

# THE VISIONARY



**LIGHTHOUSE**  
OF BROWARD

## Lighthouse Summer Camp Holds Surprises For Parents

### The Bertram Family:

“My sons, Joel and Ethan are happy about returning to Lighthouse’s summer camp this year, and so am I. It definitely has had an impact on their social skills and they love the variety of physical activities,” said Camille Bertram. But what really impressed Camille was the inclusion of schoolwork in the camp day. “I didn’t know they would be working on writing and basic math, and I saw they each were working at age-appropriate levels. That was pretty impressive.” She had planned to work with them after camp each day on homework,

“But they come home exhausted. That means they’re having fun.”

She got a further surprise when, after returning from a long day with the family at Walt Disney World, she told the boys to “just chill” for a while so she could lie down a few minutes. As her head touched the pillow, she heard her sons discussing bagels “lightly toasted” and cream cheese. “When I got to the kitchen, they were munching away, and there was no mess! If it weren’t for the Lighthouse, they wouldn’t be doing that.



*Lana age 8, Simone age 9 enjoying being “girls.”*

Lighthouse’s Teacher of the Visually Impaired.

Both girls enjoyed the camp’s arts and crafts, music, and dance activities. They also learned to prepare their own ice packs and wash fruits for after-school snacks.

In addition, they are learning to advocate for themselves. Miriam has noticed that they are starting to speak up more when they need help with schoolwork. They have a better understanding of how to react and help educate when sighted classmates tease them.

### The Martinez Family:

“Education is everything!” said Miriam Martinez, whose daughters Simone and Lana attend Lighthouse Summer Camp. The girls are doing well in science and math during the school year. “Camp keeps them from forgetting things over the summer,” Miriam said. She especially appreciated the tutoring and resources offered by Cindy Wolke,



*Ethan, 6 and Joel, 9 at Disney World.*

*continued on page 3*

# Message from the Executive Director

## Education is Everything

It is often said, you only have one chance to educate your child. There is a tremendous urgency in that message which captures a sense of the limited amount of time before the child may lose interest, not keep up or go down the wrong path.

As summer approaches, The Visionary customarily focuses on the camp programs for children and teens. This time we listened primarily to parents talking about what these camp experiences mean to them and their children. What we heard was the supreme importance of education and the huge difference the Lighthouse programs make in ensuring these blind and visually impaired kids succeed in school.

Ensuring success in school for children with visual impairment means so much more than learning the 21st Century version of Reading, Writing and Arithmetic. Yes, Lighthouse camps keep the academic skills sharp over the long months before school begins again. But it's also about the social skills, physical activities unbounded by visual impairment and living skills that will also be needed in adulthood. Echoing these thoughts is Miriam Martinez, whose girls have learned to speak up for themselves and ask for help as needed. They are dealing with the number one challenge all blind kids have, that of being "the only kid" in the school who is visually impaired, and dealing with the teasing, bullying or ignorance of others.



How do we know it all comes together in the end? Just ask Keaira DeShong, who has been coming to the Lighthouse since she was 5 years old. Now she's headed for college and a solid career. While she is excited about her future, she's wistful about leaving the Lighthouse which has been such a support to her - a place where she found out she isn't "the only kid" and made lifelong friends. Because of the skills that she learned at the Lighthouse, Keaira was able to go to one of the best high schools in Broward County and even got into a highly competitive Magnet program, putting her on her path to success.

We are very grateful for our many supporters who help us deliver so many quality programs. One of them is the Blanche S. Buck Foundation, which has been our partner for ten years. (See page 4.) All gifts, large or small, help us maintain our commitment to providing the services needed for the children in our community. We could not do it without each and every one of you. Thank you.

As always, thank you for your support.

Elly du Pré, DPA

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Elly du Pré".

Executive Director

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### JULY

Friday, July 10, 2015

2015 Bank of America Starlight Musical Series featuring the Lighthouse of Broward at Holiday Park 6pm.

Tuesday, July 14, 2015

Monthly Chapter meeting for the Broward Council of the Blind Room 20 3:30pm-5:30pm. For more information contact Marvin at (954) 894-9013.

Saturday, July 18, 2015

Saturday Interfaith Group 10:30am – 2:30pm "A Brainstorming Session on How to Educate Employers; For Equal Access & Equal Employment for the Blind and Visually Impaired" Guest Speaker: Dr. Francesca Marinara RSVP by calling Dolores at (954) 684-6708

Tuesday, July 21, 2015

BFF Social Group will meet at Cheddar's restaurant located at 7951 Commercial Blvd in Tamarac. Call Sharon Meikle at (954) 842-8828 to RSVP.

Lifetime Learners will resume in August.  
Book Club will resume in August.

## NEWS YOU CAN USE

A recorded calendar of client activities is now available at ext. 143. Call the Lighthouse and when you hear the greeting, enter 143.



Like us on Facebook:  
[LighthouseBroward](#)



Follow us on Twitter:  
[@BrowardVision](#)

# Blanche S. Buck: Her Legacy Lives On

*Some people's generosity knows no bounds. Their good work adds new meaning to the phrase "after-life."*

Years ago, a charismatic group of women joined forces with the goal of helping to improve the quality of life for people of Broward County who were blind. They were the members of The Light Brigade, dedicated to raising funds and awareness of our mission and programs. They included successful businesswomen, compassionate, civic-minded individuals, deeply involved in a number of great causes. At one time, the group included more than 550 members and they did everything from stuffing envelopes to putting on sculpture "Touch Exhibits" and fundraisers.

