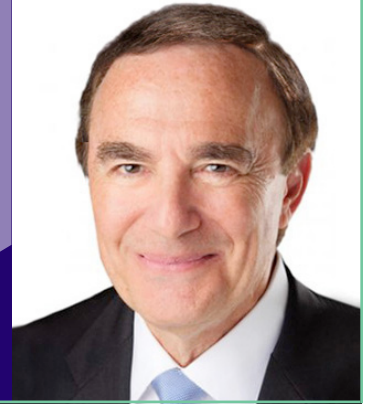


Lighthouse Guild

Lighthouse Guild In Brief

From Dr. Cal Roberts, President and CEO



Dear Friends,

I am pleased to announce that in recognition of **World Sight Day**, Lighthouse Guild received a grant from Janssen Global Services, LLC for our National Tele-Support Network. This national network provides programs and resources for parents, teens, young adults, and adults with vision loss. By offering social support via phone or online, the network helps participants to reach their full potential.

Facilitated by licensed professionals with input from experts in the field of vision loss, our Tele-Support Network provides practical tips and a sense of community to over 500 participants from 44 states. We thank Janssen for its generous donation to support people who are visually impaired and their families.



October is Disability Employment Awareness Month

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2020, 17.9 percent of people with a disability were employed, down from 19.3 percent in 2019, reflecting the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Networking is key to job-hunting and finding new employment opportunities in today's challenging environment.

"A nourished and well-developed network will very often be the gateway to future opportunities," says Jaydan Mitchell, a certified professional coach and the Transitions Coordinator for Career & Youth Services at Lighthouse Guild.

But what does networking look like in 2021?

- Using networking platforms like **LinkedIn**.
- Being proficient with video platforms like Zoom.
- Volunteering in a virtual capacity.
- Scheduling informational interviews.

- Connecting to resources such as Lighthouse Guild's Career Services.
- For more on networking, visit the Lighthouse Guild website.

Marta Shares About her Family

When she was eight years old, Marta was diagnosed with Retinitis Pigmentosa (RP). By the time she was twenty, her vision had started to deteriorate. In 2019, Daria Zawadzki, a facilitator for Lighthouse Guild's National Tele-Support Network, recommended our services to Marta.

After a comprehensive low vision exam, Marta received mobility skills training that included teaching her how to utilize the white cane and safely cross the street. Most important to her were the mental health services that provided her with the therapy she needed to accept her vision loss. Marta believes that the therapeutic treatment she received from social worker Jeff Shames and Dr. Peter Bookstein of Lighthouse Guild's Dorothy Strelsin Behavioral Health Clinic was a life-changing experience for her.

“Lighthouse Guild is like a family to me ...And that is special to have the support and people who believe in me.”



Daria also connected Marta to the Young Adult Tele-Support Network for people with vision impairment between the ages of 20 to 34. The group meets twice a month, via phone or online. A licensed professional facilitates the discussion to connect participants, provide helpful resources and tools, help develop strategies for maximizing opportunities and build momentum towards career, family, and independence goals.

“The experience has been absolutely amazing. I was feeling really lost and confused, and I did not know how to cope with my vision loss,” Marta says. “I am now able to open up more and connect with the group, and I share my challenges and troubles.”

Currently working as a certified life coach, Marta works with clients who have genetic conditions like her. She

credits the tele-support program for preparing her for the position. “A big reason I got this job is due to the encouragement I received from Jaydan [Mitchell] on the tele-support calls,” she shares.

“From the vision rehabilitation to the tele-support groups, to emotional adjustments, to adjusting to blindness. It is a terrific place to go for vision loss services, and the resources are endless,” Marta says. “Lighthouse Guild is like a family to me, and they are more understanding of my vision loss than my biological family or parents. And that is special to have the support and people who believe in me. That’s unique.”

Read more about Marta’s story on our blog. If you or someone you know needs help managing life with vision loss, visit our website to join one of our national tele-support groups.

Inspirational Events

Visionary Evening & Concert: In September, we partnered with Road Recovery to host an exciting sold-out event! We honored long-time volunteer and supporter Lauren Oplinger, who is visually impaired, a leader in the community, and a Vice President at JP Morgan. Road Recovery recognized long-time board member and Creative Staff Mentor, Simon Kirke. The event generated over \$250,000 with proceeds supporting vital mental health and vision-related services for thousands of individuals participating in the programs of both organizations. Check out this inspirational evening – which included special performances by Simon Kirke and Darryl “DMC” McDaniels – on our [website](#).

An Evening of Discovery: Earlier this month, the historic Explorers Club was the setting for a cocktail reception that raised over \$200,000 for Lighthouse Guild’s exceptional services. The club’s Executive Director Will Roseman reflected upon the parallel between the mantra of discovery and exploration of their members and Lighthouse Guild’s innovative technology initiatives, including a state-of-the-art Tech Center. Daria Zawadzki, Lighthouse Guild client, and facilitator of our tele-support program, inspired us with her compelling story of overcoming her vision loss through Lighthouse Guild’s support and technology. Discover more about this amazing evening on our [website](#).



From left to right: Dr. Calvin W. Roberts and Lauren Oplinger; Joe and Daria Zawadzki

An Evolution at Your Fingertips

If you have not listened yet, check out episode 1 of our new season of On Tech & Vision with Dr. Cal Roberts podcast! It's all about tactile technology and its evolution beyond Braille. In "The Latest Frontier in Tactile Technologies," I speak with material scientist Dr. Julia R. Greer and physicist Dr. John Gardner, who are working to make images and graphics accessible through touch for people who are visually impaired.

GuildCare Albany is Back!

I am pleased to announce the re-opening of our Albany GuildCare program under a new director, Nancy Ann Smith, BSN, RN. With an extensive healthcare career, she brings over 25 years of nursing experience to Lighthouse Guild. Previously, she was Chief Nursing Officer at Sunnyview Rehabilitation Hospital in Schenectady, NY, where she worked closely with admissions, system management, case management, and on the preparation and implementation of surveys and outcome reporting. She has held positions at St. Mary's Healthcare-Amsterdam and the Schenectady Community Action Program. Nancy received a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Russell Sage College. Welcome, Nancy!



From Buffalo to Niagara Falls, Albany to Manhattan, our GuildCare programs provide a broad range of services for people with vision loss, including nursing care, medication management, diabetes care, physical, occupational, and speech therapy, social work services, nutritional counseling, vision rehabilitation, therapeutic activities, morning snack, and lunch. And we do it with strict health and safety protocols in place. Our services and activities are specially designed and adapted for individuals with all levels of disability – physical, cognitive, and visual. If you or your loved one need daily medical services and crave social interaction, visit our [website](#)!

The amazing experiences clients like Marta convey could not be possible without your support of Lighthouse Guild programs. As we approach the holiday season, our services are a lifeline for those coping with depression and vision-related challenges. Please consider **volunteering, donating, referring** people who can benefit from our services, and spreading the word on **Twitter** and **Facebook**! And for the latest on technology to help people with vision loss, listen to our podcast: **On Tech & Vision with Dr. Cal Roberts**. Link: <https://bit.ly/3zDRXyr>

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

Calvin W. Roberts, MD
President and CEO, Lighthouse Guild
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