

# THE LIGHTHOUSE JOURNAL

EMPOWERING INDEPENDENCE. ENCOURAGING INSIGHT.

## OUT OF THE DARKNESS

Although an eye doctor tests your vision, you might be surprised to learn that it's Uncle Sam who defines whether you're legally blind.

Read more on Page 3.



Why do these boys look filtered and fuzzy?  
Find out on Page 4.

## 5 LEADING CAUSES OF VISION LOSS

- Age-Related Macular Degeneration (AMD)
- Cataracts
- Diabetic Retinopathy
- Glaucoma
- Retinitis Pigmentosa (RP)

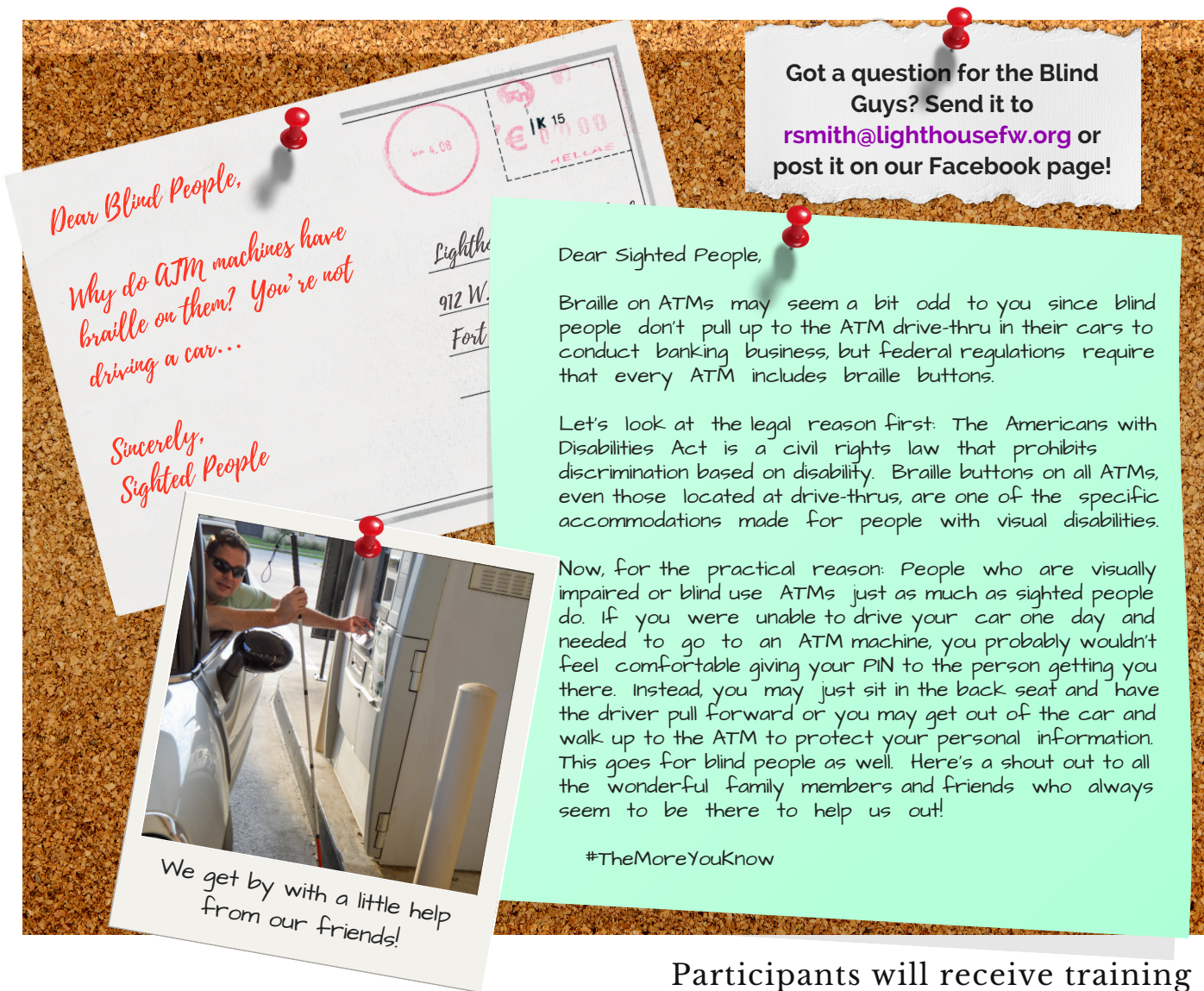
Do you know someone with one of these conditions? Chances are you do, even if you don't know it.



