



Insight

Lighthouse for the Blind of Fort Worth

Spring 2010

Lighthouse Organizes First Annual White Cane Day Walk in Fort Worth

On October 13, 2009 approximately 100 individuals had the privilege to participate in the first annual White Cane Day walk in Fort Worth. The intent of the walk was to celebrate the independence of residents in our community that contend with vision loss. A committee comprised of representatives from National Federation of the Blind, American Council of the Blind, Lions Club International, Prevent Blindness, Division for Blind Services, Computers Made Easy, and The Lighthouse for the Blind of Fort Worth coordinated the event. Prior to the walk, many of the participants gathered at the Lighthouse for the Blind of Fort Worth and were provided with commemorative shirts to honor the event. The Fort Worth Transportation Authority, known locally as The T, provided two buses to transport participants to the Tarrant County Courthouse where an opening rally initiated the event. After a welcoming speech by members of the American Council of the Blind, a representative from the Tarrant County Commissioners Court read a White Cane Day proclamation for Tarrant County. After the proclamation was read, the walk began. The walk concluded at a local downtown restaurant four blocks from the Tarrant County Courthouse. The closing ceremony included the reading of a State of Texas Senate Proclamation in recognition of White Cane Day by an employee of The Lighthouse for the Blind. A word of thanks and closing remarks were made by representatives of The National Federation of the Blind. A proclamation from the Mayor was read by a member of the City Council at the Fort Worth City Council meeting later that evening.



President Lyndon B. Johnson first observed White Cane Day in 1964 as a reminder to promote courtesy and special consideration to the blind. White Cane Day has since taken on greater meaning as a time to celebrate the independence of the blind and their right to participate fully in society.

President's Message

Please join me in congratulating the Lighthouse for the Blind of Fort Worth for 75 years of continual service to people who are blind in Tarrant County. I doubt that Ms. Willie Fay Lewis envisioned our 80,000 square foot facility or being able to serve 1,600 clients a year. But, here we are – continuing the mission that began 75 years ago and growing stronger every year.

To mark the occasion, we will host a 75th Anniversary celebration on March, 22 2010. We hope to have city officials, council members, Endowment Trustees, and many of our Board of Directors in attendance for the morning festivities. It should be a wonderful occasion to recognize our continued contributions to our community and nation.

I will be traveling to Washington D.C. to participate in the National Industries for the Blind Public Policy forum. This event provides a platform for agency executives to share our story and mission with members of the legislature. We want to arm them with current information and insight into the employment of people who are blind and the benefit of the JWOD Act and the AbilityOne Program as they take up the task of modernizing the JWOD Act. In addition, we will also gain exposure to the process and how we can better be involved in the program that benefits our collective agencies.

We would enjoy having you visit the Lighthouse. We'll leave the light on.

--Platt Allen, III President/CEO

Recognition of Retirement

W. Wayne Pound

1974 - 2010

With our heartfelt thanks for the 36 years of outstanding service to the people who are blind in Tarrant County and for your unique personal involvement with the employees at the Lighthouse for the Blind of Fort Worth.



2010 Endowment Trustees

The Lighthouse for the Blind of Fort Worth announces its 2010 Endowment Trustees. Trustees include: Michael Rendon, Endowment Chairman; Steve Peglar, Secretary and former Chairman of the Board of Directors; Bill Lamkin, former Endowment Chairman; and Robert Mosteller, former President/CEO of the Lighthouse.

The Lighthouse extends a special thanks to Trustee Michele Hahnfeld whose Endowment term ended in 2009. Michele served on the Endowment and the Lighthouse Board of Directors.

Please join us in thanking these individuals for their service to benefit the 31,000 people in Tarrant County who are blind or significantly visually impaired.

2010 Board of Directors

The Lighthouse for the Blind of Fort Worth announces its 2010 Board of Directors. Board members serving their first term at the Lighthouse include David G. Ondich and Brian T. Farrington. The current members include J. Brad Buell, Elizabeth Campbell, Joe Estill, Armand Fisher, Kathe Goodwin, Jack Hunnicutt, Ruth Ann Kearley, Bill Lamkin, Dr. Charles D. Little (Chairman), Clayton Meissner (Secretary), R. Alston Roberts, III, Dr. Shannon Shipp, Steve Wood-Smith, Dr. John Via (Treasurer), Stephen Wilson, and Councilman W.B. Zimmerman (Vice-Chairman). Please join us in thanking these individuals for their service to benefit the 31,000 people in Tarrant County who are blind or significantly visually impaired.

