



**Lighthouse
Guild**

Evolving Our Vision

2020

Our Mission

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

12 million people 40 years and older in the U.S. have vision impairment.*

Lighthouse Guild is committed to innovative and inclusive solutions, striving for a world in which no person is limited by their visual capacity.

**Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

To Our Supporters

2020 was a challenging year, but at Lighthouse Guild, helping people with vision impairment overcome challenges is what we do. Our work accelerated during the COVID-19 pandemic. We adapted our services and continued to provide care and support to our patients and the local community. We are offering telehealth and tele-support services and our on-site services, such as low vision exams, are provided with strict adherence to social distancing and all safety requirements.

Our staff remained dedicated to offering the highest level of care to children and adults who are blind or visually impaired. One of the critical means of ensuring people received the services they needed in 2020 was the implementation of telehealth. The ability to deliver services virtually is invaluable and will further evolve our work.

- Our **Health Center** provided over 3,500 visits including low vision exams, primary care and specialty physicians, diabetes care and self-management education, and occupational therapy. And we have added new state-of-the-art technology to help our low vision patients. We also conducted 8,346 wellness checks and 2,668 health education and diabetic teaching sessions for patients and caregivers.
- During this crucial time, our **Behavioral Health** services were extremely important to our patients and through telehealth we were able to offer continuity of mental health care. We provided 8,400 visits, including individual and group therapy, and medication management.
- From navigation to computer learning, teen programs and career and daily living skills, our **Vision Rehabilitation** services were provided to clients and patients via phone, video sessions and in person meetings. We helped over 600 individuals of all ages, from teens to older adult. In addition, our experts shared our guidelines on remote instruction with other agencies to insure as many people as possible receive the services they need.

- Our **Adult, Young Adult, Teen and Parent Tele-Support Groups** have helped over 550 people from 43 states, Canada and India address concerns such as coping with isolation during the pandemic, the impact of online learning on children with visual impairments and how to manage the basics of daily living.
- The **Lighthouse Guild Research Institute** continued to focus on studies and initiatives to help people who are blind or visually impaired.
- Our Volunteers remain crucial to our mission. Despite the unique challenges of the pandemic, they provided 8,000 hours of service, both on-site and remotely to support the mission. In December, we announced the **Stephen T. Pearlman Volunteer Center**, in recognition of one of our most committed and dedicated volunteers.
- In response to the surge in professionals working from home, we provided free access to our **eLearning** program. Over 350 healthcare professionals received over 600 hours of online training.

We are extremely proud to help people with vision impairment through this difficult year and to know we are making a real difference in their lives. With your continued support, we will continue to provide the exceptional services that inspire people who are visually impaired to attain their goals.

On behalf of all those we serve, thank you for your commitment to helping transform the lives of people with vision impairment.



Calvin W. Roberts, MD
President and CEO



James M. Dubin
Chairman of the Board

Attaining Goals

Providing Exceptional Services

Lighthouse Guild offers programs such as Tele-Support, Vocational Rehabilitation, Behavioral Health, low vision exams and related services in our Health Center. During 2020, we modified our offerings and developed new and innovative ways to deliver care in light of the pandemic. As we look ahead, we will continue to enhance existing and develop new in-person and remote offerings, while at the same time plan initiatives for the future that will inspire people who are visually impaired to attain their goals.



Rehabilitation

Assisting the Leaders of Tomorrow

Since our **scholarship program** began, we have helped many legally blind young adults make a successful transition to college and support post-graduate education, facilitating career development. In 2020, we awarded 12 unrestricted scholarships of \$8,500 each to an outstanding group of high school students from nine states. Each graduate student received a \$2,500 scholarship to support his/her continuing education.



Jalen Ballard
2020 Scholarship Recipient

Scientists & Scholars

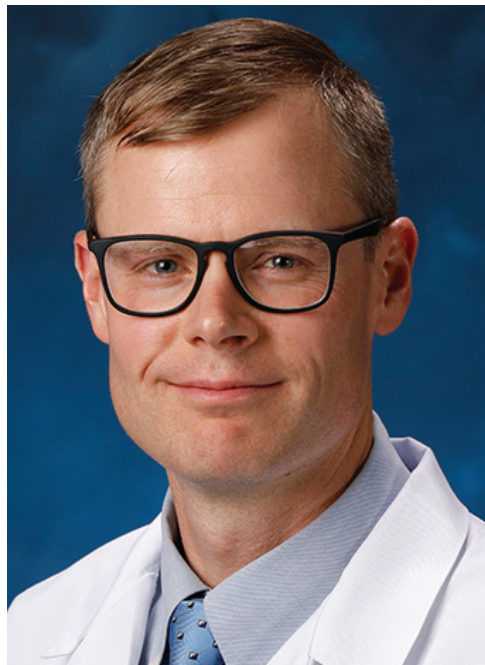
Celebrating Outstanding Accomplishments in Vision Science

This past year we honored deserving individuals for their significant achievements in vision science research, including the **Bressler Prize in Vision Science** recipient Gerrit Melles, MD, PhD, from the Netherlands, for his outstanding work in the field of corneal transplantation, and **Pisart Award in Vision Science** recipient Philip D. Kiser, PhD of the University of California Irvine School of Medicine for his innovative scientific approaches and unique knowledge in the field of carotenoid and retinoid.

