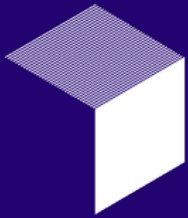


September 2024



Lighthouse Guild

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



Listen to the Audio

Dear Friends,

Vision Tips for Older Adults

Maintaining our health and quality of life as we age requires us to prioritize the protection of our vision. Regular eye exams and early detection are essential for maintaining good eye health, just like many other aspects of our overall health.



Photo: A group of older adults pose wearing workout clothing, glasses and hats and visors.

Older adults are at increased risk for eye diseases that affect vision such as age-related macular degeneration and glaucoma. Systemic health problems such as diabetes and high blood pressure can also impact the eyes. Injuries, such as falls, and cataracts are also common causes of reduced vision in older adults.

“Many eye diseases and conditions have no warning signs or symptoms, but they can be detected in their early stages during a comprehensive eye exam,” says Dr. Rebekah Lin, Low Vision Specialist at Lighthouse Guild. “Early detection and treatment are essential for saving sight.”

September is Healthy Aging Month, a reminder to prioritize your health. As part of your health routine, make sure to have a regular eye exam, eat a balanced diet, and shield your eyes from the sun to reduce the risk of vision problems allowing you to enjoy a better quality of life for years to come. For more tips to protect your eyes, visit the press release section of our [website](#) for the article “Vision Tips for Older Adults: September Is Healthy Aging Month.” You can also schedule an appointment for an eye exam with one of our [vision experts](#) by going to our website.

Accessible Ballot Assistance Program New York City Voters

For New York City Voters with vision impairment who have requested an accessible ballot from the Board of Elections, Lighthouse Guild is providing access to print the ballots and assistance with printing them. To register for this program or for more information, visit our events section of the [website](#).



Photo: Red, white and blue buttons with stars and the word “VOTE” printed on them.

Every voter's right to independent and accessible voting is fundamental to our democracy! For additional voting tips and resources visit the blog section of our [website](#).

Celebrating National Adult Day Services Week!

Our **GuildCare Adult Day Health Care program** held multiple events and activities in celebration of National Adult Day Services Week. The **Buffalo GuildCare** program celebrated its 32nd Anniversary with a party and prom, followed by a talent show the next day. Our clients enjoyed festive treats, dancing, and showcasing their talents. This year, we also had a Day of Service where our GuildCare members made cards for the KenTon Meals on Wheels clients and welcome bags for clients of Ronald McDonald House. **Albany GuildCare** members enjoyed a day of celebration with an apple pie cooking group, lively singing, dancing and heartwarming kindness projects.



Photos: Left to right, PTA Activity Coordinator Tammi Brucker dances with Constance, a client, at the Albany GuildCare celebration; Clients who were voted prom queen and king pose with bright smiles and their crowns at Buffalo GuildCare's anniversary celebration.

In addition to celebrations, our GuildCare Adult Day Health Care program offers comprehensive healthcare and a full day of activities with centers in New York City, Albany, Buffalo, and Niagara Falls. 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 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 the GuildCare section of our [website](#).

Tavia's Care Team

Since **September is Healthy Aging Month**, we are shining the spotlight on one of our clients who shares her journey to stay healthy with the help of her Lighthouse Guild care team.

Tavia is 59 years old and lives in New York City. For a few decades, she experienced an exciting and successful career as a freelance editor and occasional writer. She has held positions at The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), Prudential Securities, and Merrill Lynch, and dedicated over ten years to her most recent job in the main research library of The Metropolitan Museum of Art (Met).

It was in the late 90s, after attending a concert with friends, that Tavia experienced the initial problem with her spine. When she arrived home and began to exit her taxi, she suddenly noticed that her neck had stopped responding, and she could no longer turn her head. When attempting to move her head with her hands, she felt an excruciating pain that she had never experienced before. It was so severe that although she managed to make it inside her apartment, she could not even try to lie down in bed without screaming in agony. Fortunately, she saw a physiatrist two days later who treated the condition.

Decades of Challenges

Over the next twenty years and more, Tavia found herself having to undergo spine surgery, a total hip replacement, arthroscopic surgery on her right knee, an injection into the tendon sheath of her right thumb, ongoing mental therapy, and years of physical and pain-management therapy. "I've had quite a few warranties expire," she says with a smile.

