



LIGHT LINE™

A MONTHLY BLOG FROM MIAMI LIGHTHOUSE FOR THE BLIND

Issue 21 December 2015

■ It's time to be thankful. . .

designed to enable blind and visually impaired youngsters, working alongside their sighted siblings and peers, to transition more easily to the public school environment.

As the holiday season approaches, we have much to be thankful for, here at Miami Lighthouse. 2015 has been a year of empowerment for the blind and visually impaired children, teenagers and adults who regularly attend our vision rehabilitation programs and classes such as Braille and technology literacy, adult education, GED and ESOL made possible by the generosity of our many committed donors and through the hard work of our professional staff. Our community celebrated Give Miami Day last Thursday where we raised over \$108,000 during The Miami Foundation's 24 hour Challenge event. We are extremely grateful to our Miami community of supporters and everyone who is helping us close the year with the crucial revenue we need to serve the growing number of persons with vision loss.



2015 has also been a year of recognition for the work being done here at the Miami Lighthouse. We were honored by Florida Blue's 2015 Sapphire Award as an outstanding non-profit organization in community healthcare, and by the Beacon Council, as the recipient of its Distinguished Industry Award for Education. We were also recognized nationally when our peer-reviewed Braille music curriculum was published in the *Journal of Visual Impairment & Blindness*. One of the highlights of our annual "See The Light" luncheon on November 12th was the acceptance of a \$25,000 check from the Ronald McDonald House of Charities. Presented by the local franchisees who nominated us, the check is designated to go towards furthering our fast growing music program.



José and Milly Montes, McDonald's franchise owners and Soraya Rivera Moya, Executive Director, Ronald McDonald House Charities of South Florida present \$25,000 check to CEO Virginia Jacko.

As keynote speaker at this year's "See The Light" luncheon, Tom Wlodkowski, Comcast's VP of Accessibility, who is blind, demonstrated his company's innovative "Talking Guide" that reads aloud selections like program titles, network names, time slots and various settings. He also noted the Miami Lighthouse's important collaboration in the development of the device's brand new Spanish version, and provided a Comcast Digital Literacy Grant check for \$18,000 to be used toward advanced computer training services. "Talking Guide" technology instruction is available at Miami Lighthouse and has been incorporated into the training curriculum.



Cynthia Arco, Mindy Kramer, Thomas Wlodkowski, CEO Virginia Jacko, Filemon Lopez, Nina Sherman and Derek Cooper

Funding for our "Center of Excellence" expansion for a new Lighthouse Learning Center for Blind and Visually Impaired Children is well underway, spearheaded by the 2014 Grant Challenge dollar for dollar match up to \$5 Million. When completed, the new Miami Lighthouse Learning Center will have five learning laboratories focusing on critically needed services for the growing numbers of blind babies and young children from birth through pre-kindergarten. As part of this expansion initiative, we are collaborating with Miami-Dade County Public Schools to pilot a pre-kindergarten program



Yes, 2015 has been a remarkable year for the Miami Lighthouse and we have much to be thankful for, including the fact that once again we have been ranked nationally in the top 2% of the 8,000 nonprofit

organizations as evaluated yearly by Charity Navigator. We are very proud of our 4-star rating based upon sound fiscal management and responsible use of donor dollars.

Finally, we are most thankful for the support we receive from all of you that enables us to continue this important and life transforming work.



Best wishes for a happy and healthy holiday season from all of us at Miami Lighthouse.

■ Miami Lighthouse instructors collaborate with Comcast in launching the Talking Guide Spanish Version

Comcast unveiled its new "Talking Guide" Spanish Voice Guidance system at Miami Lighthouse's See the Light Luncheon. Thomas J. Wlodkowski, Vice President of Accessibility for Comcast, spoke about Comcast's collaboration with Miami Lighthouse to pilot the new innovative system, which allows a visually impaired person, using either English or Spanish, to access TV program selection through audio output.

[Click here](#) to watch the coverage by NBC 6 Miami.



601 SW 8th Avenue | Miami, FL 33130

305-856-2288

www.miamilighthouse.org

[Donate Now!](#)

[Forward this email](#)

STAY CONNECTED



EMPLOYER ID #59-0637847. MIAMI LIGHTHOUSE FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED, FLORIDA REGISTRATION #CH775. A COPY OF THE OFFICIAL REGISTRATION AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES BY CALLING TOLL FREE, WITHIN THE STATE, 1-800-HELP-FLA. REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL, OR RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE STATE. MIAMI LIGHTHOUSE FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED, INC. NON-PROFIT IRS EMPLOYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER IS 59-0637847.