

WINTER 2012

LIGHTHOUSE FOR
THE BLIND
OF FORT WORTH
817-332-3341

www.lighthousefw.org



INSIGHT

LIGHTHOUSE SALES PERSON ROBERT SELLERS NAMED AS THE 2012 ARTIE LEE HINDS NOMINEE

When the Lighthouse first started, there were door to door salesmen trumpeting the hand-crafted wares made by the blind employees. Today, instead of going door to door, the Lighthouse sales team now goes coast to coast, and as well, uses the worldwide web for reaching customers. On average, three to four monthly inquires about purchasing products come through the Lighthouse's website and the sales person fielding those inquiries is **Robert Sellers**, the 2012 Artie Lee Hinds Nominee.

CONSISTENTLY DEMONSTRATING INITIATIVE, DEDICATION, AND A POSITIVE ATTITUDE

As the Inside Sales Assistant, Robert processes all of the sales orders, follows-up with customers and keeps track of orders from input to delivery. He works closely with the sales representatives by forwarding customer information, order information, and leads to the appropriate person. He maintains sales records and reports for department meetings. Robert helps coordinate sales promotional activities, prepares samples, and maintains and updates the products section of the Lighthouse website. Robert handles our inside sales – telephone calls and walk-in customers. He works everyday with TIBH Industries, Inc. on all aspects of our orders.

Frank Oliver, Lighthouse National Sales Manager, explains the reason for nominating Robert for this state wide award, "Robert is an integral part of the sales team at the Lighthouse for the Blind of Fort Worth. Customer satisfaction is crucial to the success of any organization. He goes above and beyond his assigned duties to ensure that our customers are satisfied. His commitment to customer service has allowed the Lighthouse to thrive and contribute to our mission of providing

[continued inside](#)



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Platt Allen, III

– [Artie Lee Hinds Nominee continued from front page](#)

meaningful employment for the visually impaired. He consistently demonstrates initiative, dedication, and a positive attitude.”

On a personal note, you need to know that Robert has a wonderful laugh and is just a super nice guy – someone you enjoy talking to. Legally blind due to Retinitis Pigmentosa, he received the diagnosis at age 30 but acknowledges that he has had vision problems since he was a boy.

Having been involved in sales and product development since 1990, he joined the Lighthouse sales team in April 2010. Like many of his co-workers, Robert learned about the Lighthouse through Scott Hudson at Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services. He is so glad to be here; he really enjoys the people, the varied daily activities and working with customers over the phone. Married for 25 years and the father to teenage sons, family is important. Together they enjoy symphony, basketball, and watching sports. He is also an avid reader and likes to cook. We understand he cooks a yummy steak, but we are still waiting for that dinner invitation.

FORT WORTH'S LIGHTHOUSE FOR THE BLIND SENDS HYGIENE KITS TO SUPER STORM SANDY VICTIMS

When a call came out from National Industries for the Blind (NIB) that there was an opportunity for Lighthouses and other similar agencies to assist in the relief efforts for Super Storm Sandy victims, the Fort Worth Lighthouse didn't hesitate to join in the effort.



Back in 2010, this local nonprofit responded to a similar request from FEMA after the earthquake devastated Haiti with a nine piece personal hygiene kit. Within 10 days of the call from FEMA, Lighthouse had 100,000 kits assembled and in transit to help victims of the quake.

“Even as a nonprofit that provides employment and rehabilitation services to individuals who are blind, a philanthropic philosophy is demonstrated by our employees almost daily. Whether it is doing a local canned food drive for an area food bank or providing bath soap and toothpaste for the Sandy victims, Lighthouse employees generously participate with the goal of helping others who are less fortunate,” comments Nancy Fisher, Community Development.

Approximately 5000 similar kits were shipped out to those affected by Super Storm Sandy. New York City Industries for the Blind, an agency similar to our Lighthouse, coordinated distribution to those in need.

MARK THE DATE

A SPECIAL GIFT TO OUR COMMUNITY: MICHAEL HINGSON

The Lighthouse for the Blind of Fort Worth will serve as host to Michael Hingson, *New York Times* best-selling author of THUNDER DOG, the week of February 25, 2013.