Find out what Platt L. Allen, III., has to say about the Lighthouse and North Texas Giving Day on Page 5.

## GEAR UP FOR GIVING

The Lighthouse for the Blind of Fort Worth is gearing up for **North Texas Giving Day**, an 18-hour online fundraising event benefiting over 2,000 local nonprofits! Every dollar donated will receive bonus funds from the Communities Foundation of Texas. This is the perfect day to get up, give, and show some love to the Lighthouse!



## BLIND AWARENESS TRAINING

Blind Awareness Training is now offered to the public free of charge! This unique and memorable training demonstrates how the Lighthouse is making a positive impact within the blind community.

Lighthouse for the Blind of Fort Worth runs training courses that help sighted participants better understand how the visually impaired adapt to their disability. Conducted by our Client Services professionals, participants are put under blindfold to become educated on ways in which those with low vision use equipment, white cane travel, and daily living aids to facilitate independence.

These are practical, highly regarded workshops, with a mixture of information and activities. We would welcome the opportunity to engage your group by setting up Blind Awareness Training whether you represent another non-profit organization, business, club, church, or individual. The event can take place at the Lighthouse or at your location, in which case your own work environment can be incorporated into the training.

To schedule Blind Awareness Training, please contact April Harris, Head of Client Services, at [aharris@lighthousefw.org](mailto:aharris@lighthousefw.org).

Participants will receive training in these areas of expertise:

- Orientation & Mobility – Cane travel, sighted guide travel, and verbal guidance cues
- Independent Living – Home management and leisure skills
- Assistive Technology – Keyboard navigation and use of screen readers and other assistive technology software

### FUN FACT:

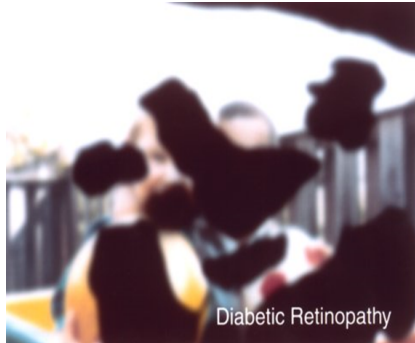
Over half of our Client Services team are blind!





Do you know someone with one of these conditions?

# 5 Leading Causes of Vision Loss



**DIABETIC RETINOPATHY** is caused when chronically high blood sugar damages tiny blood vessels in the retina. This disease usually does not show symptoms until it affects vision. Bleeding from abnormal retinal blood vessels can cause "floating" spots to appear. Without prompt treatment, bleeding often recurs, increasing the risk of permanent vision loss. Between 40 - 45% of Americans diagnosed with diabetes have some stage of Diabetic Retinopathy.

### Who is at risk?

Anyone with Type 1, type 2, or gestational diabetes risk increases the longer a person has the disease.



### Who is at risk?

Anyone over 60, smokers, Caucasians, people with a family history of AMD.

**AGE-RELATED MACULAR DEGENERATION (AMD)** is the leading cause of vision loss for people 60 and older. It causes damage to the macular, the part of the eye needed for sharp, central vision. In some people, AMD advances so slowly that vision loss does not occur for a long time. In others, the disease progresses quickly and may lead to a loss of vision in one or both eyes. A blurred area near the center of vision is a common symptom.

### Who is at risk?

Anyone over 80, people with certain diseases such as diabetes and/or hypertension, smokers, heavy drinkers, people who've had prolonged exposure to ultraviolet sunlight.

**CATARACTS** can occur in one or both eyes; however, it cannot spread from one eye to the other. Cataracts affect vision when:  
**A.** Clumps of protein reduce the sharpness of the image, which cloud the lens and reduces the light causing blurred vision.  
**B.** The clear lens slowly changes to a yellow/brownish color, adding a brown tint to vision. This tint does not affect the sharpness of the image, but makes it difficult to identify colors.

