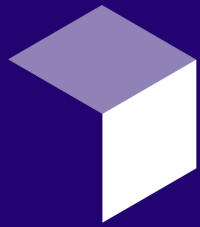


September 2023



Lighthouse Guild

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



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Dear Friends,

Focusing on Healthy Aging

September is Healthy Aging Month, highlighting the importance of caring for our health. One important focus is eye health. Our eyes are essential for experiencing the world, but as we grow older, we're more prone to eye issues like cataracts, glaucoma, and macular degeneration. To maintain eye health, having regular eye exams, eating a balanced diet, shielding our eyes from the sun, and avoiding smoking is vital. Doing these things can reduce the risk of vision problems and allow you to enjoy a better quality of life for years to come.



Photo: Five older adults raising their glasses in a toast at a dining table filled with salads and vegetables.

For more tips to protect your eyes visit our [website](#). You can also schedule an appointment for an eye exam with one of our [vision experts](#).

Celebrating National Adult Day Services Week!

Our **Buffalo GuildCare** program celebrated its 31st Anniversary with a party and prom, followed by a talent show the next day. Our clients enjoyed festive treats, dancing, and showcasing their talents — the perfect way to celebrate National Adult Day Services Week!

We are proud of our **GuildCare Adult Day Health Care program**, which provides comprehensive healthcare and a full day of activities. With centers in New York City, Albany, Buffalo, and Niagara Falls, we offer 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.



Photos: Left to right, a female GuildCare client dressed in pink holding a pink hoop and singing into a microphone; Five GuildCare clients pose for a group photo, smiling at the camera.

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](#).

Mitch’s New Chapter

Mitch is 71 years old and lives in Brooklyn, New York. The retired hospital administrator speaks multiple languages and is a writer, a film critic, and a French translator. He is also a percussionist and played the role of Pierre Langevin in the film *The Days of the Commune*.

In June 2021, Mitch had open-heart surgery due to heart failure. While recovering, he experienced vision issues in his left eye, diagnosed as a stroke called Non-Arteritic Ischemic Optic Neuropathy (NAION). His regular ophthalmologist later confirmed this diagnosis. Mitch was referred to a neuro-ophthalmologist who explained there is no treatment for NAION and a 30% chance it will affect his other eye. Four months later, Mitch lost vision in his right eye. He was also diagnosed with Charles Bonnet Syndrome (CBS), a condition causing visual hallucinations in individuals who have experienced vision loss.

Mitch Learns About Lighthouse Guild

Mitch’s neuro-ophthalmologist believed he had low vision and referred him to Lighthouse Guild to schedule an appointment with a low vision specialist.

“In my limited time going to Lighthouse Guild, everybody there had something for me.”

– Mitch



Photo: A quote, “In my limited time going to Lighthouse Guild, everybody there had something for me,” next to a portrait of Mitch wearing sunglasses and smiling.

Low Vision Exam

Mitch reached out to Outreach and Referral Coordinator Lisa Miller, who set the intake process in motion at Lighthouse Guild and scheduled an appointment for a low vision exam with Dr. Bruce Rosenthal, former Chief of Low Vision Services. When Mitch discussed his profession and his primary interests — reading, watching films, and visiting museums — Dr. Rosenthal helped him register with the New York State Commission for the Blind (NYSCB). During further visits, Dr. Rosenthal provided him with devices enabling Mitch to surmount his vision loss as best as possible.

Mitch said, “Dr. Rosenthal is really great and a very nice gentleman. Once I explained to Dr. Rosenthal all the things that I do in my work and everyday life, he provided me with several different pairs of glasses, all for different purposes, that helped to restore color and make my eyes strong enough so I could again watch a film and read subtitles and understand what’s going on.” Mitch continued, “I explained to Dr. Rosenthal that I sometimes find it difficult to find where the traffic lights are, and he gave me glasses to help me with that, too.” Dr. Rosenthal also provided Mitch with a guided tour of the Lighthouse Guild Technology Center to demonstrate some of the many accessible technology devices that are available to help him.

Vocational Rehabilitation

Mitch said, “Immediately following my confirmed diagnosis of having low vision, a Lighthouse Guild social worker followed up with me and arrived for a home visit. She arrived with a goodie bag that included writing pads with large, spaced lines; markers; a talking clock with the date and time; a watch with large numbers; a calendar with enlarged numbers; and other helpful items.”