Eventually, walking became difficult, and standing long enough in the kitchen to prepare a complete meal was almost unbearable. It was in 2011, that she began to require the use of a wheeled walker. By 2014, Tavia found herself unable to work, and had to apply for Social Security Disability benefits. “The last time I tried to take the subway – which I’d been very accustomed to doing, even when I first started using the walker – it had become almost impossible physically,” she says.

Tavia Discovers Lighthouse Guild

It was in 2014 when Tavia needed a new primary care physician. A friend suggested reaching out to Lighthouse Guild. After contacting us, she scheduled an appointment with our primary care physician.

“If I know someone who’s looking for an endocrinologist or who needs an eye exam, I will absolutely recommend Lighthouse Guild.”

—Tavia



Photo: A quote, “If I know someone who’s looking for an endocrinologist or who needs an eye exam, I will absolutely recommend Lighthouse Guild,” next to a portrait of Tavia wearing her glasses from Lighthouse Guild and smiling.

Although Tavia has not experienced low vision or blindness, she has been nearsighted since childhood and wears prescription glasses. Having Type 2 Diabetes, however, puts her at risk of developing Diabetic Retinopathy. At the time, she was also overdue for an eye exam, so she made an appointment with Optometrist and former Chief of Low Vision Services Dr. Bruce Rosenthal. Tavia recalls, “[At] my last appointment with him ... He walked me to [Lighthouse Guild’s new **EyeCare EyeWear** optical boutique], which is a fabulous upgrade, to get my first-ever pair of reading glasses.”

Tavia was also connected to Lighthouse Guild’s **Behavioral Health** services. Reflecting on her therapy experience she says, “This was my first-ever successful attempt at therapy, after so many years of trying that I’d given up. It was the first time I felt heard, not condescended to. I didn’t think it was something that would happen to me at that point in my life. It was astonishing.”

Since Tavia was also living with diabetes, it was vital for her to be under the care of an **endocrinologist**. Dr. Carmen Pal, Diabetes Specialist at Lighthouse Guild, was added to her healthcare team to assist her with monitoring and managing the disease. Tavia says, “She’s very meticulous, and what I appreciate most about her is her willingness to discuss various potential directions to take. She’s incredibly open-minded and up-to-date on what’s going on with new medications and potential plans, and I always leave her office feeling well-informed.”

Lighthouse Guild is a “One-Stop Shop”

After making her first appointments, Tavia realized that she could get nearly all of her medical care at Lighthouse Guild, from primary care and endocrinology to optometry, psychotherapy, **podiatry**, and more. “When I arrive there, I only need to walk down a hallway or take a quick elevator trip to get to the various departments and receive many different kinds of care.”

To schedule an appointment with our medical care experts, visit our **website**.

Tavia’s Current Care Team

Tavia now receives her **primary care** from Medical Director Dr. Mary Yulmei Chang, who she describes as “Super detail-oriented with a lot of great questions. She’s very thorough and truly kind, and you get the feeling she’s always available for you.” Tavia shares that for her first appointment with Dr. Chang, “She took the time to go back and review all of the notes in my medical history, which I really appreciated.”

Tavia is also very grateful for Lighthouse Guild’s behavioral health services. Her current therapist is Social Worker Lisa Beth Miller and her therapy sessions are going very well. “I feel she’s very connected to me as a client, accommodating my needs, and extremely focused. I feel seen and heard in every kind of positive way in the context of a therapeutic relationship.”

Fantastic Nurses

The nursing staff at Lighthouse Guild has also been key to Tavia's care. "The nurses at Lighthouse Guild are absolutely fantastic. I adore them. Every nurse there who comes to take blood and do this test or that test is really warm and friendly. They put you at ease. If I look like I'm having a hard day, they'll say something funny or kind, and it's always a joy."

Medical Care at Lighthouse Guild

For anyone considering going to Lighthouse Guild, Tavia says, "You're going to have a good experience when you get there. There's been more than once when I've left an appointment with a big ol' grin on my face. If I know someone who's looking for an endocrinologist or who needs an eye exam, I will absolutely recommend Lighthouse Guild. And if I were talking to a friend who's had problems with therapy, as I have, the first thing I would tell them is that my first-ever successful therapeutic experience happened at Lighthouse Guild. That is enormous for me. And I think it speaks powerfully to the quality of the staff there."

To read more about Tavia and her journey with her care team, visit Tavia's Story on our [website](#).

Welcome, New Board Members

We are pleased to announce that Valerie Chianuri and Sarah Kramer have joined the Lighthouse Guild Board of Directors.