### Who is at risk?

Retinitis Pigmentosa is a genetic disease caused at conception by mutations in genes that are active in retinal cells.

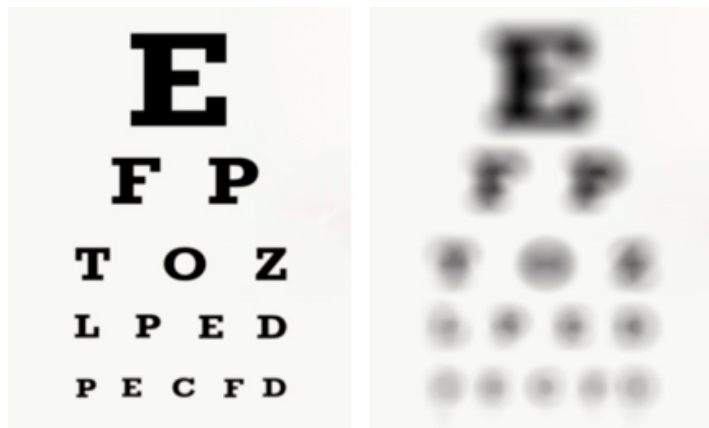
**RETINITIS PIGMENTOSA (RP)** involves a breakdown and loss of cells in the retina. Common symptoms include difficulty seeing at night and a loss of peripheral vision. In the early stages of RP, people experience night blindness and a progressive loss of the visual field. In the late stages of RP, people tend to lose more of the visual field, developing tunnel vision. RP is a progressive disorder and most sufferers are legally blind by age 40.



**GLAUCOMA** is when fluid pressure inside the eye increases and may cause progressive damage to the optic nerve and loss of nerve fibers. Glaucoma can develop in one or both eyes. There may not be any symptoms or cause any pain. Without treatment, people slowly lose their peripheral (side) vision and it may seem as if they are looking through a tunnel. Straight-ahead (central) vision may also decrease until no vision remains.

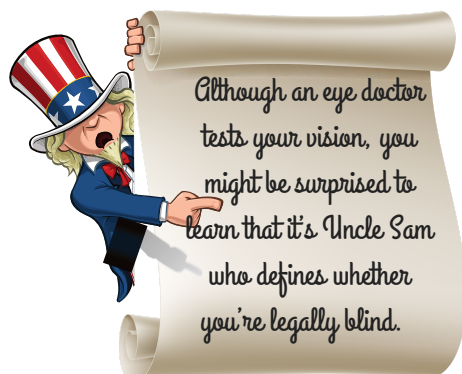
### Who is at risk?

Anyone over 60, people with a family history of glaucoma, African Americans, and people who've had severe eye injuries - trauma, such as being hit in the eye, can result in immediate increased eye pressure.



## Legally Blind is Not Total Darkness

Some people use the term "legally blind" to describe their vision without eyeglasses or contact lenses if their uncorrected refractive error makes them feel visually disabled (unable to drive a car, for example). Others assume it means the same thing as total blindness (complete lack of form and light perception). A comprehensive eye exam will help to determine if you are considered legally blind.



The government uses the term "legal blindness" to determine who can receive benefits, like disability or job training. It's not the same as being totally blind.

Most government agencies and health care institutions agree that legal blindness is defined as one of the following:

- Reduced central visual acuity of 20/200 or less in your better eye with use of the best eyeglass lens or contacts to correct your eyesight.

- A visual field that is limited to no more than 20 degrees.

As long as your vision can be corrected to better than 20/200 with glasses or contacts, you are not considered legally blind. Also, if your best-corrected vision in one eye is worse than 20/200, but you can see better than 20/200 with corrective lenses with your other eye, you are not considered legally blind. Only 15 percent of people who are blind can see nothing at all.

If you are legally blind, you should look for an eye doctor who specializes in low vision. Low vision specialists typically are familiar with the latest vision aids such as magnifiers and digital devices that can help legally blind individuals use their remaining vision as effectively as possible. Such devices often enable a person with legal blindness to live more independently.

Contact our Client Services team for specialized skills training at (817) 332-3341.