Orientation and Mobility Training

The next step was for a Lighthouse Guild Orientation and Mobility (O&M) instructor to come to Mitch’s home to train him on using the white cane. Mitch said, “[The O&M instructor] arrived at my home and took me through all the possible scenarios so I could master my skills when using the white cane. She took me up and down the stairs of my house and down all the streets in my neighborhood where

I normally walk. We rode the bus, maneuvered the curbs and street crossings, and more. She was an excellent teacher, and I got the distinct impression that [she] is someone who really loves the work that she does.” Mitch shared that during the training, he learned the eclectic needs for crossing the street — to only cross the street when the light turns green and not when the light is already green, and how to establish ownership of the crosswalk.

Advice for Someone Recently Diagnosed with Vision Loss

Mitch said, “I would say don’t expect people to defer to you in any way, and you’ve got to go to Lighthouse Guild because there are things they can give you that can help you to maximize your vision. You are not going to make it on your own, and you should not give up and think this is what my situation is and that nothing is going to help. If I could sum things up, I would say I’m a writer, and I have continued to write. I’m a film critic, and I continue to watch films and write about them, despite the difficulties and limitations, but I’ve found ways to get around. If you have low vision, there are things out there that are available to you, and if you go to the Lighthouse Guild, I’m certain that everyone else will receive the same treatment I received,” He concludes, “In my limited time going to Lighthouse Guild, everybody there had something for me.”

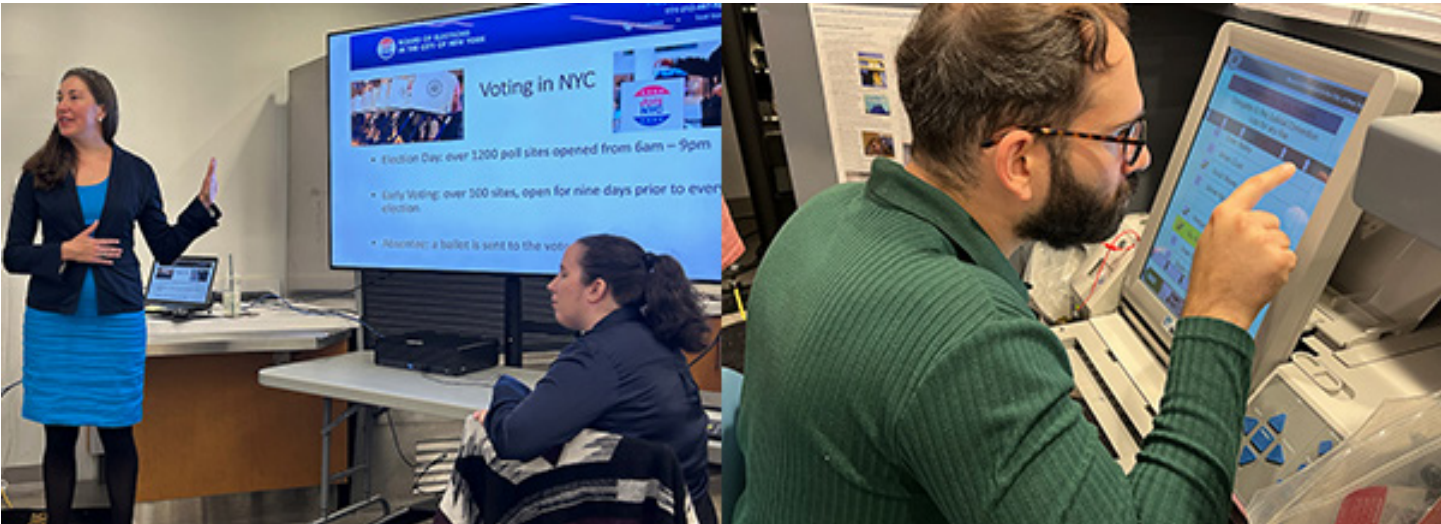
Mitch’s New Chapter

Mitch’s essay about his experience, **Life as “The Blind Man,”** was published on PublicSeminar.org. His articles have appeared in The New York Times, The New York Review of Books, Cineaste, Foreign Affairs, and many other publications. He is currently writing a biography of the French-language novelist and political figure Victor Serge that will be published by Pluto Press in 2024. He recently published two books this summer, adding to the dozen already published.

Read more about Mitch’s story on our [website](#).

