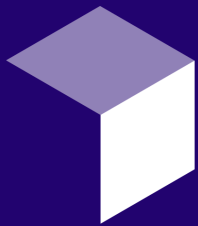


December 2024



Lighthouse Guild

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



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Dear Friends,

'Tis the Season to Shop Confidently with Vision Impairment

The holiday season is meant for giving, but gift shopping can be stressful. Individuals who are blind or have low vision face extra challenges, such as reading labels, determining sizes, and identifying prices and colors.



Photo: Four older adults wearing holiday scarves seated at a table with coffee cups. One of the men hands a wrapped gift to one of the women.

Gift shopping should be a joy, not a frustration. Jeff Ambury, Vision Rehabilitation Therapist and Orientation and Mobility Instructor for Lighthouse Guild, shares tips to make the process easier.

Use Chat Functions on Shopping Websites

Many online retailers like Target and Walmart offer chat functions to connect you with customer service. They can help you find specific gifts and navigate the website.

Use Helpful Apps

Take advantage of apps like Aira and Be My Eyes, which connect you with trained professionals or volunteers who can use your phone's camera to guide you through shopping.

Ask for Help

If you prefer shopping in-store for gifts, don't hesitate to ask for help from a friend or family member. Store staff can also assist with locating items and answering questions.

Consider Gifting Experiences

Not all gifts come in boxes! Consider giving tickets to a holiday event, like a concert or a sports game, or treating someone to a festive meal. These experiences create lasting memories.

Get Creative and Make a Handmade Gift

The best gifts are often homemade. Whether knitting a scarf, baking cookies, or writing a poem, these gifts carry personal meaning.

With some planning and helpful tools, gift shopping can be enjoyable and stress-free. For more tips, visit our [website](#).

Recognizing Leaders in Vision Science, Technology, and Advocacy

Community members, clients, and staff gathered in Lighthouse Guild's Technology Center for its 2024 awards ceremony and lectures recognizing outstanding accomplishments in vision science, technological innovation, and advocacy. **Dr. Thomas Lee**, from Children's Hospital Los Angeles, was awarded The Alfred W. Bressler Prize for Outstanding Advancements in Vision Science and spoke about "Innovating Our Way to Curing Childhood Blindness." **Dr. John-Ross Rizzo**, from NYU Langone Health, received The Pisart Award in Technological Innovation and spoke on "The Future of Assistive-Technology Optimization: Trends, Realities, & Predictions," and **Dr. Hoby Wedler**, a renowned chemist and entrepreneur, was awarded the Dr. Alan R. Morse Lecture in Advocacy for People with Vision Impairment and presented "How I Turned a Seeming Disadvantage into an Advantage." To learn more about the awards and this year's recipients, visit our [website](#).



Photo from left to right: Dr. Thomas C. Lee, Dr. John-Ross Rizzo, Dr. Calvin W. Roberts, and Dr. Hoby Wedler.

Eric's Having Fun and Making Connections

"Time flies when you're having fun," says Eric, reflecting on the 4 to 6 months he has been a part of GuildCare Albany.

After owning a Ford dealership for 31 years, Eric wanted to retire and do more to help people. He worked for the Ronald McDonald House and, later, drove clients for the Healthcare Consortium, which Eric says was his "favorite job." He shares what it was like to be the only person the clients saw all day, "Just to have somebody sit there, 90 years old, and say, 'thank you,' you know, 'I don't know what I would do without you,' and almost everyone said that. So, I took that to heart, and I told jokes."

Eric had a stroke, and his life changed. He could not walk or talk. He was in a nursing home where a doctor encouraged him to exercise, and he did. "So, I exercised on a bike, five days a week, and took two days off, but I did it, and, you know, I could walk," he shares. Eric also regained his ability to speak again.

Though Eric wanted to return to work, it was not meant to be. He was concerned about staying home. "I'd get up, go downstairs, sit on the couch, watch TV, go to the bathroom, and [go] back to bed. I just have to do something. I am used to doing," he shares.

"That's what I like about being here. [You are around] people who understand what your problems are, [and] they care about you. That means something to me."

—Eric



Photo: A quote: "That's what I like about being here. [You are around] people who understand what your problems are, [and] they care about you. That means something to me," next to a smiling portrait of Eric.

A New Beginning

“I was going to another program, but it just wasn’t me. Too boring. [Then] I walked into GuildCare.” Eric recounts that first day vividly, still amazed by the warmth he felt from staff and clients. “I met everybody, and everybody was so nice to me... they said, ‘Hi, Eric!’” “You couldn’t put a price tag on it.”

Purpose and Connection

Eric looks forward to coming to GuildCare. Despite the challenge of rising early, “I hate getting up at 5 am ... it’s hard when you’ve had a stroke,” he said. Yet, Eric wouldn’t trade coming to GuildCare for anything. His days are busy and filled with meaningful activities. Physical therapy helps strengthen him, and he says, “The benefit of this place is their physical therapy department.” Educational talks teach him something new. Even bingo makes him light up and feel useful. “I’ve called bingo before ... I used to have a great voice. It’s still good!” he jokes.