If you already know Michael's incredible story, you will want to hear him. If you don't know his story, you must hear him!

As described in his bio, "Although blind from birth, Michael has an indomitable and fearless spirit that first emerged when he began to spread his wings as a boy, first riding a pedal car inside the house, without assistance, after he learned to "hear" the coffee table. Then he shocked neighbors by graduating to riding his bicycle, ALONE, through the streets of Palmdale, CA."

"Michael Hingson's life changed dramatically on September 11, 2001, when he and his guide dog, Roselle, escaped from the 78th floor of Tower One in the World Trade Center moments before it collapsed. Soon after, Michael and Roselle were thrust into the international limelight where

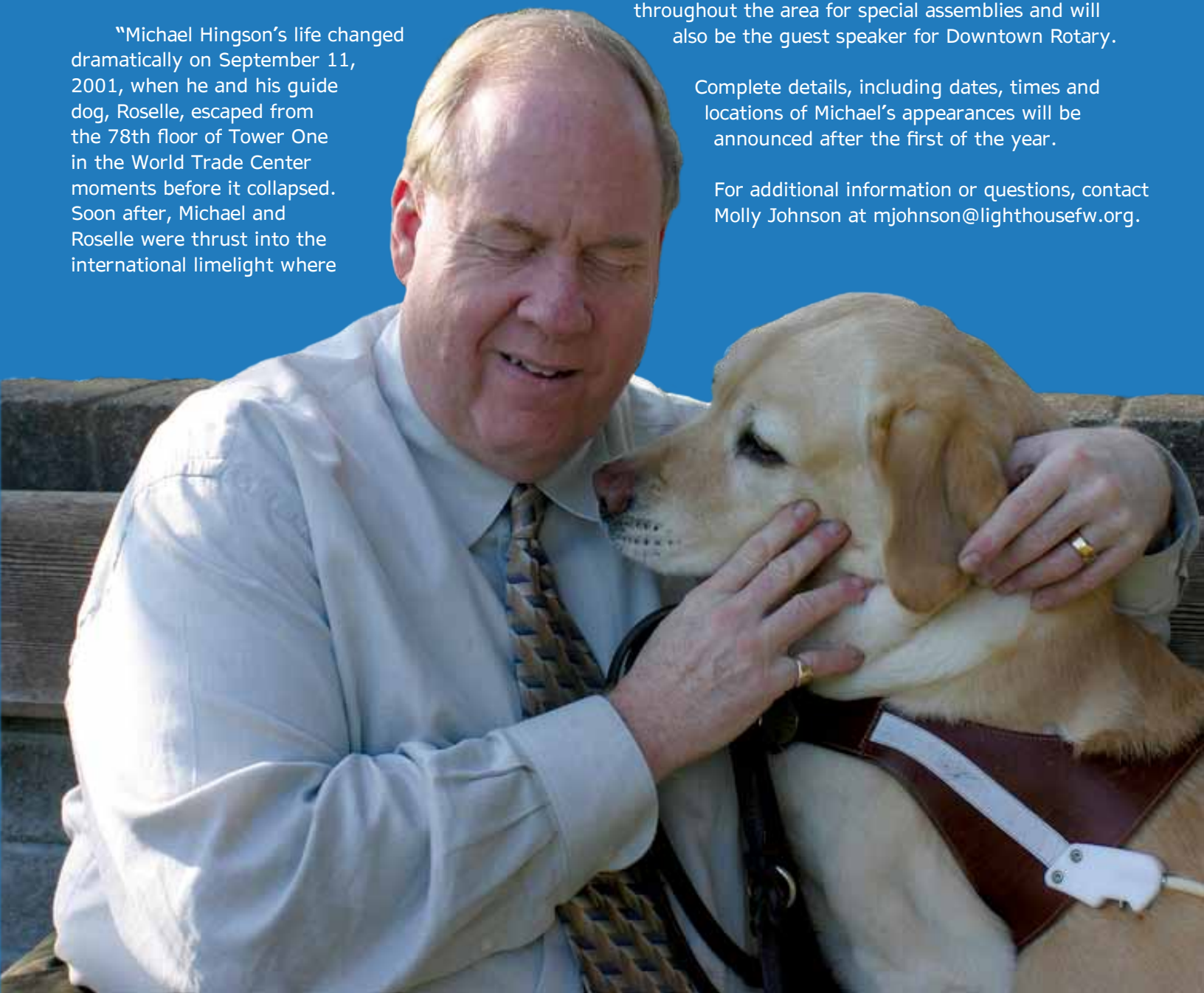
Michael began to share his unique survival story and 9-11 lessons of trust, courage, and teamwork."