The Lighthouse extends a special thanks to the Directors whose terms ended in 2009. Board members and years served include: Lynn Crazz (4), Adam Gellert (4), Tammy Gomez (6), Blake Hailey (10), C.T. Scott (30) and Stephen Peglar (10). Mr. Scott and Mr. Peglar were both prior Chairmen of the Board.

THANK YOU AmeriCredit

The Lighthouse would like to express a sincere "Thank You" to AmeriCredit for their recent donation of desk chairs. You truly did a wonderful thing. We appreciate your donation and you have helped our staff tremendously.

Fun at the Fort Worth Stock Show and Rodeo

The Lighthouse for the Blind of Fort Worth has partnered with the AT&T Pioneers for over 30 years to provide a memorable event for children that are blind or visually impaired in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. On January 29, 2010, dozens of children from the Fort Worth Independent School District, Eagle Mountain-Saginaw School District, Denton County Co-Op Special Education, Mansfield Independent School District, Stephenville Co-Op, and Joshua Independent School District had the opportunity to visit the 114th annual Fort Worth Stock Show and Rodeo.

Many well deserved thanks go to the AT&T Pioneers. The AT&T Pioneers are a group of corporate volunteers that provide hardware necessary for children with visual impairment to listen to an announcer narrate a play by play account of all rodeo activities.



They arrived in the early morning hours to wire headsets and a microphone permitting the children to hear the events as they occur on the dirt floor of the Will Rogers Coliseum. A big thank you also goes out to the Colleyville Lion's Club and Frost Bank as they made this event possible through a donation made to the Lighthouse for the Blind. The children certainly appreciated Coburn's Catering for providing snacks and Coca-Cola for providing beverages. As in previous years, Westland Petting Zoo allowed the children to visit and pet a variety of animals before the rodeo began. Despite the cold weather, attendance was high and everyone involved had a wonderful time. We all certainly look forward to next year!



Chairman of the Board, Charles D. Little, Ph.D.

Dr. Charles Little is a native Tennessean, born and raised in Nashville. He graduated from high school there in 1966, and attended Tennessee Tech University for his freshman and sophomore years of college.

After his first two years of college, Dr. Little entered the United States Air Force, where he served two years. In 1970, he returned to finish his college degree majoring in business. Upon graduation, he remained at the University of Tennessee to pursue the Masters in Business Administration (MBA). He was awarded that degree in March of 1974 and immediately accepted a position with the United States Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) in Washington, DC.



Dr. Little served almost ten years as a criminal investigator with the ICC in Washington, Chicago, and Fort Worth, achieving the level of District Director and Supervisor of Investigations over an eight-state area while in the Fort Worth regional office. During this time, he served on major projects and investigations involving such criminal activities as

illegal agricultural cooperatives, bogus brokerage activities, "lumping," weight fraud, and duplicate payments.

Dr. Little was offered the position of Director, Transportation Services with the United States General Services Administration (GSA) in November of 1982. He accepted this position and spent the remainder of his career in various managerial and then executive positions working out of GSA's regional offices in Fort Worth. During the course of Dr. Little's federal career, he led supply projects for military activities in the Middle East, Somalia, and the Falklands and disaster projects

including floods, earthquakes, tornados, hurricanes, and the bombing of the Alfred Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City. During his career with GSA, Dr. Little earned his Ph.D. in Organization Theory and Leadership with a secondary in Marketing from the University of North Texas in 1985.

As Dr. Little moved through his career with the GSA, he developed a special interest in the National Industries for the Blind (NIB). He worked closely with the Blind Workshops in Texas, and he built a close working relationship with the Lighthouse for the Blind of Fort Worth. He and his business development staff, actively promoted blind made products to the over 54,000 federal customers located over the eleven state area of his region. He often spoke at federal customer meetings promoting blind made products, and he regularly attended NIB and Lighthouse Industries for the Blind of Texas (LIBT) meetings, in order to strengthen the working relationship between he and his business development staff and the blind workshops located in Texas, the Southwest, and nationally. He received numerous awards from NIB and the NIBT during his career with GSA.

