This is what independence looks like

2016-2017 Annual Report
Mission Statement
To advance the independence and quality of life for individuals in Pinellas County who are blind or visually impaired.

Vision Statement
Every individual who is blind or visually impaired has the opportunity to achieve his or her fullest potential and to pursue his or her aspirations in all aspects of life.
Message from the President and Board Chair

In 2016 – 2017, Lighthouse of Pinellas embarked on a new vision for the future. The Lighthouse Board and management team developed a three-year strategic plan aimed at positioning the agency to successfully innovate, enhance, and expand the critical services we provide to Pinellas County residents who are blind or visually impaired. It focuses on diversifying funding sources, building community awareness and a continued commitment to operational excellence. Together, these initiatives will help the Lighthouse extend its services to even more people in our community who are living with vision loss.

In this year’s annual report, you’ll see a common thread in the stories about our motivated clients - the profound desire to be independent. It’s at the core of our mission statement: To advance the independence and quality of life for individuals in Pinellas County who are blind or visually impaired.

But, what does independence look like? For our young client Joshua, who speaks two languages at age seven, it’s going to school and having all the opportunities as his sighted friends. For Eva, who has travelled all over the world during her lifetime and recently lost her sight, it’s walking her dog around her retirement community without assistance. And, for 27-year-old Justin, it’s the financial freedom of earning a paycheck at a job he loves.

Every client has his or her own personal story, and because of your investment in the Lighthouse of Pinellas, they all have the opportunity to add their own chapters that shape the direction of their stories.

Through the support of our donors and exceptional training by our staff, last year alone, over 500 Pinellas County residents who are blind or visually impaired were able to define what independence looked like for them.

Because of your commitment, we are changing lives right here in our community. However, nearly every day, a senior is told there is nothing more that can be done to reverse the effects of Glaucoma and another child is born with a sight-robbing eye condition. So please, help us continue to meet the needs of people like Joshua, Eva and Justin. And, thank you for being a part of this critical mission.

Warmest regards,

Kimberly Church, CPA, MBA
President & CEO

Dennis Holthaus
Lighthouse of Pinellas, Inc. Board Chair
2015 – 2017
This is What Independence Looks Like

This year’s annual report features several of our clients whose lives have been forever changed by the Lighthouse. They represent not only the impact of the important work we do here every day, but the legacy of our work for years to come.

Walking my dog

Eva

Eva isn’t going to let her vision loss slow her down. She learned she had Glaucoma at age 48. After many treatments and surgeries, she is blind in one eye and progressively losing vision in her other eye.

Nine years ago, her eye doctor referred her to the Lighthouse. She took advantage of all the services we had to offer including independent living skills classes, kitchen safety, counseling, computer classes and she learned to use the white cane. “The classes at the Lighthouse gave me confidence to live on my own and in my own environment,” she said. “I wanted to be as free as possible and not feel locked in.”

Last year, she asked the Lighthouse for additional training to help her navigate in her senior living community because it is becoming more difficult for her to see. She wanted to make sure she could walk her poodle Coa around the community on her own. After a few of sessions with our Orientation & Mobility Specialist, Eva and Coa are enjoying the outdoors and she is now focusing her efforts on helping others in her community who have severe vision loss.
Using a computer without assistance

Debi

“The world was opened back up to me and I got my life back,” said Debi, a Lighthouse of Pinellas client.

In the prime of her life, Debi developed Cone-Rod Dystrophy, a disorder that affects the retina. She had to give up her beloved job as an accountant because she couldn’t see the detail on the spreadsheets and on the computer any longer. “It got to the point where I had to do everything on the computer through my husband,” she remembered.

Frustrated that she couldn’t use her computer any longer, Debi began researching software that reads out loud what appears on the computer screen. “The JAWS program is very expensive, but I decided it was worth it to get back on the computer,” she remembered. But when she came to the Lighthouse, the instructor told her about a free program called Non Visual Desktop Access or NVDA.

She took classes with a Lighthouse technology instructor and she soon learned how to access her email, surf the internet, use Microsoft Word and even Excel. “This is my love, and I can function again,” she said. “Now, I can do anything I want to.”
Living on my own after high school

Antwan

At age 18, Antwan is an easy-going high school senior. He likes watching basketball and anything to do with auto racing, especially video games. But don’t let his casual style fool you. Despite having Optic Nerve Coloboma and Nystagmus, a condition where the optic nerve is not completely formed before birth as well as involuntary eye movements, he is already prepared for the next stage in his life.

Thanks to the Teen Transition Program at Lighthouse of Pinellas, Antwan discovered his passion for cars. He plans to begin training to become a mechanic after he graduates in May. The Transition Program is a rigorous curriculum of activities that prepares students for a successful transition to life after high school.