MYTH	VS	FACT
<p><b>80%</b></p> <p><b>MYTH</b></p> <p>Blindness is a tragedy. For people who suffer from blindness, life has lost all meaning. People who are blind or visually impaired are mentally retarded or less informed.</p>		<p>80% of people living with a visual impairment participate in extracurricular activities.</p> <p><b>FACT</b></p> <p>With proper training and opportunity, the blind or visually impaired can compete, in terms of equality, with the average person who is sighted. The blind or visually impaired can be as happy and lead as full a life as anybody else.</p>
<p><b>1,492,700</b> The number of visually impaired employed either full or part-time.</p>		
<p><b>MYTH</b></p> <p>People who are blind or visually impaired are helpless and require supervision in their daily activities for safety's sake.</p>		<p><b>FACT</b></p> <p>People who are blind or visually impaired are by and large much more independent than others give them credit for. Many are mobile and independent. Many view their blindness as a mere physical nuisance and not a disability.</p>
<p><b>&lt; 5%</b> Less than 5% of the blind have guide dogs.</p>		
<p><b>MYTH</b></p> <p>Guide dogs know where to go and how to get there without their handlers telling them.</p>		<p><b>FACT</b></p> <p>The handlers know where they are going, not the guide dog. Guide dogs have been trained to look for visible dangers on the route.</p>
<p><b>65%</b> The number of blind Americans who are married or live with a partner. Only 16.5% have divorced.</p>		
<p><b>MYTH</b></p> <p>People who are blind or visually impaired have extrasensory perception and are musically gifted.</p>		<p><b>FACT</b></p> <p>For people who are blind or visually impaired, there are no miraculous new powers awakening, no strange new perceptions, and no brave new worlds to explore.</p>
<p><b>10%</b> Only 10-15% of people who are blind or visually impaired "see" total darkness.</p>		
<p><b>MYTH</b></p> <p>All people who are blind or visually impaired see nothing at all and are always in total darkness.</p>		<p><b>FACT</b></p> <p>The majority of people who are considered blind have some sight, rather than no sight at all. That is, they have some residual vision, whether it is light perception, color perception, or form perception.</p>



The Lighthouse for the Blind of Fort Worth is gearing up for

# North Texas Giving Day

Thursday, September 14th - 6 a.m. to midnight

## Donate Online, We Need Your Help

Help us raise \$40,000 to provide services, training and assistive devices at no charge to blind and visually impaired individuals.



### What is North Texas Giving Day?

It's an 18-hour online fundraising event benefiting over 2,000 local nonprofits! Every dollar donated will receive bonus funds from the Communities Foundation of Texas. This is the perfect day to get up and give and show some love to the Lighthouse!

### Here's how you donate:

- 1 Go online to [NorthTexasGivingDay.org](http://NorthTexasGivingDay.org) and search for Lighthouse for the Blind of Fort Worth
- 2 Show Some Love! (Make a donation)
- 3 Tell your friends on Facebook by using [#LoveIsBlindShareTheLove](https://www.facebook.com/loveisblindsharethelove)

Lighthouse for the Blind of Fort Worth means opportunity. Opportunities for people who are blind to learn or apply a trade in our industrial operations. The Lighthouse is a place where folks who are blind can push their limits in a safe and supportive environment. I give so that others may receive. The Lighthouse provides its services free of charge to anyone in need. Sales of our products fuel our industrial operation and support our Client Services team. The generosity of donors allows us to explore new opportunities and methods for improving the lives of people who are blind through our independent enhancing programs.

-Platt L. Allen, III, President and CEO

Check our Facebook Page for upcoming **North Texas Giving Day** events including Chili's and Jason's Deli Give Back dates or email [rsmith@lighthousefw.org](mailto:rsmith@lighthousefw.org) for a list of locations.

For more information on how you can donate, contact Lisa Fellers, Head of Development, at [lfellers@lighthousefw.org](mailto:lfellers@lighthousefw.org)



## Ever Wondered What Those **BUMPS** On The Sidewalk Are For?

At some point, you've probably caught yourself wondering why there are bumps at the end of a sidewalk:

**Are those traction bumps?**

**Are they some sort of sidewalk fashion statement?**

**Are they for durability?**

These are all valid questions, but the real reason for those raised, bumpy patterns at the end of sidewalks is to assist people who are visually impaired!