Lighthouse President/CEO Platt Allen, III, describes the upcoming visit in the following way, "Michael Hingson has a life story that will inspire anyone who hears him speak. He exemplifies the spirit and "can-do" attitude that both visually impaired and sighted can benefit from. Because of that, the Lighthouse is proud to have Michael as our guest and as our gift to the Fort Worth community. His story of success, companionship, and survival is one that we are pleased to bring to the community."

Michael will be speaking to blind youth and their families, members throughout the blind community, the Lighthouse employees and Lighthouse friends in various venues. As well, Michael will be visiting several schools throughout the area for special assemblies and will also be the guest speaker for Downtown Rotary.

Complete details, including dates, times and locations of Michael's appearances will be announced after the first of the year.

For additional information or questions, contact Molly Johnson at mjohnson@lighthousefw.org.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



As we approach the holiday season our attention is drawn far too often to the commercialization of the holidays. We cannot help it, it is all that you see on TV or hear on the radio. We have been conditioned to it, and reminded that the reason for the season is to spend. I believe that Fort Worth is different.

We are blessed to live in a city whose small town feel and concern for each other rises above the din of the marketers. The spirit of giving, instead of receiving, resonates within us. Those of us at the Lighthouse are part of that "us," too.

Our team members contributed care bears that were donated to Cook Children's Alexander Vision Clinic so that children who are suffering from visual impairments, like many of our team members did as children, have a soft friend to hug and hold while they wait for treatment and maybe aren't quite as scared as they would be otherwise. Our team members also participated in a canned food drive benefitting the Tarrant Area Food Bank so that those who are not as fortunate as we are might enjoy a hot and healthy meal.

I am proud of our team for wanting to participate in the spirit of giving. You might think that because our team members are blind or significantly visually impaired that they would be the recipients of such gifts, and many may be. Our team members recognize that they are lucky to have competitive jobs, with competitive wages and benefits and because of that, they too want to give back. They can't give a lot, but what they give comes from their heart.

The Lighthouse will be giving a gift to our community in February of 2013. We are bringing Michael Hingson to town to share his experience as a

"Wall Street" employee, best-selling author, and survivor of 911. And, oh by the way, he's blind. He and his guide dog, Africa, will be coming to town as our guest and speaking to school children who are blind, high schoolers that will be our future community leaders, college students trying to navigate our changing economic and social landscape, community leaders involved in the Downtown Rotary, and individuals who are blind in Tarrant County. His story of evacuating the North Tower, under the careful guidance of his then guide dog Roselle, prior to its collapse and the incredible bond between him and Roselle is wonderfully gripping. I cannot wait to share this incredible man, his story, and his heart with our friends and neighbors.

In closing, I have been very blessed over the past four years to work with an amazing team of individuals. We are the evidence that the team is greater than the sum of its parts. I am grateful for their diverse talents and their collective focus on serving the community of people who are blind. But we are not finished; our work is not done. In the coming year we will embark on a project to build a world-class rehabilitation services department. We will be reaching out to the community of people who are blind and asking what it is that they want, need or expect from the Lighthouse. Armed with that information we will then craft a suite of services to exceed those expectations. We will also be asking for those within our community who also serve this population to join us for a Vision Summit to share our individual efforts in service and to determine how we can collectively serve the population better. It is going to be a busy year. We are ready for the challenges it will bring and are excited about the opportunities it will provide for us to continue to demonstrate the spirit of giving that marks this season.

From all of us at the Lighthouse,
Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year!

Platt Allen, III
President/CEO

FORT WORTH LIGHTHOUSE RECOGNIZED BY THE DOD WITH PRESTIGIOUS AWARD

Lighthouse for the Blind of Fort Worth was selected to receive the Outstanding AbilityOne Program Vendor Award by the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA), a part of the Department of Defense (DOD).

