperazza, Director of Low Vision Services at Lighthouse Guild. "Diabetic eye diseases, such as diabetic retinopathy, a serious eye disorder caused by damage to the blood vessels in the back of the eye, often have no symptoms in the early stages. By regularly monitoring eye health, treatment can begin as soon as signs of disease appear, helping to prevent vision loss."



Photo: A woman receiving an eye exam by a female eye doctor.

November is Diabetes Awareness Month, and we urge everyone to be aware of the risks and take steps to preserve their health and vision. For more information about risks for diabetes and diabetes-related eye disease and tips on what you can do, visit our [website](#).

### Celebrating A Visionary Leader

We recently hosted a special event to honor **Dr. Bruce P. Rosenthal**, former Chief of Low Vision Services of Lighthouse Guild. About sixty guests came together in New York City to celebrate Dr. Rosenthal's impressive fifty-year career in low vision care.

Lighthouse Guild Board Chairman James Dubin and I were pleased to highlight Dr. Rosenthal's pivotal role in our organization. A touching video featured testimonials from patients and colleagues, followed by Dr. Rosenthal expressing gratitude and discussing his future plans. The evening concluded with the announcement of **The Dr. Bruce Rosenthal Chair in Low Vision Services** to honor his exceptional legacy and the launch of a campaign to raise an endowment to support this position. To see the video and highlights from the evening, visit our [website](#).



Photo: President and CEO Dr. Calvin Roberts, Dr. Bruce Rosenthal and Chairman of the Board James Dubin.

To learn more about or provide support to The Dr. Bruce Rosenthal Chair in Low Vision Services, contact [development@lighthouseguild.org](mailto:development@lighthouseguild.org).

**Through Bob’s Lens**

Bob retired in 2015 after years of owning and operating an antique gallery in New York City. He also has a jewelry business on Madison Avenue, including a boutique in Bergdorf Goodman, which his niece and nephew now run.

Bob has Retinitis Pigmentosa (RP). When he received the news of his RP diagnosis and was told that there was no treatment available, Bob did not accept this verdict. He scheduled an appointment with an ophthalmologist in Boston who was researching RP and followed the prescribed regimen, which was helpful to him.

According to Bob, his visual acuity is terrific. However, his field of vision has become more limited. He gave up driving at the age of 65 but said he can still navigate on his own. He finds a walking cane is helpful when navigating the streets.

Bob says one of the issues in having RP is that you lose confidence when walking. He mainly uses the walking cane when entering restaurants or at night when it’s more difficult to see steps and bumps in the streets. The cane is also helpful to him when walking downstairs, where there is no railing. He explains that one issue a person can have with a vision impairment is bumping into people, but when using the cane, people tend to be helpful by giving you space.

“I always felt [Dr. Rosenthal] was going to do whatever he could to help me, and he had his finger on the pulse of what was going on in the vision field.”

—Bob



**Connecting with Lighthouse Guild**

About 25 years ago, Bob was referred to the former Chief of Low Vision Services, Dr. Bruce Rosenthal. Bob said, “Once I connected with Dr. Rosenthal, he conducted extensive testing on my vision and provided me with an accurate idea of my vision capabilities and limitations.” Bob said, “Dr. Rosenthal began doing what he could to improve and deal with the reality of my vision, and one of the most significant things he did was to propose color-tinted eyeglass lenses.”

According to Bob, people with RP have a limited light intake. For him, the sun and ordinary bright daylight can make it very difficult to see. Bob said, “Without a doubt, the color-tinted lenses have greatly slowed the progression of my eye disease. They have really helped.” Over the years, the tinted colors of the lenses have changed to address his needs — for the past decade he has found yellow-tinted lenses to be most helpful.

**Mobility Training**

Dr. Rosenthal connected Bob with a vision rehabilitation therapist at Lighthouse Guild, who helped him to make the most of his vision. Although his vision impairment has not reached a point of requiring him to use a mobility cane, Bob received several training sessions with a Lighthouse Guild mobility instructor. Bob said, “Not only was she very nice and helpful, but she also taught me how to use the mobility cane correctly.”