Among their members was Blanche S. Buck. Mrs. Buck was a true civic leader, a staunch supporter of art, theater, the orchestra, the opera, and dozens of philanthropic causes. She lived a full life and died in 2004 at the age of 96. But her legacy of support lives on.

In her generosity of spirit, she left a bequest to the Lighthouse to be administered through the Blanche S. Buck Charitable Foundation. The bequest ensures that her vision of creating a better life for people who are blind in our community would be continued on after her passing. We are very grateful for all she has done—throughout her life, and beyond—and for her continued support of our programs.

You can leave a legacy by naming Lighthouse of Broward County in your Will. For further information, please call Jose Lopez, Director of Community Relations and Development, 954-463-4217, ext 141.



*Rita Bryant with Blanche S. Buck, right, receiving LHOB honors for their philanthropy, in 1988.*

## Lighthouse Summer Camp Holds Surprises For Parents *(continued from page 1)*

"I love the Lighthouse," Miriam said. "It has opened many doors for me. I found so much there for my girls."

### The Mills Family:

It's hard to understand what it must be like to be the only one at school with a visual impairment. Margaret Mills noticed the relief expressed by her sons Andreas and Aaron when they started attending Lighthouse Summer Camp. "My son Andreas used to be scared, but his confidence has increased since he started attending camp. He's learned to move around at home and school more gracefully," Margaret said. "He waits all year for camp—he loves the swimming." Andreas also enjoys the arts and crafts activities.

Although brother Aaron is quieter, "I can read him, and I know he has a

good time," she said. He's learned to cook—omelets are his specialty. She believes camp has made Aaron more outgoing and improved his leadership skills. He's now volunteering—playing the piano to entertain his mother's first grade class with songs he learned by ear.

"I'm really, truly happy there is a program like the Lighthouse. And I appreciate the support that makes it possible for me to send my sons at no cost." She values the extra attention to safety at Lighthouse. "At a regular camp, I would worry that there might



*Andreas Mills, age 10, a confident young man.*

be accidents. I thank you for every year they've been to Lighthouse Summer Camp."

Make Lighthouse Summer Camp a reality for all children in our community with vision loss. Please give generously.

# Keaira Deshong: Paying It Forward

Your generosity to Lighthouse of Broward County continues to ripple. Keaira Deshong has learned the joy of helping others.

“I like helping others,” Keaira DeShong said. The recent graduate of Deerfield High School will be attending Florida Gulf Coast University in Fort Myers this fall. Her goal is to become a physical therapist.

As the first generation in her family to go to college, Keaira’s focus on education and hard work is a source of pride for her parents. Her visual impairment has made the challenge harder, but thanks to the Lighthouse, she has learned the skills she needs to level the playing field. “At school, lots

of people don’t understand and that’s an extra weight on me,” she said. “I’ve always been so comfortable here. I’m going to miss the Lighthouse!”

Lighthouse programs have been an integral part of Keaira’s life. She began attending the David and Jean Colker KIDS camp when she was 5 years old. “My parents trusted the Lighthouse,” she said. The KIDS summer camp is a great place for children who are blind or visually impaired to learn while having fun. In addition to the usual camp activities: arts and crafts, swimming, skating, visits to parks and museums; the children also learn martial arts (good for developing spatial awareness), and perform in talent shows. They learn safe travel skills, age-appropriate cooking and self-care techniques, as well as braille, accessible computer programs, communication, and self-advocacy. Keaira and her parents appreciated the opportunity for her to interact with other children with visual impairments and meet blind adult role models.

At 13, Keaira joined the TeenLIFE Program at the Lighthouse. LIFE stands for Learning Independence From Experience and focuses on preparing students for college, living on

their own, and employment: travel skills, cooking, grooming, braille or the use of magnifiers, assistive technology, résumé-writing, interviewing, and more. “It was all very relevant to what I need now—researching careers, and learning to use the adaptive technology I’ll need for college,” she said. “I learned all about networking at the Lighthouse.” As part of the TeenLIFE Program, she got a summer job in a day care, which then led to a babysitting job. Through further networking, she landed her current job at another day care, and is building her résumé.

Her vocational research focused on her two main interests: working with children, and the medical field. When her mother recently needed physical therapy, Keaira accompanied her to her appointments, and helped her do the prescribed exercises at home. “I realized I enjoyed it, so I researched physical therapy. I found out it’s a job that will be needed in the future and it may give me opportunities for advancement.”

Thanks, in part, to your generosity and the Lighthouse, she’s on her way. We wish her every success!



Keaira DeShong, at LHOB College Prep Week at Florida Atlantic University.

## LHOB leaders in Amex Leadership Academy

Lighthouse of Broward Executive Director Elly du Pré and Director of Programs Karen Parparian, were accepted into the American Express Leadership Academy inaugural program for nonprofit leaders at the Community Foundation of Broward. Lighthouse of Broward was specifically invited to apply for the prestigious national program, which helps senior nonprofit leaders build the personal, business and leadership skills that lead to organizational success. Elly and Karen will meet in person with Leadership Academy faculty for executive coaching.



LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

## Let’s Get Cooking

The Lighthouse of Broward’s Alumni Association raises funds to send the teachers they love to conferences and professional meetings to earn ongoing certification units. The Alumni are proud to present:

Now available in PDF and accessible Word Format at [www.lhob.org/index.php/component/digistore/products/1-digital-downloads](http://www.lhob.org/index.php/component/digistore/products/1-digital-downloads).