In July of 2004, Dr. Little retired from the U.S. General Services Administration in order to accept the position of Associate Dean of Business at Texas Wesleyan University. He left that position in May of 2008 to accept his current position of Senior Lecturer in the Department of Marketing and Management at Texas A&M University-Commerce.

Despite his retirement from GSA, Dr. Little remains committed to the mission of the National Industries for the Blind, and in particular, the mission of the Lighthouse for the Blind of Fort Worth. In 2006, Dr. Little was selected as a board member of the Lighthouse for the Blind of Fort Worth. He was selected to serve as Chairman of the Board for 2010/2011. In this position, he hopes to be able to continue his support of the Lighthouse, and work in concert with the board and Lighthouse leaders to take the organization to new levels of success in the coming years.

LIGHTHOUSE SUPPLIES ENERGY PAD FOR RELIEF EFFORTS

The products made with blind labor, here at the Fort Worth Lighthouse, have been an important component for relief efforts for more than 10 years in such places as Bosnia, Iraq, Afghanistan, Africa and just recently Haiti. If you witnessed air drops of food and water over Haiti you have seen one of our blind made products in action. Each layer of water bottles dropped or meals ready to eat were padded for impact by our Energy Pad product. If you saw or heard of humanitarian relief efforts anywhere in the world you saw our blind made product playing a very important part in saving lives. The Lighthouse for the Blind is the only qualified source in the world for the TRIADS (Tri-Wall Aerial Delivery System Kit) and (Energy Dissipating Pads). The Lighthouse has sold the Energy Pad product, through brokers, to Australia, Singapore, Egypt and the Netherlands for their military air drops and humanitarian relief.



2009 Customers – Supplies – Donors

Top Suppliers

ABM Federal
All Star Corrugated
American National Supply
Blind Ind. & Serv. of Maryland
Carpenter Company
Central Texas Corrugated
Dallas Lighthouse
Defense Finance & Account Service
Eastern Carolina Voca. Ctr., Inc.
Airlift Technologies Int'l
Enterprise Group
Fort Worth Trans. Authority
Future Foam
Horizon Industries
IFS Industries, Inc.
Industries for the Blind, Inc.

Georgia Industries
LC Industries, Inc.
North Central Sight Services
NYC Industries for the Blind
Enovation Group
Print Team
Rotary Pen Corp.
Rusco Shipping Supply Co.
West Texas Lighthouse
Envision
Texas Labeling & Supply
Crown Label Products, Inc.
South Texas Lighthouse
The Lighthouse in New Orleans
TotalFlare, Inc.
United Stationers
University Computers

Victory Packaging
Wortham Ins. & Risk Mgmt.
Dynamold, Inc.
Xpedx

Top 10 Customers

DDHU/EG&G LOGISTICS
Derco Aerospace, Inc.
EFW, Inc.
Focusworks Base Service Store
Javits-Wagner-O'Day Program
Lockheed Martin Aeronautics
San Antonio Lighthouse
South Texas Lighthouse for the Blind
Texas Industries for the Blind and Handicapped
U.S. General Services Administration

General Fund Donors

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Saracco Charitable Unitrust
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Tabb-Thompson Trst
Tessa Smith, DFW Intl. Airport
Texas Federation of the Blind
The Beasley Foundation
TIBH/Marie Richter
Tolli Macalik
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Wallace & Joetta Ethredge
Wayne Pound
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Whit & Gretchen Smith

Endowment Donors

Alexander Foundation
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We have made every effort in listing accurate information. If a mistake is identified, please accept our sincere apology and notify Phyllis Looney at plooney@lighthousefw.org or at 817-332-3341.

CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION 2009

The only way to begin a party is with good food. The good food this year was provided by Soda Springs Barbecue. If you are wondering why "Barbecue" for Christmas, well it's because it has been the Lighthouse tradition for many years. The blind employees of the Lighthouse chose to have their turkey at Thanksgiving and not again at Christmas.