Antwan explained, “I learned how to live on my own: cook for myself, clean and do laundry. The teachers helped us look at different careers, write resumes, search for a job and interview.” While Antwan may have a vision impairment, his future looks decidedly clear from here.

Learning without Limitations

Joshua

At seven year old, Joshua is inquisitive, curious and always looking for the next challenge to conquer. He was born with Bilateral Persistent Hyperplastic Primary Vitreous (PHPV), a condition that causes significantly blurred vision. Because Joshua’s parents discovered his near-blindness early and brought him to the Lighthouse of Pinellas at six months of age, Joshua not only enjoys learning, he craves it.

His mom, Ling credits his Lighthouse teacher for laying the groundwork to Joshua’s success, “His teacher at the Lighthouse taught us how children who are visually impaired learn differently than children with sight. She gave us the confidence to raise Joshua to believe there are no limits on what he can do.” He started school at the same age as his sighted friends and speaks two languages: English and Mandarin.
Supporting my family with a job I love

Justin

Justin’s motto is, “You can do anything you set your mind to do.”

Justin was born with Bilateral Optic Nerve Hypoplasia, a condition that occurs when the optic nerve axons weren’t developed properly. He remembers his grandmother taking him to the Lighthouse of Pinellas when he was a toddler.

At age 27 and armed with a Bachelor’s Degree in Psychology, Justin was ready to begin working. He returned to the Lighthouse for job placement assistance. He told his case manager, “I never really knew what I wanted to do. But, I knew I wanted to help people.”

Lighthouse staff helped Justin write his resume and cover letter, search for positions online and practice interviewing skills. One day, his case manager noticed a position open for a Youth Development Specialist at the YMCA before-and-after-school program her son attends. Justin applied for the job and was hired!

“It’s the perfect job. I get to work with kids and I’m making a difference,” Justin said. “The Lighthouse was a valuable resource to me. They have a great supportive team that helped me not just with finding a job, but also with living skills, mobility and computer skills.”

You can do anything you set your mind to do.
Now in its second year, the Low Vision Expo was held October 14, 2017 in partnership with the Pinellas Council of the Blind’s (PCB) White Cane Safety Day Walk. The four-hour event is a collaboration of Lighthouse of Pinellas, PCB, the Talking Book Library and Disability Relations Group. It’s designed to educate blind or visually impaired individuals, their families, friends, potential employers and the community about the latest resources, aids, technology and services available in Pinellas County.

Over 35 business and non-profits filled Evan’s Hall at Chapel on the Hill Church. St. Petersburg Mayor Rick Kriseman, who is a “Puppy Raiser” for the Southeastern Guide Dogs, gave the keynote speech and City of Seminole Councilwoman Trish Springer read a proclamation from the city recognizing White Cane Safety Day which is universally recognized on October 15th of each year.
The Lighthouse of Pinellas held its 11th Annual Point of Light Luncheon on October 30, 2017. Initially scheduled for September, 8th, Hurricane Irma forced our committee to reschedule the event to the following month. The luncheon is mission-driven event that honors community volunteers with two awards and features inspirational stories told by two individuals who have overcome vision loss.

With over 350 guests in attendance, retired Fox 13 News Anchor John Wilson set the stage for a successful afternoon. The Point of Light Committee recognized Margaret Word Burnside and Aaron R. Fodiman, co-editors and co-publishers of Tampa Bay Magazine with the Beacon of Light Award in appreciation for their years of leadership and service within the community, and outstanding civic and philanthropic responsibility. The committee also honored community philanthropist Joan Kline with the John Wilson Spot Light Volunteer Award for her years of outstanding service and dedication to the Lighthouse of Pinellas.

The highlight of the luncheon was a presentation by Criminal Investigative Analyst Evan Connell, who began losing his sight as a teenager and went on to graduate from the University of South Florida and join the Lee County Sheriff’s Department. In a moving presentation, retired Circuit Court Judge Joseph Donahey shared his experience of losing his sight following back surgery and his incredible journey back to the bench with the help of Lighthouse of Pinellas staff.

A special thank you to our dedicated committee chaired by Joan Kline and included Pat Grubb and Terry Porter.

Thank you to our major sponsors:

- Achieva
- Publix Super Markets Charities
- Pat Grubb
- Dan & Roz Doyle

2017 Point of Light Committee (L to R) Pat Grubb; Joan Kline, Chair; Terry Porter
Established 61 years ago, the Lighthouse of Pinellas provides comprehensive vision rehabilitation training and services for individuals of all ages in Pinellas County who are visually impaired or blind. Our highly trained, certified and/or licensed staff provides individual and group instruction designed to help clients succeed in school, the work place, travel independently in the community and live a safe and healthy lifestyle despite vision impairments.