**Dr. Bruce Rosenthal**

Bob met with Dr. Rosenthal yearly for his annual checkup. During their appointment, Dr. Rosenthal would provide Bob with updates about any research he knew about. He said, “Dr. Rosenthal was a very warm and conversational man, and what was always clear to me was that he was really interested. I always felt he was going to do whatever he could to help me, and he had his finger on the pulse of what was going on in the vision field. He was in touch with all the new research as well as all the innovative technology. He was very comforting, and as you can imagine, you wander around not knowing which way is up because you have this thing that is out of control, and here is someone who is kind of standing by your side.”



**Bob’s Advice**

In terms of Lighthouse Guild, Bob said, “It’s my understanding that RP is not curable, so a person wants to do whatever they can do to manage it, and Lighthouse Guild is that place to go. The Lighthouse Guild team will know how to manage your RP best.”

To read more about Bob and his colorful journey, visit our [website](#).

**Kicking Off Our Cycling Team**

Lighthouse Guild has teamed up with the **Foreseeable Future Foundation** to break down barriers and build the strongest team to participate in the **2024 TD Five Boro Bike Tour** in New York City! Team **#NoLimits** will include athletes who are blind, visually impaired, and fully sighted; and members will ride through all five boroughs raising awareness and funds that will go directly to the services of both organizations.

The Lighthouse Guild Visionary Committee hosted a kickoff cocktail reception to begin growing and supporting our cycling team. Many guests brought their energy and enthusiasm raising over \$2,300 and signing up to join the team. Stay tuned for more on Team #NoLimits and how you can help as we pedal towards the 2024 TD Five Boro Bike Tour and our fundraising goal!



Photo: Lighthouse Guild Visionary Committee members Shelley Gitelson, David Lefty, Jeremy Morak, Development Intern Kiana Glanton, Josh Berger, Jeremy Edelson and Leanne Honig.

If you are interested in joining our team and making a difference in the lives of people who are blind or visually impaired visit our [website](#).

**We Salute Our Veterans**

At GuildCare Niagara Falls, we hosted a memorable celebration to honor our members who are Veterans. Expressing our deepest gratitude, we individually acknowledged each Veteran, extending heartfelt thanks for their service. The Veterans were each presented with a distinctive tribute plaque, symbolizing our appreciation for their invaluable contributions.



Photos: Two older men wearing dark caps reading special tribute plaques; An older man wearing a dark cap with the words “Native American Veteran” on it.

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](#).

## Laugh for Sight

Laughter and generosity collided at the Laugh for Sight NYC Comedy Show Fundraiser hosted at the legendary Gotham Comedy Club. Lighthouse Guild is honored to have been one of three beneficiaries of the proceeds raised at this amazing event, along with the U.S. Blind Baseball Association and Flight for Sight. Our thanks to **Laugh for Sight** and the comedians Robert Klein, Jim Gaffigan, Rich Vos, Bonnie McFarlane, Geoffrey Asmus, Brian Fischler and his guide dog Wesley, and Brian McCarthy. Their efforts played a significant role in raising awareness and funds to support individuals who are blind or visually impaired.

## SUNY Tours Our Tech Center

We were thrilled to host The State University of New York (SUNY) Optometric Innovations and Technology Club for a tour of our Technology Center.



Photo: Chief Technology Officer Dr. Bryan Wolynski (far left) and Low Vision Specialist Dr. Rebekah Lin (3rd person from the right) pose with the 9 members of the SUNY Optometric Innovations and Technology Club under the Lighthouse Guild Technology Center sign.

## Events

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

**November 20** | Tele-Support Talk: Explaining Vision Impairment to Siblings | Online

**November 21** | Tech Talk: Featuring **Be My Eyes** | Online

**December 2** | Tech Talk: Featuring **GoodMaps** | Online


**December 9** | Virtual Art Workshop for Youth Who are Blind or Visually Impaired | Online

## Giving Thanks, Making a Difference

There are so many reasons to be thankful. At Lighthouse Guild, we are most thankful for the support that enables us to provide exceptional services that inspire people who are visually impaired to attain their goals. We hope you will take the time on **Giving Tuesday (November 28)**, or any time before the end of 2023 to give a **gift of support** to Lighthouse Guild. The holidays can be difficult for some, especially people with vision impairment. Our services are a lifeline for those coping with depression and vision-related challenges. With your help, we can do so much in the lives of so many, and that is something we can all be thankful for.

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**.

Wishing you a happy, healthy, and safe Thanksgiving!

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

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