Presented to organizations that exemplify overall excellence in product quality, on-time delivery, customer service, dependability, and accuracy, this award recognizes the Lighthouse for having demonstrated exceptional efforts in partnering with DLA and improving the federal agency's mission of providing supplies and services to America's military forces worldwide.

Nominated by DLA Aviation, the Lighthouse's recognition is a result of the nonprofit's extraordinary efforts to rapidly and consistently provide the requirements of our military, and in particular, supplying the Lighthouse product, Energy Dissipating Pads.

The Lighthouse has been the sole source manufacturer and supplier of this unique and critical product for the US Army Air Command since 1998. Adding to the uniqueness is the fact that the production operation is manned by a 100% direct labor force of individuals who are blind or legally blind. (Federal and military contracts require, as a minimum, a 75% blind labor ratio.) The pads, 6 x 3 feet in size each, are used in air drops made by the US Army Air Command (Air Force). They are used around the world for humanitarian aid and in the delivery of life-saving supplies to our military troops in the war zones of Afghanistan or wherever our troops are deployed.



JOHN QUA (NIB), LIGHTHOUSE PRESIDENT/CEO PLATT ALLEN, III, LIGHTHOUSE VP INDUSTRIAL OPERATIONS TOMMY JAYNES, AND VICE ADMIRAL MARK HARNITCHEK (USN)

Tommy Jaynes, Lighthouse Vice President of Industrial Operations, explains the magnitude of the product, "We, here at the Fort Worth Lighthouse, are very proud of our role in the success and safety of our soldiers and in the relief provided to starving or traumatized people due to natural disasters wherever they may be. Whenever the supplies or equipment needed must be delivered by air, that air drop will include these locally made Energy Dissipating Pads for the purpose of cushioning the impact of the landing of the precious cargo."

Certainly proud of this recognition, the Lighthouse for the Blind of Fort Worth also views it as an opportunity to prove to the community as well as the country that individuals who are blind are contributing members to the American workforce in a significant way.

Outstanding
AbilityOne
Program
Vendor
AWARD

LIGHTHOUSE PROVIDES QUALITY WORKFORCE FOR LOCAL ENTREPRENEUR'S HOLIDAY PRODUCT

Lighthouse for the Blind of Fort Worth is a multi-faceted mid-size manufacturing operation with its labor force being comprised of skilled workers who are blind or significantly visually impaired.



In the mid-1970s, the Lighthouse transformed from a small manufacturer of mops and brooms to a manufacturer of paper products, shipping containers and military products. Today, six departments—energy dissipating pads, boxes, copy paper, computer paper, bottling, pens, and sub-contract—provide a range of employment opportunities and cross-training. In the past three years, the Lighthouse has grown their direct blind labor force from 65 to 95 blind/visually impaired team members. Sales revenue has increased from \$15,000 to \$23,000 in the same time frame.

RECOMMENDING THAT OTHER LOCAL BUSINESSES CONSIDER THE LIGHTHOUSE

The majority of the nonprofit's customer base originates from federal and state contracts, but there is desire on the part of the board of directors and senior management to diversify manufacturing operations and sales. "Without a doubt, the Lighthouse greatly appreciates the relationships with federal and state entities but there is also a benefit in the development of commercial opportunities. This means extending our reach out to private businesses who we can partner with in the manufacturing of products or who we can approach as a viable purchaser of our products," explains Platt Allen, III, Lighthouse President/CEO.

One such opportunity happened earlier this year when Jan Aziz, a local real estate agent and entrepreneur, contacted the Lighthouse about packaging a product that will be on the shelves of The Container Store this holiday season. The item, an ornament storage tray insert developed and marketed by Keep It Safe Systems or KISS, is a system of trays that stack inside a plastic bin.

In need of assistance in packaging the inserts, Aziz called the Lighthouse. "From the moment I contacted the Lighthouse for the Blind, they did everything they could to make sure that I would be comfortable working with them. The fact that they didn't have the right equipment didn't stop them. They researched the equipment and purchased what was required, calculated the number of people needed to do the job, and assured me they could get it done on time or ahead of schedule. A very good competitive quote closed the deal for me," stated Aziz. Once production was up and running, the staff kept her in the loop. Upon visiting the production line, Aziz walked away pleased and impressed with professionalism of each employee.