Accessible Voting is Everyone’s Right!

A person’s right to vote independently is a fundamental cornerstone of our democracy, and accessibility should be a priority for every voter. Lighthouse Guild collaborated with the New York City Board of Elections for a workshop and demonstration on accessible voting machines, step-by-step voting tips, and the absentee ballot process for people who are blind or visually impaired. Attendees had the opportunity to try the accessible ballot marking machines and learn about the accessibility features available at all polling locations to make their voting experience more inclusive, private, and efficient.



Left to right, Board of Elections ADA Coordinator Ariel Merkel presenting with Lighthouse Guild On-Call Tech Assistant Shanell Matos; Marking Manager Jeremy Morak tries the accessible ballot marking device.

If you missed this informative workshop, no worries, you can view a video of it on our [website](#) as well as find more information on ballot marking devices, voting rights, and other polling site resources.

Tech Pals at Montefiore Einstein

Thanks to our collaboration with Dr. Anurag Shrivastava, an Advisory Board Member of Lighthouse Guild and Associate Professor of Ophthalmology and Assistant Dean of Montefiore Einstein, Lighthouse Guild brought our **Tech Pals program** to Montefiore Einstein. The pilot program assisted older visually impaired patients in using accessibility and mobile application functions to improve their technology competency, quality of life, and health outcomes.

For six weeks during the summer, Tech Pal mentors from Lighthouse Guild visited Montefiore Einstein’s ophthalmology clinic twice a week with Lighthouse Guild Job Coach Chelsea Baez. The mentors, also visually impaired, partnered with patients for one-on-one educational sessions, teaching them how to use their handheld devices based on their individual needs and goals.

Visually impaired patients who could most benefit from services were identified by the Montefiore Einstein team, Zara Mian, BS and Olivia Allen, MS3, who also facilitated the mentors and mentees during their visits to the Montefiore Ophthalmology Department. Patients were able to attend these sessions at no cost, and met with the Tech Pals for individualized training held in conference rooms donated by the Montefiore Einstein Otorhinolaryngology and Cardiothoracic Surgery Departments. Not only did the program benefit Montefiore Einstein patients, but it also provided valuable career experience for the mentors through their internship. Lighthouse Guild looks forward to future collaborations with Montefiore Einstein and Dr. Shrivastava that will increase access to services for people who are visually impaired and assist them in attaining their goals.



Photo: Left to right, Tech Pal mentor Janine Frias, Lighthouse Guild Job Coach Chelsea Baez, Montefiore Einstein Ophthalmology Research Administrator Zara Mian, Montefiore Einstein patient Edward Williams, Montefiore Einstein third-year medical student Olivia Allen and Tech Pal mentor Leslie Guevara.

An Evening of Discovery

One hundred fifty guests savored the unique ambiance of the historic Explorers Club for a cocktail reception and auction that raised over \$350,000 for Lighthouse Guild’s exceptional programs and services. James Dubin, Lighthouse Guild Board Chairman, and I expanded on how cutting-edge technology and Lighthouse Guild’s expert training help individuals who are blind or visually impaired live the lives they aspire to. Kiana Glanton, Lighthouse Guild client and intern, captivated the crowd with her compelling story of her experience with vision loss as a professional, a mother, and now a Blind Baseball player who helped Team USA win a bronze medal at the WBSC Blind Baseball International Cup. Throughout the evening at our Innovation Station, guests saw first-hand samples of accessible technology helping people with vision loss navigate their world.



Photos: Left to right, Marc Rosen and Susan Gutfreund; James Borynack and Adolfo Zaralegui.



Photos: Left to right, Kiana Glanton holding up her bronze medal as she speaks from a podium; President and CEO Dr. Calvin Roberts, Beth Rudin DeWoody and Chairman of the Board James Dubin.

Visit our [website](#) to read more about this inspiring evening.

Events

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

October 12 | Forseeable Future Foundation, Grant Workshop | New York City

October 16 | Tele-Support Talk: Advocating for Your Child with Vision Loss | Online

October 19 | Lighthouse Guild Awards Lectures | Online

October 30 | Laugh for Sight Comedy Show Fundraiser | New York City

Whether connecting people who are visually impaired to the tools, training, and resources to help them vote, communicate, or navigate their world, Lighthouse Guild cannot do it without your support. 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

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Share: X @lighthousegld | Facebook @lighthouseguild



**Lighthouse
Guild**

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