These bumps are a part of Tactile Paving (paving that can be felt) known as Truncated Domes and Detectable Warning Pavers. This technique is also called Braille Paving. People who are visually impaired can feel the change in texture on the ground and know to stop before proceeding across the street.

Blistered sections of pavement can communicate important messages to blind pedestrians. A uniform grid of circles signals a sloping curb leading to a crosswalk. If the squares are red, that indicates to a partially-sighted person that the path has a light for stopping traffic.

Since only approximately 15 percent of people who are blind can't see anything, many places have a bright striping on stairs to signal trip hazards as well.

It's easy for some pedestrians to go their whole lives without paying much attention to the raised bumps that cover parts of the sidewalk they step on. But for others, those little dots are essential to getting around.



## **BLIND MOMENTS**

Blind folks are usually the first to see humor in the sometimes awkward moments they find themselves in. . .

Bobby learned a valuable lesson one morning. *If in doubt, ask for help!*

"Sunday afternoon, I mixed three healthy scoops of strawberry yogurt with a cup or so of what I was sure was granola with blueberries. As I began to eat, I noticed that the granola tasted pretty salty. Thinking that maybe I had forgotten what it was supposed to taste like, I ate on.

I then started thinking maybe the granola had gone bad. I ate a couple of more bites and decided something wasn't right. I asked my wife if what I had poured in the bowl looked like granola. She said, *No, it looks like bacon bits.* I didn't think it tasted like bacon, so I got the bag and asked her what it was.

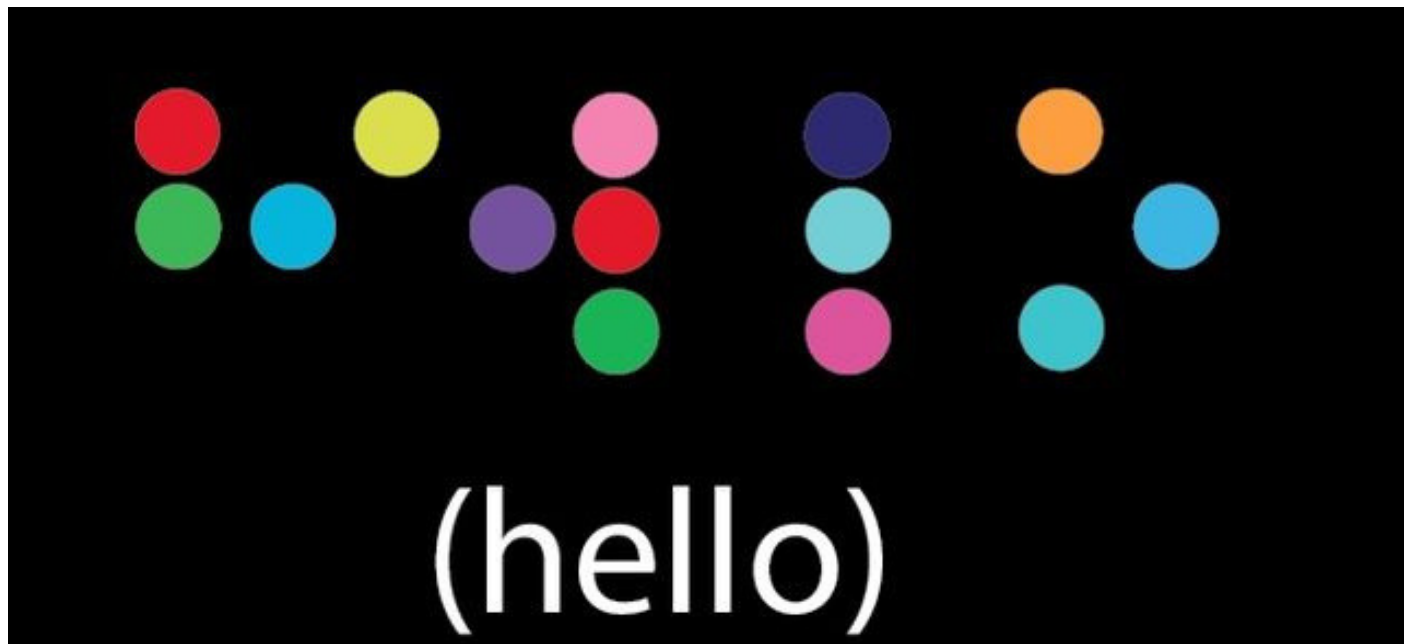
Let me just say this, strawberry yogurt doesn't taste good when mixed with dried refried beans!