"It was such a pleasure to work with people who made sure that I understood the process despite my lack of knowledge on manufacturing operations and who demonstrated through their actions and abilities that my business was important to them. I was more than satisfied with final results and I will happily recommend that other local businesses consider the Lighthouse and its very qualified employees for similar jobs," said Aziz.





VISION IMPAIRED STUDENTS ATTEND CAMP LIGHTHOUSE @ THE Y

The Lighthouse for the Blind of Fort Worth has long been known as a major employer and provider of rehabilitation services for local adults who are blind. In earlier times, the Lighthouse also had children and youth programs. Today the seventy-seven year old nonprofit agency provides three activities specific to children and youth in the way of a Summer Youth Work Program and Fort Worth Stock Show and Rodeo and circus excursions.

According to the Education Service Center Region XI there are approximately 1,000 school-aged children and youth who are blind or have significant low vision enrolled throughout several school districts. With a growing number of younger people who are confronting blindness and low vision due to childhood obesity and the proliferation of diabetes, the Lighthouse is addressing this vision epidemic in the way of developing and implementing additional services specific to our local population of children and youth who are blind or have low vision.

An exciting new endeavor happened the week of June 24th with "Camp Lighthouse @ the Y". In collaboration with the YMCA Camp Carter and the generous support of five funders: Alcon Foundation, C. B. Baird, Jr. Foundation (Wells Fargo, Trustee), Garvey Texas Foundation, Crystelle Waggoner Charitable Trust (Bank of America, Trustee), and RadioShack, a five day

camp introduced adaptive technology to 10 high and middle school aged youth who are blind or significantly visually impaired. The purpose of the camp was to enhance their skills as they complete high school and pursue an undergraduate degree or vocational training. Professional instruction on utilizing technology in academic and life-exploration activities was done by a trainer and 4 assistants who were also blind. Campers had the opportunity to meet and interact with several adult mentors who are vision impaired and who have successfully utilized technology while in college or in their chosen professional careers.

In addition to the technology portion, the 10 campers had the opportunity to get the true "camp experience" by participating in other activities such as horseback riding, beep baseball, arts and crafts, swimming, camp dance and hiking with other campers.

The camp finale was a closing meeting that included parents, family members, and funders where the week's activities were highlighted and each camper was presented with their very own iPad!

For information on how to nominate a local middle school or high school student for the 2013 Camp Lighthouse @ the Y, contact Nancy Fisher at nfisher@lighthousefw.org or by calling 817-332-3341, ext. 7782.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS "This summer, I had the opportunity to go to Camp Lighthouse @ the Y, a technology camp that teaches campers about the iPad and its features. This one week camp at Camp Carter YMCA combined technology training, traditional Camp Carter activities, and socializing all into one busy but fun camp.

Each morning, before iPad training, we each went to a skill activity like archery or dance. This was a great way to learn something new, and socialize before the tech training began. After the training, we would do things with our cabin such as canoeing, dance, or just hang out, and then go swimming with the other cabins.

Each night, we would end the day with some kind of activity with everyone at Camp Carter: games like musical chairs, to beep baseball, to a camp dance at the end of the week. It was cool that these were all camp wide, because there were visually impaired campers and sighted campers all doing the same activities at the same time, which I hope showed that just because we can't see doesn't mean we can't do the same things as our sighted peers.

Camp Lighthouse @ the Y was an amazing camp. I got to try new things and made several new friends. I am incredibly thankful that Lighthouse for the Blind did all of this for us lucky campers, and I am also thankful to Camp Carter for being great hosts and making sure we had a great camp experience as well..." ~ **CHELBY**



GOLFING UNDER THE STARS RAISES AWARENESS AND DOLLARS FOR LIGHTHOUSE PROGRAMS



Golfers and wine tasters attending the 2012 Shot in the Dark Golf Tournament and Wine Tasting didn't let the first cold front of the season stop them from having a good time at River Crest Country Club on the evening of October 5th. In only its second year, this fun and unique benefit under the stars almost doubled in participants and revenue. Presenting sponsor was EnerVest, the fifth largest Barnett Shale producer and a returning sponsor from 2011.

