



## Lighthouse Guild In Brief

From Dr. Cal Roberts, President and CEO

Dear Friends,

I am sure you have read the recent articles about how the COVID-19 vaccine roll-out is unbalanced and inaccessible. Though not all systems are perfect, we believe much more can be done to ensure that people with disabilities are considered a priority in this process.

### Advocating and Vaccinating

Lighthouse Guild has reached out to elected officials and the media to raise awareness of three critical issues: **1.** Blindness should be made an eligibility criterion for the vaccine. The CDC should include blindness in its list of vulnerable populations. **2.** Websites that schedule vaccine appointments should use accessible technology for people who are visually impaired. **3.** Vaccination centers should be easily navigated by people who are blind. Getting to and from vaccination sites and navigating large medical centers and stadiums is a challenge for people who are blind or have low vision.

The government at all levels needs to step up and make sure that the over 1 million people\* in the U.S. who are legally blind are not left out in the cold as our vaccination program moves forward.

We are also doing our part in the vaccination efforts. Since January, Lighthouse Guild was approved to provide vaccines and we have been vaccinating essential workers and our community's eligible members ever since. We will continue to do all we can to ensure people are safe and healthy.

\*Source: CDC. Link: <https://bit.ly/38RB5ZD>

### Remote Diagnostic Testing and the Machine Learning Revolution

How will remote diagnostic tests change ophthalmology and vision care? Find out on the latest episode of **On Tech & Vision with Dr. Cal Roberts**. The founders of Keep Your Sight, Dr. Peter Pham and Dr. Sean Ianchulev, share how they developed their remote vision screening program to help detect macular degeneration, glaucoma, and other conditions that can lead to vision loss. Prof. Einar Stefansson and Dr. Arna Gudmundsdottir, developers of Retina Risk, talk about their app designed to help people with diabetes remotely assess their risk of diabetic eye disease. Listen at: <https://bit.ly/3cNY2hP>



Photo: Dan Rentea



### Tips to Preserve Your Vision

At last month's **Vision for Life: A Virtual Forum**, I was joined by Dr. April Jasper and Dr. Terrence P. O'Brien, who provided insights on maintaining good eye health and preserving vision during COVID-19 and beyond. If you missed the forum, you can still learn how to maintain good eye health by viewing the video at: <https://bit.ly/3lrHGix>

## Nothing Can Stop Sekai

Sekai was 19 years old when a severe accident caused multiple injuries, including the loss of his vision. The physician who was treating Sekai recommended Lighthouse Guild.

We provided Sekai with occupational therapy and orientation and mobility instruction to maximize his function inside and outside his home. Sekai says, "The tools that Lighthouse Guild provided to me are very useful and so helpful to me mentally in terms of my lifestyle. I feel I have more freedom now that they have shown me how to navigate around the neighborhood. It's a lot easier for me to be able to do things like using the microwave. I have been blind for only one year, and they have already helped me with a lot of things that I am really grateful for."

Sekai found Lighthouse Guild staff to be tremendously helpful. He shares that Lisa Miller, LCSW, Outreach and Referral Coordinator, was his first point of contact and connected him with the services he needed. Carol Moog, Senior Mobility Instructor,

taught him how to navigate with a white cane. Jaydan Mitchell, Transitions Coordinator, Career and Youth Services, guides the tele-support sessions where Sekai can talk to peers with vision impairment who are going through similar experiences.

Now 21 years old, Sekai is planning his future. His father, William, says, "He told me the other day that he was thinking about going back to work. Knowing there is a place that can assist you with that and help get you there, you cannot ask for anything more than that. To me, that is a big obstacle, and to know that it is available to him, that takes a load off mine and my wife's mind."

**That's what we do: help people attain their goals!** We'll be here for Sekai when he is ready to take his next steps.



I am pleased to announce that **Judith Katzen, MSW**, has been named Director of Rehabilitation Services at Lighthouse Guild. In this role, she will lead the Rehabilitation Department, which helps people who are blind or visually impaired obtain skills needed to navigate their world, manage their day-to-day activities, learn adaptive technology skills, attain their education and career goals, and remain engaged in their communities. Ms. Katzen is bringing over 30 years of experience in educational, vocational, health, and long-term care services for people with disabilities to Lighthouse Guild. You can reach her at [katzenj@lighthouseguild.org](mailto:katzenj@lighthouseguild.org)



From keeping people safe to helping them live the lives they aspire to, Lighthouse Guild could not do this without your help. Please join Lighthouse Guild's community of support and care by **donating, volunteering** and **sharing** about us on Twitter and Facebook!

Be well and stay safe,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Calvin Roberts, MD".

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

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