Valerie Chianuri is General Counsel and Head of People and Operations at the computational design and engineering software company, nTopology Inc. (nTop). A legal and operational expert with over two decades of experience in the financial and technology industries, Ms. Chianuri is responsible for strategy and oversight of the legal, compliance, information security, and people operations functions at nTop. Prior to nTop, she held similar roles at several high-growth technology companies.

"I am honored to have the opportunity to use my experience in governance, technology and innovation to contribute to the incredible work that the Lighthouse Guild does every single day for the visually impaired community."



Photo: A quote, "I am honored to have the opportunity to use my experience in governance, technology and innovation to contribute to the incredible work that the Lighthouse Guild does every single day for the visually impaired community," next to a portrait of Valerie Chianuri.

"I am honored to have the opportunity to use my experience in governance, technology and innovation to contribute to the incredible work that the Lighthouse Guild does every single day for the visually impaired community," Ms. Chianuri said. "I look forward to contributing to the future growth of this great organization and supporting its enduring legacy."

To learn more about Ms. Chianuri, visit our [website](#).

Sarah Kramer is Global and U.S. CEO of Spark Foundry, part of Publicis Groupe. A marketing expert with decades of proven leadership and operational capability, Ms. Kramer has held ascending domestic and global roles at Publicis Groupe, including serving as interim CEO for Starcom MediaVest Groupe Greater China in Shanghai. She has received multiple awards in the advertising and marketing industry throughout her career, including being named a Campaign U.S. 2024 "40 over 40" honoree, a Campaign U.S. 2023 "Inspiring Women" recipient, and an Ad Age 2022 "Leading Woman" honoree.

"I'm honored to be joining the Board of Lighthouse Guild," Ms. Kramer said. "Having access to the essential services that Lighthouse provides is so critical for the visually impaired community, and I'm thrilled to be involved with such an important and meaningful cause. I look forward to lending my experience and skills to help Lighthouse with its mission to inspire the visually impaired community across the world."

To learn more about Ms. Kramer, visit the Board and Leadership section of our [website](#).

“I look forward to lending my experience and skills to help Lighthouse with its mission to inspire the visually impaired community across the world.”



Photo: A quote, “I look forward to lending my experience and skills to help Lighthouse with its mission to inspire the visually impaired community across the world,” next to a portrait of Sarah Kramer.

Blind Baseball Clinic is a Hit!

Lighthouse Guild and the **U.S. Blind Baseball Association (USBBA)** teamed up for the second annual public **Blind Baseball Clinic** in Central Park. Participants who are blind, visually impaired, or sighted, were encouraged to experience this rapidly growing adaptive sport which included a demonstration by USBBA players, a skills clinic covering batting, running, throwing, and fielding, and a scrimmage. It was my privilege to announce the players who were selected to represent Team USA in the 2024 Blind Baseball International Cup in London. Check out our [website](#) for highlights!



Photo: Lighthouse Guild staff, volunteers, USBBA players and coaches, Team USA players and clinic participants pose on a baseball field in Central Park.

We’re Just Wild about Harry’s

The men’s grooming brand **Harry’s**, and its affiliated brands like Flamingo and Lume, has teamed up with Lighthouse Guild to supply kits of essential personal care items to GuildCare clients and other individuals who are blind or visually impaired. Some clients often face tough decisions when it comes to what they can afford to buy, such as choosing between essential food and personal care items. Harry’s corporate volunteers put together kits for distribution to the clients who would benefit from them, and our team presented information about Lighthouse Guild’s exceptional programs and services to Harry’s employees.