After having a good traditional Christmas lunch the next thing you must have is entertainment. We had an abundance of quality entertainment this past Christmas.

We were blessed with a group of very talented music students from the Southwestern Baptist Seminary led by my Dom Jae (David) Kim. This group not only entertained us but also supported the blind employees.

Lisa Jackson, Marcus Jones, Roger Shultz, and Norma Torres performed and were accepted with appreciative applause. After the entertainment everyone was encouraged to join in as we all sang our favorite Christmas carols.

A highlight of every Christmas is the announcement of who has been chosen to represent the Lighthouse as our new "Employee of the Year". This year Oscar Olvera was nominated by his peers and selected for his outstanding work, pleasant attitude, and leadership. Oscar works primarily in the Box Department but you might find him on any given day almost anywhere he is needed.

Oscar will be invited to attend the NIB Annual Training Conference that will be held in Cincinnati, Ohio in October.



Annual Meeting

The Lighthouse held its annual meeting on the evening of January 26, 2010 at the Colonial Country Club. This event each year is where our board members and staff have an opportunity to come together and share in the success of mutual efforts, as well as expectations of the coming year. Steve Peglar opened the meeting as his last official act as Chairman of the Board, after having served in this position for the previous two years. Following the election of officers, Mr. Peglar turned the podium over to the new chairman, Dr. Charles Little. Mr. Little recognized current and outgoing board members and thanked them for their dedicated service. He also introduced the Endowment Trustees.

Having completed his first full year as President/CEO of the Fort Worth Lighthouse Platt Allen gave a breakdown of the past year in review by focusing on the financial performance, community services, and employment opportunities offered by the Lighthouse. Mr. Allen spoke extensively about the ambitious goals of the current fiscal year. Following the report, attention was then turned to the highlight of each year's annual meeting which is the recognition of this year's Lighthouse Employee of the Year Honoree, Oscar Olvera.

A special tribute was made in honor of Mr. Wayne Pound, Community Services Vice-President, after his forthcoming retirement was announced. Platt Allen presented Mr. Pound with a plaque and expressed his heartfelt thanks for 36 years of outstanding service to the blind people in Tarrant County and for his unique personal involvement with the employees at the Lighthouse for the Blind of Fort Worth. Mr. Pound was also presented special recognition from David Jeppson, representing the Division for Blind Services.





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Visit our Web site at www.lighthousefw.org

Oscar Olvera Named 2010 Lighthouse Employee of the Year

Our Employee of the Year was born 50 years ago to a large family. Oscar Olvera has four sisters and four brothers. He was born in Allende (ay-en-day) Coahuila (co-ah-we-la) North Mexico. Oscar enjoyed playing soccer as a young child in Mexico with his siblings. In adulthood, Oscar worked as a welder in Houston, Texas. Oscar married his wife, Dora Elia Olvera in 1980. Dora Elia and Oscar gave birth to their only child, Oscar Junior in 1981. Oscar moved to the Fort Worth area in 1987 where he had a number of different occupations in construction, landscaping, and housekeeping.

Oscar was diagnosed with a brain tumor in 1978. That tumor started to substantially impact his vision in 1985. Oscar started working with the state agency for the blind, the Texas Commission for the Blind, now Division for Blind Services, in 1998 and later started working with us at the Lighthouse for the Blind in 2003.

Oscar stated that he enjoys his position at the Lighthouse for the Blind of Fort Worth because he enjoys working with others with vision loss and specifically mentioned that he enjoys working with his direct supervisor, Mr. Rick Watkins. When nominations for Employee of the Year were submitted, Rick said that Oscar is "Highly productive and entirely self motivated." Oscar's excellent attendance record was also acknowledged as was the fact that he is always flexible and willing to learn new tasks. Oscar has excelled in his department and consistently performs an outstanding job. Oscar's supervisor and others that voted said that Oscar Olvera certainly merits being awarded the Lighthouse for the Blind Employee of the Year.



E-mail Address Request

The Lighthouse needs your help!

If you have e-mail and would like to have your Newsletter delivered electronically, please send your name and e-mail address to Donna Miller at dmiller@lighthousefw.org

We appreciate it, and the environment will too!