I hope my little error makes more than just my wife and I laugh. Praise God for a humorous end to a wonderful Sunday!"

Send your awkward blind moment to:

[rsmith@lighthousefw.org](mailto:rsmith@lighthousefw.org) or post them to our Facebook page for a chance to have it featured in our next issue!





## What to do When You Meet a Blind Person:

- 01** Treat the blind the way you would anyone else.  
We all have things that limit us.
- 02** Speak in a normal tone of voice.  
Blindness doesn't equal hearing loss!
- 03** Talk directly to people who are blind.  
Introduce yourself.
- 04** Ask before you help.  
Sightless doesn't mean helpless. It's always best to ask first.
- 05** Address the blind by name.  
This way, they'll know you're talking directly to them.
- 06** Identify yourself when entering a room.  
Also, be sure to mention when you're exiting.
- 07** Don't worry about using phrases like: "See you later," "Watching TV," or "Good to see you."
- 08** Use orientation clues like, "The door is to your left," or "There is a tree at your 3 o'clock."
- 09** Leave doors all the way open or closed.  
Half open doors or cabinets can become a hazard.
- 10** Avoid grabbing the arm of a blind person or touching a guide dog and/or its harness.

For more tips, check out our [Blind Tip Tuesday](#) series of videos on our website, YouTube, and Facebook!



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*Let Chili's or Jason's Deli do the cooking while you support Lighthouse for the Blind of Fort Worth at the same time! Just mention the Lighthouse to your server on the dates below, and a percentage of the proceeds will be donated to us!*

Local Postal Customer  
Fort Worth, TX 76104

**Jason's deli**

Jason's Deli  
2217 Midtown Lane  
Fort Worth, TX 76104  
Wednesday, Sept 13th  
Dine - In & Pick Up Orders  
All Day

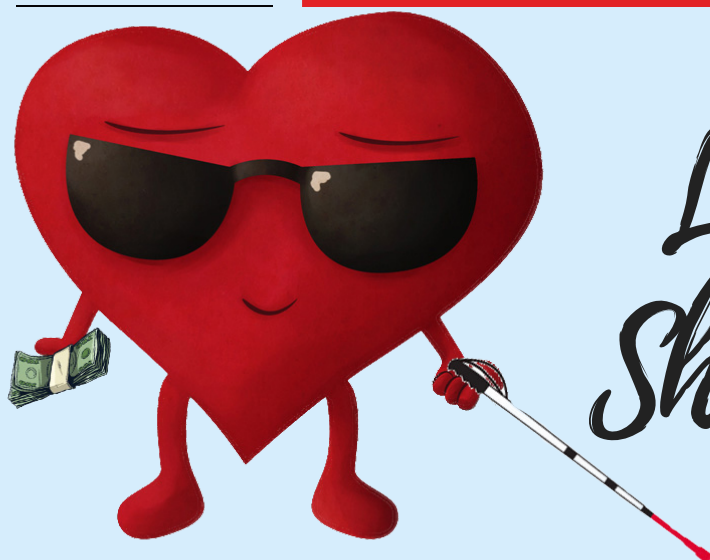


Every Chili's in  
Tarrant County  
Thursday, Sept 14th  
All Day - Dine - In & Pick Up Orders

Love is Blind Love is Blind  
Love is Blind Love is Blind  
Love is Blind Love is Blind

**Remember**

Show and Share the Love  
Show and Share the Love  
Show and Share the Love



*Love is Blind,  
Show Some Love*

1. Go to [NorthTexasGivingDay.org](http://NorthTexasGivingDay.org) and search for Lighthouse for the Blind of Fort Worth
2. Show some love by making a donation
3. Tell your friends by sharing on social media with *#LoveIsBlindShareTheLove*

