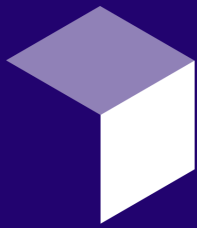


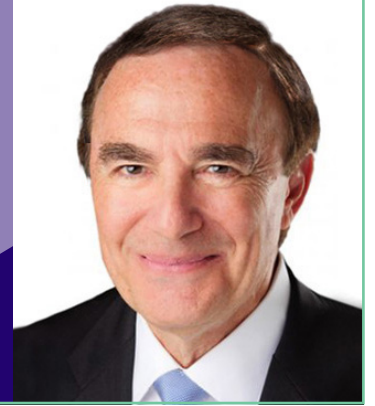
October 2023



Lighthouse Guild

Lighthouse Guild In Brief

From Dr. Cal Roberts, President and CEO



Listen to the Audio

Dear Friends,

Be Spooky, Stay Safe

Happy Halloween! On this fun and festive holiday, it's important to prioritize eye safety, especially if you or your children are wearing costumes that involve masks, makeup, or accessories that could potentially harm your eyes. Here are some safety tips:

- **Choose safe costumes and accessories.** Ensure costumes and masks fit properly and don't obstruct your vision. Choose costumes with flame-resistant materials to reduce fire hazards.
- **Never use non-prescription colored contact lenses.** Non-prescription (decorative) contact lenses can cause eye injuries, infections, and vision problems. Only wear contact lenses prescribed by an eye care professional. Learn more about **decorative contacts**.



Photo: Five children dressed in Halloween costumes trick or treating followed by a parent and a dog walking behind them.

- **Use hypoallergenic makeup.** Test makeup on a small area of skin before applying it to your face to check for allergic reactions. Avoid getting makeup in your eyes, and remove it properly using makeup remover.
- **Be cautious with masks.** Make sure the eye holes in masks allow for clear and unobstructed vision. If your mask has small openings, use makeup or face paint instead to avoid potential vision impairment.
- **Stay well-lit.** When trick-or-treating at night, carry a flashlight or wear reflective clothing to increase visibility for drivers.

If you experience any eye discomfort, redness, irritation, or vision problems, remove your costume or accessories immediately and seek medical attention if necessary. Prioritizing eye safety can help ensure a safe and enjoyable Halloween for everyone. For more tips, visit our **website**.

Recognizing Excellence

Community members, clients, administration, and staff gathered in Lighthouse Guild's Technology Center for its 2023 lectures and awards ceremony recognizing outstanding accomplishments in vision science, technological innovation, and advocacy. Dr. Wiley A. Chambers was awarded **The Alfred W. Bressler Prize for Outstanding Advancements in Vision Science** and spoke about "Approving New Ophthalmic Drugs." Mr. Saqib Shaikh, **The Pisart Award in Technological Innovation**, spoke on the topic "Seeing AI: Empowering People with Vision Loss Through the Power of Technology," and

Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney was awarded the **Dr. Alan R. Morse Lecture in Advocacy for People with Vision Impairment** spoke about “The Importance of Advocacy for People with Disabilities.” To learn more about the awards and this year’s recipients, visit our **website**.



Photo: A title, “2023 Lighthouse Guild Awards Lectures,” next to a photo of President and CEO Dr. Calvin W. Roberts with awards recipients Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney, Saqib Shaikh and Dr. Wiley A. Chambers.

Low Vision Specialist Dr. Rebekah Lin Joins Lighthouse Guild

We are pleased to announce that Dr. Rebekah Lin, an optometrist specializing in vision rehabilitation and low vision ocular disease, has joined Lighthouse Guild’s team of experts.

“Over seven million Americans have vision loss or blindness,” says Dr. Lin, “and as a low vision specialist, I’m looking forward to working with the team at Lighthouse Guild to help patients maintain a healthy lifestyle, optimize their vision, reduce their risk of further vision loss and maximize their eyesight using adaptive devices and exercises.”

Before joining Lighthouse Guild, Dr. Lin was an assistant clinical professor at SUNY College of Optometry and the University Eye Center and served as co-instructor of the Low Vision elective program, coordinator of the Low Vision laboratory, and supervisor of the Low Vision Ocular Disease Micro-Credential Program.

“I’m looking forward to working with the team at Lighthouse Guild to help patients maintain a healthy lifestyle, optimize their vision, reduce their risk of further vision loss and maximize their eyesight using adaptive devices and exercises.”