Yolanda Walker, Cash America Vice President for Public Relations and Corporate Communication and former television news reporter, served as the Mistress of Ceremonies. Guests enjoyed the talents of Joseph King, an up and coming musical composer who is blind, during registration and the wine tasting.

Right before sunset, 114 golfers headed out to the links with flashlights in carts and glow-in-the-dark golf balls and necklaces to find specially lit tee boxes and holes. Another 60 guests enjoyed a wine tasting that featured several wines from LangeTwins Winery and Vineyard described by Guynell Whetstone, District Sales Manager. Golfers rejoined the wine tasters at the conclusion of the 9 hole best ball scramble for dessert, raffle drawings, live music by Fiddlesticks and the awarding of trophies. Special congratulations to the teams representing Coors Distributors and Frost Bank for having best scores of the evening.

An event of this magnitude requires the support and efforts of many – sponsors and volunteers. Those names are gratefully recognized on subsequent pages in this newsletter, but we would like to publicly thank Presenting Sponsor, EnerVest, our Platinum Sponsors who were TPG Capital, Fort Worth, Texas Magazine, Coors Distributors and Future Foam and the Gold Sponsor: Bonfire Capital Group, Cash America, Enterprise Group, Georgia Pacific/xpedx, and Plains Capital for their generous support this year.

The Lighthouse wishes to also express a heartfelt thanks to the hardworking committee: Theresa Berend, Chair, Ann Allen, Chuck Berend, Zach Burt, Dana Compton, Marian Frymire, David Garcia, Michael Graves, Maria Gregorio, Julie Jones, and Drew Martin.



PLEASE SEE
SHOT IN THE DARK
SPONSORS
LISTED ON
NEXT PAGE



SHOT *in the* DARK

GOLF TOURNAMENT & WINE TASTING
Benefitting Lighthouse for the Blind of Fort Worth



BEACONS OF HOPE

GIFTS RECEIVED BETWEEN MAY 1, 2012 – OCTOBER 31, 2012

Because of the kind gesture of the following, Lighthouse for the Blind of Fort Worth is proudly providing jobs, services and independence.

SHOT IN THE DARK

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Lighthouse for the Blind of Fort Worth strives to accurately reflect all of those who generously supported our mission. If an error has occurred, please accept our sincerest apologies and let us know of our mistake by contacting us at 817-332-3341, ext. 7782.

FROM THE LIGHTHOUSE BOARD CHAIR



THE NEXT CHAPTER TO THE LIGHTHOUSE STORY: PROVIDING WORLD-CLASS SERVICES

It has been a great honor to serve as board chair this year and to participate in the growth of the Lighthouse. The Lighthouse has been blessed with strong leadership, a great staff, and an involved board, all working toward a common goal - to provide world-class services to blind and visually impaired individuals in Tarrant County.

The outstanding performance of the Lighthouse this year continues a trend that began several years ago. Since 2008, the Lighthouse has experienced tremendous growth in sales of products and, more importantly, in the number of visually impaired clients served. In 2008, the Lighthouse had sales of approximately \$13.8 million and served approximately 1,300 visually impaired individuals. For 2011, the Lighthouse had sales of \$24.8 million and served approximately 3,000 visually impaired individuals. While all the numbers are not yet in for 2012, it appears that while sales may be under those of 2011 that revenues in excess of costs will be higher than in 2011 and that we will serve more visually-impaired individuals than we did in 2011. These results have occurred due to the tremendous teamwork and extraordinary efforts by the Lighthouse staff and despite simultaneously undergoing the worst recession in 50 years and having local, state, and federal government reduce their purchasing budgets. While these numbers tell a great story, the Lighthouse faces several important challenges—actually opportunities—in the next few years.