When staff noticed Eric’s love for conversation, his energy, and his knack for people, they found ways for him to participate even more. Eric is never bored when calling games, learning from talks, or chatting Rangers hockey with Office Manager Tina Quigley. “It’s fun ... you just feel part of the group. You feel part of something.”

A Community

Beyond the activities and care GuildCare provides, Eric treasures the human connection most. “They care about you. I can’t explain it, but it’s like they’re giving back the care I used to give others when I worked.”

Having spent time helping people with his work at Ronald MacDonald House and the Healthcare Consortium, Eric knows how impactful small moments of kindness can be. He feels it firsthand when he walks through GuildCare’s doors each morning. From nurses who carefully manage his medications to friends like Lucille, who claims he is “the greatest,” every day offers a reminder that he is seen and valued.

More Than a Program

For Eric, GuildCare is more than a program. It’s a community. It’s a purpose. It’s joy. “That’s what I like about being here. [You are around] people who understand what your problems are, [and] they care about you. That means something to me.” To read more about the fun Eric is having and the connections he has made, visit our [website](#).

GuildCare: Providing Care and So Much More

With centers in New York City, Albany, Buffalo, and Niagara Falls, our [GuildCare Adult Day Health Care](#) program offers nursing care, diabetes care, physical, occupational, and speech therapy, medication management, vision rehabilitation therapy, social work services, and structured therapeutic activities in a safe, comfortable, and attentive environment. Services and activities are specially designed and adapted for individuals with all levels of disability — physical, cognitive, and visual.

Our [GuildCare team](#) is ready to provide your patient or 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 our [website](#).

Stay Informed: Able News Includes Lighthouse Guild Insights

[Able News](#) at The Viscardi Center is a monthly digital publication that covers disability news and events at the national, state, and local levels. Its focus is on amplifying the perspectives of New York’s diverse and vibrant disability community, making it an essential source of information. Lighthouse Guild proudly contributes by providing monthly tips, tools, and resources to help individuals who are blind or have low vision live the lives they aspire to.

In partnership with Able News, we’re delighted to let you know about a discounted year-long subscription offer: for just \$15, you can receive a digital issue each month in your inbox and e-Newsletters to help you stay connected year-round. To subscribe, just visit the [Able News website](#) and enter code LIGHTHOUSE in the promo code box to receive the discounted price of \$15.



Photo: A woman engaging with her laptop.

In Support of a Lifeline

In this season of giving, we are excited to announce a grant from the **Allene Reuss Memorial Trust** in support of our national **Tele-Support Program**. Our program is a lifeline that has expanded to serve more than 1,100 individuals and their families, providing resources, skills, and a sense of community. With this grant, we plan to continue to our growth and enhancements in the coming year. For over the past 25 years, the Allene Reuss Memorial Trust has contributed to Lighthouse Guild in various ways and we are truly grateful for their continued partnership!

Events

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

January 8 | Lighthouse Guild's Cabaret Fundraiser | New York City

January 9 | Ask the TVI: Special Education | Online

January 15 | Tech In-Session: Smartphone Screen Readers: Best Practices | New York City

January 20 | Tele-Support Talk: Assistive Technology | Online

January 21 | Tech Talk: CES 2025 Assistive Tech Highlights | Online

January 29 | Explore Lighthouse Guild Services | Online

Explore Lighthouse Guild's Exceptional Services

Join us for our monthly information session to explore Lighthouse Guild's services, whether you are new to our organization or simply just want to learn more. We'll cover:

- Technology programs and resources
- Tele-Support Groups
- Virtual talks and book club programs
- Resources on accessibility

During the session, participants can ask questions and sign up for programs. For more information or to register for a session, visit our [website](#).

Gifts with Profound Impact

Have you ever given someone something that had a profound impact on their life? What if it enabled them to pursue their dream job, travel the world, or stay connected with their loved ones through a smartphone? By supporting Lighthouse Guild, you can make all this possible. Please visit our [website](#) to give that gift! With your help, we can offer the services and programs that inspire people who are blind or visually impaired to reach their full potential... and even beyond!



Photos, left to right: Young clients from our Youth Services program tour Target; an Occupational Therapist helps an older client learn the apps on her iPhone.

Just like gifts, giving comes in countless ways. Visit our website to learn about two special ways you can provide support: establishing a **Charitable Gift Annuity (CGA)** or making an **IRA Rollover gift**. To learn more about how you can help Lighthouse Guild, please call Donna Lippman, Director of Gift Planning, at 646-874-8443 or email at dlippman@lighthouseguild.org.

Please also consider **volunteering, referring** people who can benefit from our programs and services, or spreading the word on **X, Instagram** and **Facebook**.

Wishing you and your family a joyful holiday season and a healthy, safe New Year.

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

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