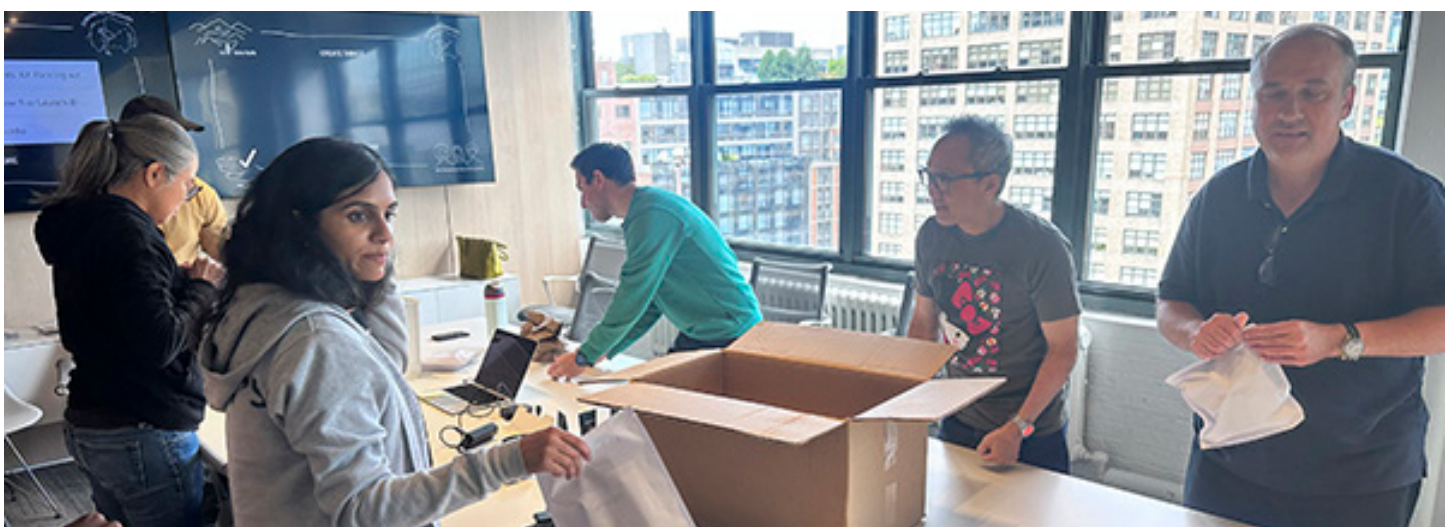


Photo: Harry’s volunteers assembling over 100 personal care kits for GuildCare participants.

Navigating with Music

When it comes to navigation technology for people who are blind or visually impaired, many apps utilize voice commands, loud tones or beeps, or haptic feedback. In an effort to create a more natural, seamless experience, the team at **BenVision** has created a different type of system that allows users to navigate using musical cues instead! In the latest **On Tech and Vision** podcast episode, I speak with BenVision's CEO and co-founder Patrick Burton along with its Technology Lead and co-founder, Aaditya Vaze about how they're able to create immersive soundscapes that double as navigation aids, and the exciting future applications this technology could offer. The episode also features BenVision's Audio Director and co-founder Soobin Ha. Soobin described her creative process for designing BenVision's soundscapes, how she harnesses the power of AI, and her bold vision of what's to come. We hear from Lighthouse Guild volunteer Shanell Matos who tested BenVision and shares her thoughts on the experience. As you'll hear, this technology is transformative! On Tech and Vision is available on Apple Podcasts, Spotify or wherever you get your podcasts. If you like what you hear, please subscribe, rate, and review.



Photo: A woman with dark glasses navigating her surroundings using her iPhone. Purple and blue sound waves radiate around her.

An Evening of Discovery

One hundred guests savored the unique ambiance of the historic **Explorers Club** for a cocktail reception and auction that raised over \$250,000 for Lighthouse Guild's exceptional programs and services. **James Dubin**, Lighthouse Guild Board Chairman, and **Dr. Christopher Starr**, Lighthouse Guild Board member, 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.



Photos: Left to right, Lighthouse Guild Board member Dr. Christopher Starr; Lighthouse Guild client Matthew Cho.

Matthew Cho, a Lighthouse Guild client, captivated the crowd with his compelling story of his experience with vision loss and how he has leveraged technology to excel in school and beyond. He also shared about being a Lighthouse Guild Tech Pals Mentor, teaching older adults who are visually impaired how to use technology.

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

Events

Don't miss some of our upcoming virtual and in-person events. Visit the [Events](#) section of our website for more information.

October 9 | Tech In-Session: Exploring the Victor Reader Stream 3 and Alternative Solutions | New York City

October 10 | Adaptive Athletics Grant Workshops | New York City

October 10 | Ask the TVI: How Parents can Support their Children with Homework Assignments, Test Preparation, and Parent Teacher Conferences | Online

October 15 | Tech Talk: Low Tech, Low Cost | Online

October 21 | Tele-Support Talk: Seeing Through Strength: Ashley Mizzell's Journey with Vision Loss, Motherhood, and Creativity | Online

October 28 | Laugh for Sight Comedy Show Fundraiser | New York City

You are a vital part of the Lighthouse Guild team. Your support not only drives our organization's mission but also has a lasting impact on the care we provide to individuals who are blind or have low vision. Please consider **donating, volunteering, referring** people who can benefit from our programs and services, or spreading the word on **X, Instagram** and **Facebook**.

Be well and stay safe,



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

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