—Dr. Lin



Photo: A quote, “I’m looking forward to working with the team at Lighthouse Guild to help patients maintain a healthy lifestyle, optimize their vision, reduce their risk of further vision loss and maximize their eyesight using adaptive devices and exercises,” next to a portrait of Dr. Lin.

A Fellow of the American Academy of Optometry, Dr. Lin has performed various clinical research studies, and several of her abstracts have been published by the American Academy of Optometry and Southern Council of Optometrists International.

Dr. Lin completed a Residency in Low Vision Rehabilitation at SUNY College of Optometry, a Doctor of Optometry at UC Berkeley School of Optometry, and a Bachelor of Science in Human Biology at John Muir College at UC San Diego.

To learn more about Dr. Lin, visit our **website** or schedule an appointment for an **eye exam**.

Your Voting Rights and Resources

At Lighthouse Guild, we believe a person’s right to vote independently is a fundamental cornerstone of our democracy, and accessibility should be a priority for every voter. Unfortunately, not everyone is aware of all the adaptations that enable people who are visually impaired, or have other challenges, to vote independently and privately. To view an informative workshop we hosted with the New York City Board of Elections along with information on ballot marking devices, voting rights, and other polling site resources, visit our [website](#).

Corporate Volunteers Help with Technology Workshop



Photo: Volunteers from Regeneron wearing their “Day for Doing Good” shirts pose with Chief Technology Officer Bryan Wolynski after receiving training to help clients for a Lighthouse Guild Technology Workshop.

Earl’s Awakening

Earl is 68 years old, grew up in Harlem, and lives in the Bronx. He has navigated career paths in broadcast journalism, advertising, community outreach, motivational speaking, and entrepreneurial business. He owns and runs a baking business called Mr. Lucky’s Down Home Sweet Potato Pies and Peach Cobblers.

In 2022, Earl was diagnosed with cataracts and severe Glaucoma in both eyes. Earl was informed by his doctors that he had lost 90% of his vision in his left eye and 70% of his vision in his right eye. His ophthalmologist decided that immediate surgery was necessary to try to save as much of his vision as possible. Following the surgery, Earl’s vision was minimal.

Connecting with Lighthouse Guild

A friend referred Earl to Lighthouse Guild, and he spoke to Outreach and Referral Coordinator Lisa Miller. Earl said, “Lisa connected me with a wonderful guy at Lighthouse Guild — Rehabilitation Specialist, Angel Guzman, and he came and sat down with me in my house, and he gave me a watch that when you press a button, it tells me the time, he gave me a clock to place at my bed and when you press a button it tells you the date and the time, he gave me a great electric shaver to use so I would not cut myself. It was at this point that I realized that I’ve got some hope. He made me feel really good.”

Lisa followed up by connecting Earl with Orientation and Mobility Instructor Jeffrey Ambury. Earl said, “Jeffrey has come to my home a couple of times and brought me the official white cane, and he showed me how to use it to access the stairs, how to cross the street. For the first time, I was not afraid.”

“I want to live and learn more and go forward. I am encouraged and it’s due to Lighthouse Guild,”

—Earl

A portrait of a man with a grey beard and mustache, wearing a red baseball cap with a logo. He is looking directly at the camera.

Photo: A quote, “I want to live and learn more and go forward. I am encouraged and it’s due to Lighthouse Guild,” next to a portrait of Earl wearing a baseball cap.

Low Vision Exam

After a low vision examination and assessment and receiving special glasses, Dr. Zimmerman informed Earl that he had a lot of vision left in his right eye. Dr. Zimmerman told him that he had extreme Glaucoma and said it was insidious. She set him up with a Glaucoma specialist in his neighborhood so he would not need to travel too far away from his home for follow-up vision appointments.

Earl shared, “Dr. Zimmerman was just top of the line. She was so wonderful.” She explained to me that she hears what I’m saying to her, and she could hear my anger and rage. She held my hand and said, ‘You have to be aware that you may not receive the same treatment from doctors outside of Lighthouse Guild because here, that’s what we do. We hold your hand through this crisis, and we let you know that we are with you.’ Earl said, “At that moment, I knew I had come home. She was so nice and as personable with me as if she were a member of my family.”

Earl’s Advice

If ever diagnosed with low vision or blindness, Earl says, “You should reach out to Lighthouse Guild for their help. I’m so appreciative of Lighthouse Guild because they are providing a service that is invaluable to people who are blind or have a vision impairment. I have a great appreciation for the Lighthouse Guild organization because they will set you on a different course, and you will feel encouraged. I want to live and learn more and go forward. I am encouraged, and it’s all due to Lighthouse Guild.”