**Adult Services**

**Independent Living Skills**

Certified instructors teach individuals new ways to perform familiar tasks and manage their daily lives. Clients learn adaptations for cooking, cleaning, money management, home organization and personal care, as well as traveling safely and independently with the use of a white cane.

**Occupational Therapy Services**

Occupational Therapy helps to ensure that older adults are able to age in place, live independently and participate in their communities regardless of their visual impairment. An expert in activity analysis and environmental modification, the occupational therapist determines how vision impairment has limited a person’s ability to complete common daily tasks. The OT then modifies the task and/or the environment to minimize or remove those limitations.

**Orientation and Mobility**

Certified Orientation & Mobility specialists help clients discover new techniques for traveling safely and independently in their homes, their workplaces and in the community. Skills taught include learning to use a white cane, cross streets safely and independently, access public transportation when driving a car is no longer an option, and for some, developing the prerequisite skills to obtain a dog guide.

**Access Technology Training**

Access technology allows clients of all ages - from the youngest to seniors - to engage with technology and gain skills equal to those of their sighted peers. Our specialized instructors provide training in the use of magnification and screen reading software (which reads everything on the device out loud), Windows operating system, email and the internet. In addition, instruction is provided on scanners, optical character recognition (OCR) software (to read printed materials) and how to use the built-in access technology in iPads and iPhones.

**Vocational Rehabilitation**

Lighthouse of Pinellas offers comprehensive training to empower individuals with the skills and confidence needed to gain employment, maintain employment or regain employment. In addition to independent living skills training and learning to travel independently, clients receive access technology training necessary to function efficiently in the workplace alongside
their sighted peers. Clients also participate in job readiness training and adjustment to vision loss classes to build the skills and confidence needed to land their next job. Job Placement Services and Supported Employment Services are also available for clients who have completed their vocational rehabilitation training program.

**Coping with Vision Loss**

Coping with Vision Loss classes at Lighthouse of Pinellas help in the transition, recovery and adjustment to living with vision impairment. Coping classes also teach stress management, problem-solving and self-advocacy techniques and address anger, depression and other common concerns associated with low vision or blindness.

**Youth Services**

**Early Intervention Program**

The Early Intervention Program at Lighthouse of Pinellas teaches children from birth to five years how to best use their remaining vision; walk, feed and dress themselves; as well as communicate and socialize with others. Children with severe vision loss also need additional training in auditory, tactile, pre-braille and independent travel skills to be as prepared for success in school as their sighted peers. Parents are provided with information, education, and support to assist them in raising a child with vision loss so they can become a successful, healthy adult.

**Children’s Program**

Because children need to focus on academics during the school day, this program is specifically tailored to elementary and middle school age children to help develop and reinforce adaptive skills and techniques to enable them to compete in a sighted world. Our real-life instruction and experiences will ultimately enhance their success as they move through the Teen Transition Program and on to life after high school.

**Transition Program**

The Transition Program empowers teenagers ages 14 – 22 to transition from high school to college, technical school or employment by providing extensive year-round training in personal and home management, access technology, job readiness, self-advocacy and independent travel skills. In addition, the teens participate in summer work experiences, career exploration and volunteer opportunities to prepare them for success in competitive employment and living on their own after graduation.
Statement of Activities  Fiscal Year 2016 – 2017

Revenue

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government Awards</td>
<td>$871,829</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributions &amp; Bequests</td>
<td>$484,855</td>
<td>26%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Investment Return</td>
<td>$424,998</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Fees &amp; Other</td>
<td>$  74,970</td>
<td>4%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>$1,856,652</td>
<td>100%</td>
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Expenses

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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program Services</td>
<td>$1,368,054</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management &amp; General</td>
<td>261,277</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>116,258</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>$1,745,589</td>
<td>100%</td>
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Mission Results

Our donors, grantors and government contracts made it possible for Lighthouse of Pinellas to help 503 clients on their way to independence.

- **61** years serving the visually impaired
- **503** clients served
- **355** supporters
- **289** referrals
- **9+** programs
- **70** eye care physicians engaged in referrals
- **1868** people through community outreach

Revenue Breakdown:

- Government Awards 47%
- Contributions & Bequests 26%
- Investment Return 23%
- Program Fees & Other 4%

Expense Breakdown:

- Program Services 78%
- Management & General 15%
- Fundraising 7%
Lighthouse of Pinellas Supporters

October 1, 2016 – September 30, 2017

Your gifts to the Lighthouse of Pinellas are used to support life-changing programs that give hope, opportunity and possibilities to residents who are visually impaired or blind. We at the Lighthouse appreciate your commitment to our mission. Every contribution makes a difference in the lives of those we serve.

$100,000+
Estate of Doris Inch Disse
$25,000-$49,999
Estate of Mary W. Eck
National Christian Foundation
Tampa Bay

$10,000-$24,999
Achieva Foundation
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