1) There is need to expand the existing services offered by the Lighthouse. The number of individuals in Tarrant County who are blind or visually impaired continues to grow. The most recent data provided by the state data shows that there are approximately 37,000 individuals in Tarrant County that are blind or visually impaired. This is an increase of more than 20% in just four years. The growth is due to an increase in population, an aging population, increases in the number of individuals with diabetes and other illnesses that affect vision, and an increasing number of indigent and poor individuals who do not receive proper eye care until vision loss occurs.

2) The Lighthouse continues to explore innovative ways that will enhance the quality of life for the entire blind and visually impaired community of Tarrant County. Summer camps for youth, beep baseball, enhanced mobility training, community partnerships, and many other programs are being implemented that will enhance the quality of life for all the individuals served by the Lighthouse. These programs constitute important ways to serve our customers yet will require additional money and staff to continue to provide and expand.

3) Our biggest customers for the Industrial and Sales Departments at the present time are local, state and federal governments. All of those customers are under tremendous pressure to reduce spending. Expenditures by the federal government were less in 2011 than in 2010 and the trend is expected to continue. The Lighthouse will see the effects of this slowdown. For example, one of our largest products in terms of sales is energy dissipating pads, which are used to protect equipment that is air-dropped to support troops in the field. As the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq wind down, sales of this product in particular are expected to slow down.

To address the changing purchasing landscape, the Lighthouse must continue to develop new and innovative products for local, state and federal governments as well as to explore additional commercial markets for its products. These efforts have been successful but must grow even more.

4) The Lighthouse has tremendous potential. It has a dedicated workforce that is productive and safe. There has not been a lost-time accident to a blind or visually impaired worker in several years, despite increases in the number of employees, an increase in the levels of production, and an increase in the number of different types of products made. New strategies will be developed by the Lighthouse to inform the public and the business community about its capabilities. The Lighthouse is a modern, sophisticated light manufacturing and assembly operation yet its image continues to be defined in the minds of many by its products and production methods from decades ago. The work of explaining the image of the modern Lighthouse requires the Lighthouse to step up its efforts to “get out the story” which will require additional staff and resources.

The opportunities of the next few years are great. The Lighthouse is prepared to meet and be successful in these opportunities. The results will be an increase of quality services that will assist our local neighbors who are visually impaired in achieving their life goals.

As always, the Lighthouse Board of Directors and all of our employees sincerely appreciate your continued interest and support.

Best Wishes for 2013,

Shannon Shipp, PhD



912 W. Broadway
Fort Worth TX 76104

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If you would like to help the Lighthouse be "green", please send your email address to nfisher@lighthousefw.org for electronic delivery only of our newsletter. Thank you!

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A HOLIDAY GIFT THAT KEEPS ON GIVING

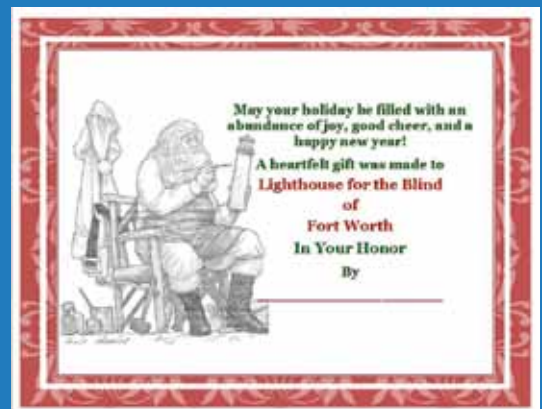
What kind of gift never expires, never goes stale, never gets returned, is always in fashion AND you can feel great about giving it?

A TRIBUTE GIFT TO THE LIGHTHOUSE FOR THE BLIND OF FORT WORTH

This holiday season make a gift in honor or in memory of a loved one, dear friend or colleague. Your gift will warm their hearts and will make a difference in the lives of people in our community who are blind or visually impaired.

Just visit the Lighthouse's website at
WWW.LIGHTHOUSEFW.ORG

or mail to
Lighthouse for the Blind of Fort Worth
Attention: Community Development
912 W. Broadway
Fort Worth, TX 76104



**PLEASE NOTE: TO INSURE GIFT NOTIFICATION BY CHRISTMAS EVE,
DONATION MUST BE RECEIVED IN THE LIGHTHOUSE OFFICE BY DECEMBER 19TH**