Eli Peli, OD, MsC, FARVO, Senior Scientist at Schepens Eye Research Institute of Massachusetts Eye and Ear and Professor of Ophthalmology, Harvard Medical School, was awarded the 2020 **Oberdorfer Award in Low Vision Research**. The Oberdorfer Award in Low Vision Research was created in 2012 in collaboration with the ARVO Foundation for Eye Research with support from Lighthouse Guild. The award recognizes an individual for his or her role in furthering low vision research and rehabilitation. It was inspired by the seminal contributions of Michael D. Oberdorfer, PhD, in support of low vision research.



Gerrit Melles, MD, PhD
recipient of **Bressler Prize
in Vision Science**



Philip D. Kiser, PhD
recipient of **Pisart Award
in Vision Science**



Eli Peli, OD, MsC, FARVO
recipient of **Oberdorfer
Award in Low Vision
Research**

Technology & Innovation

Connecting People with Vision Loss to Tech Innovators

Even through the pandemic, we moved forward with new initiatives. As we reaffirmed our commitment to providing the most innovative and supportive services to people with vision loss, we launched a podcast series. **On Tech & Vision with Dr. Cal Roberts** explores new and emerging technologies that can improve life for people who are blind or visually impaired.

The episodes include experts and a focus on a range of technology that can improve life for people who are blind or visually impaired. Technology options are aimed at restoring lost vision, enhancing existing vision, and improving function for people with vision loss.

Our podcast is one of many technology initiatives that will ensure people with vision loss have access to the latest devices and innovations.



Training Healthcare Professionals and Educators

Knowledge improves lives. Our educational programs and materials help healthcare professionals and their clients get there.

As the needs of people with vision loss change and our knowledge about how to help them evolve, there is always a demand for innovative educational programming to help them live fully and independently.

Lighthouse Guild's eLearning programs enable professionals to stay abreast of the latest technological advances and research findings through convenient online programs. We also offer innovative educational resources for people with vision loss and their family members.

Community

Honoring Volunteering

Lighthouse Guild was founded by volunteers who envisioned a brighter future for people who are visually impaired. In celebration of International Volunteer Day on December 5th, we announced the naming of the **Stephen T. Pearlman Volunteer Center** in recognition of one of its most committed and dedicated volunteers.

Stephen Pearlman began volunteering as a teenager, then returned as an adult and served as a volunteer at Lighthouse Guild for 27 years, until his death in November, at age 77. Mr. Pearlman served as a reader for people with visual impairment, screened prospective new volunteers, and he assisted with special events, including fundraisers and awards programs. His efforts and personal contributions enabled Lighthouse Guild to provide hundreds of gifts to the communities it serves.

In October, when we made the decision to rename the Lighthouse Guild Volunteer Center in his honor. Mr. Pearlman responded in a letter, “The organization has played a very important role in my life, and I am grateful to have had the opportunity to be part of the organization. I cherish the friendships that were cultivated over the years with both staff and clients.” And we are very grateful to Mr. Pearlman.



Stephen T. Pearlman

“The organization has played a very important role in my life, and I am grateful to have had the opportunity to be part of the organization.”