Earl says, “The kindness and understanding from Orientation and Mobility Specialist and Vision Rehabilitation Therapist Jeffrey Ambury, Rehabilitation Specialist Angel Guzman, and Lisa Miller have been great. Lisa is responsible for getting the ball rolling for me. They have great empathy, and they’ve made my life much better.”

Earl’s Future

Earl says he’s looking forward to joining the group therapy sessions at Lighthouse Guild, where everyone discusses their issues, questions, and concerns in managing their vision loss, as well as the technology workshops to learn about the different apps for Android phones and iPhones, and lessons to learn about the other accessibility apps for people with low vision.

Earl says he’s also looking forward to taking the train to Lighthouse Guild and being around people like him who have things in common. He’s also looking forward to making new friends in the neighborhood where he once worked for Eyewitness News. He shares, “This is a whole new time for me in my life, and I have never felt so trusting and giving.” Earl is writing a book entitled “Rude Awakening: From Harlem to Hell to Healing.” Read more about Earl’s story on our [website](#).

World Sight Day 2023

In recognition of World Sight Day, Lighthouse Guild received a \$10,000 grant from [Iveric Bio](#), an Astellas Company, to back our innovative [Tech Pals](#) program. Our program pairs tech-savvy young adults (aged 18-24) who are blind or visually impaired with older adults (aged 55+) who are visually impaired and want to become proficient in using mobile phones and tablets. Tech Pals not only imparts skills and support but also fosters meaningful connections between two generations of people with vision loss. We are grateful to Iveric Bio for their generous support of this initiative and collaboration on World Sight Day.



Photo: An older woman trying her iPhone while a young Tech Pal’s mentor guides her.

Free Virtual Workshop on Safe Travel

People who are blind or visually impaired are more likely to experience falls due to their reduced ability to see obstacles and judge distances. The risk increases with age and the severity of impairment. Environmental hazards and other health conditions can also contribute to the risk.

Lighthouse Guild offers a free virtual workshop called “Operation Safe Travel,” designed to help people with vision loss travel independently and securely. We believe this workshop can be a valuable addition to your community or senior center’s programs. During this workshop, our Orientation & Mobility (O&M) experts will share practical insights and guidance on enhancing travel skills, covering safety techniques, navigation strategies for common routes like bus stops and subways, and methods to boost confidence in independent travel. Additionally, eligible clients can schedule personalized one-on-one sessions with our O&M experts for tailored support. If you want to bring this workshop to your community or senior center, visit our [website](#).

How Do Life-Changing Innovations Become Available?

Between initial conception and going to market, there is a rigorous testing and development process. The latest episode of our podcast “**On Tech and Vision with Dr. Cal Roberts**” explores the pathway from concept to reality with two vision technology innovators.

Dr. Roberts speaks with Jay Cormier, President and CEO of Eyedaptic, a company specializing in vision-enhancement technology. Their flagship product, the EYE5, helps people with age-related macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, and other low-vision diseases. He talks about the years of planning, testing, and internal development needed to bring this technology to market.



Photo: a lit dark purple lightbulb with white dots and joined lines flowing over it to suggest the concept of “ideas.”

You will also hear from Dr. JR Rizzo, professor and researcher of medicine and engineering at NYU. He and his research team are developing a wearable “backpack” navigation system that uses sophisticated cameras, computers, and sensor technology. He discusses the practical and technological challenges, along with the importance of beta testing and feedback.

Lighthouse Guild attends NYC Mayor’s Celebration of White Cane Awareness Day



Photo: From left to right, Director of Rehabilitation Services Judy Katzen, Adaptive Technology Specialist Ed Plumacher, O&M Vision Rehabilitation Therapist Jeff Ambury, Marketing Manager Jeremy Morak, Development Intern Kiana Glanton, Director of Outreach & Support Programs Maggie Walters, Vision Rehabilitation Therapist Lilly Harris, Outreach & Support Programs Coordinator Carly Feldstein, Chief Operating Officer Paul Masiti and Chief Technology Officer Dr. Bryan Wolynski.

Events

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

November 2 | Tech-In Session | New York City

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

At Lighthouse Guild, our commitment to excellence is embodied by our team of experts who deliver top-notch services and innovative solutions that inspire people who are visually impaired to pursue their desired lifestyles. However, we rely on supporters like you to help us continue striving for excellence. 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 (formerly Twitter): @EyeDrCal

Donate: lighthouseguild.org/donate/
Volunteer: 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