— **Stephen T. Pearlman**

Providing Forums

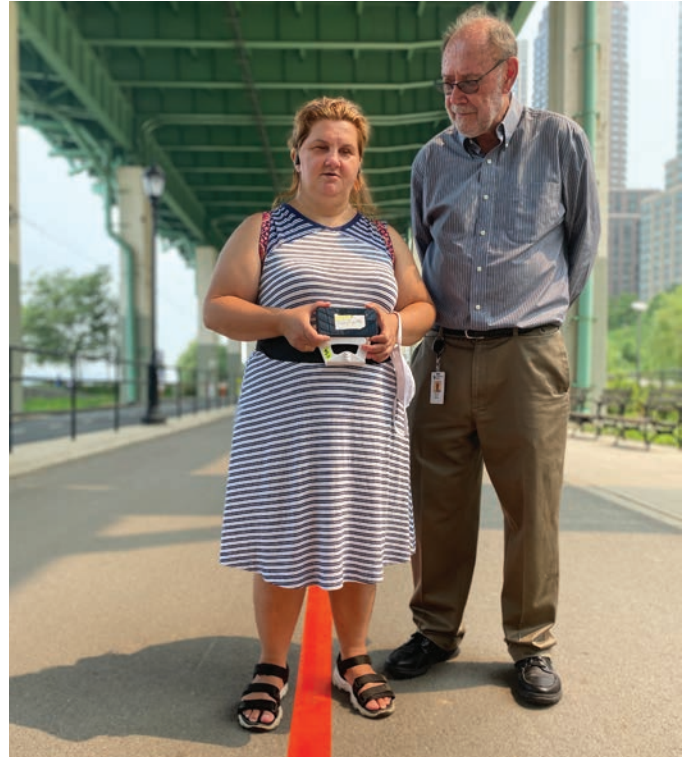
Many supporters, colleagues, partners, and clients participated in our first **Vision for Life** virtual forum. Dr. Roberts was joined by Dr. Lawrence Yannuzzi and Dr. Laura Sperazza who provided insights on the impact of COVID-19 on the lives of people with vision impairment and the ways in which **Lighthouse Guild** and the eye care field have responded.

Partnerships

We know that to do our best, we need partners, and 2020 was a great year for the addition of new collaborators and the strengthening of our relationships with existing partners. We renewed and expanded outreach and referral relationships with New York academic medical centers to help more people with vision impairment – a 4% increase from 2019 despite the pandemic’s peak months.

Since technology is a big part of Lighthouse Guild’s future, we met and developed relationships with numerous technology companies, including OrCam, NaviLens, Google, Apple, WeWALK, and the MTA.

We received new funding from the National Eye Institute and the National Science Foundation in addition to the Lavelle Fund for the Blind, Bausch + Lomb, and BioGen.



A client tests Google Guide device

If you are interesting in partnering with **Lighthouse Guild**, email **TechCenter@lighthouseguild.org**

About Us

Lighthouse Guild's work accelerated during the COVID-19 pandemic. We adapted our services and continued to provide care and support to our patients and the local community.

Our **Health Center** takes a multidisciplinary approach to healthcare offering eye exams by low vision specialists, occupational therapy, primary care, diabetes care, endocrinology, and podiatry.

Our **Diabetes Services** includes an American Diabetes Association-accredited self-management education program. Our endocrinology specialists help manage diabetes and provide individual and group sessions that teach practical techniques to maintain health.

As part of our **Low Vision Services** our optometrists evaluate the level of vision loss and recommend tools and exercises to help people read, work, socialize, and enjoy other activities.

Our **Rehabilitation and Technology Services** enable individuals to attain their goals, whether that be to work, to go to school, to shop or to navigate their community. A multidisciplinary team offers occupational therapy, training in assistive technology, orientation and mobility, activities of daily living, college preparation and career services.

Our **Technology Center** offers a one-stop resource for vision care, rehabilitation, and technology training. It features a Smart Home, where people can try the latest innovations such as the ability to use voice commands to change their thermostat, control their lighting, answer the phone, and lock their front door. Occupying 11, 000 square feet, the Center is located at Lighthouse Guild's New York City headquarters. It is the premier facility in the U.S., serving as a hub connecting vision technology innovators and users.

Our **Adult Day Health Care (ADHC)** is the only such program in New York State specializing in care for people with vision loss. The program includes nursing care, two meals a day, occupational, and speech therapy as well as social and therapeutic activities and vision rehabilitation.



Low vision exam



Occupational therapist trains a client on new technology

Dorothy Strelsin Behavioral Health Clinic operates the only behavioral health center in the U. S. for people who are visually impaired or at risk for vision loss. Services include individual therapy, couples and family counseling, and group therapy.

Our national **Tele-Support Network** enables parents of children with vision impairment as well as teens and adults with vision loss to connect with their peers to share resources, experiences and support.

We provide **support for students** with vision impairment to prepare for life after high school in a career or college by offering counseling, and advanced computer and technology training. Programs teach confidence-building, leadership, practical skills like cooking, physical fitness, and creative expression.

We have a merit-based **national scholarship program** that helps legally blind high school students from across the country attend college. Our graduate school scholarship supports students pursuing a degree after college.

Through **Advocacy** efforts, we advocate for appropriate legislative responses to issues affecting people with vision loss.

Through our **Research Institute**, we conduct studies designed to translate scientific findings and technological advances into useful solutions for people living with vision loss. We also recognize excellence in vision care and research through our **Vision Science Awards**.



Computer Training

Lighthouse Guild

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To obtain our complete audited financial statement, write to Lighthouse Guild, Development Department, 250 West 64th Street, New York, NY 10023, or contact the New York State Department of Law, Charities Bureau, 120 Broadway, Third Floor, New York, NY 10271 or visit guidestar.org.

For more information about Lighthouse Guild, visit lighthouseguild.org.

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