

# THE VISIONARY



**LIGHTHOUSE**  
OF BROWARD

## Playing, learning and preparing for school success



*Ethan Bertram learning to swim.*

Summer camp means fun and learning through play. Lighthouse of Broward's KIDS summer camp for children ages 6 to 12 is no exception. Braille. Computers. Safe Travel. Making a sandwich. Getting along with others. Building confidence. All these elements translate into doing well in school.

When asked about the importance of Lighthouse summer camp, parents shared the many different aspects of rearing a child who is visually impaired.

Camiel Bertram's two sons, Joel and Ethan, joined camp this year. The brothers, ages 8 and 5, are close. She is very enthusiastic about the changes she sees in them: "I think that camp helps them with their social skills. If they do not know how to communicate with their camp mates, it becomes harder to relate to other children when they go back to school.

This is especially important for Ethan who will be going into kindergarten next year. Even though they are going to camp and enjoying fun activities, it's also a learning environment. I know I made the right decision by putting them in the Lighthouse Summer Program."

Meanwhile, Bella Liborio is enjoying her third year at the

Lighthouse. Her mother says, "It is important for her to keep up her skills in reading and she certainly tackles the braillewriter with enthusiasm." Her mother adds, "Her independence has increased as well."

Nyla Morrow, Trinity's mom says, "It opened up her shyness. She learned how to accept others and has matured this summer. She is following instructions with trust. She enjoys showing others what she has learned."

Payton's father is glad for both the academics and the socialization. "It



*Trinity Morrow swimming.*

*continued on page 4*

# Message from the Executive Director

This summer, the David and Jean Colker KIDS Camp celebrated its 23rd successful year. **The main goal, of course, is success in school...and in life.**

In order to prepare these young children to participate at all levels in school, **the focus of summer camp is on packing in real life experiences and sharpening the special skills required to make sense of the world without sight.** Consider the list of activities from the point of view of making other senses do the work of vision.

The drum circle is a vehicle for coordinating ears and hands instead of eyes and hands. This is immediately obvious when finally everyone “gets it.” Rhythm is in the air.

When the fire truck came, everyone held on for dear life as the water was turned on and the hose came alive. The power of water and the effort it takes to control it, certainly to be discussed in science class, became memorable that day. A sighted child might understand these important concepts by observing. Our kids have to feel it to make it clear.

Cooking is a fun way to do something “grown up” and it also

teaches fractions, measuring, timing, and proper eating skills. And, of course, cooking requires reading and math, keeping those skills sharp until school starts up again in the fall.

For the children who have been coming for several summers, it is so great to see they are learning to be polite, to speak up clearly in a group, to cooperate on a project with other children and to interact with adults appropriately. When Lighthouse donor and number one fan of children, Rita Messner, visited the campers at the pool, each one said his or her name and how long they had been coming to the Lighthouse. While some are still quite shy, the older ones have become comfortable with important socialization skills.

Typically, blind children are not athletic and yet the demands of traveling safely—whether with a white cane or someday with a dog guide—require good balance and posture, coordination, use of hearing and touch, and confidence. So all summer the kids swim and climb and run. This year they also worked out with a personal trainer, as well as continued with the popular martial arts activities.

Finally, the summer also gave the younger children a chance to hang out a bit with the teenagers. They really look up to the older group who came in several days a week. Although they came to the camp to hone computer and life skills, the teens prepared and sold delicious lunches to the staff once a week.



I'm really proud of the great staff that makes KIDS Camp so relevant and fun each year. But don't just take it from me. Remember what the parents are saying. For instance, Camiel Bertram who sent two sons to camp this year: “It's also a learning environment even though they are going to camp and enjoying fun activities. I know I made the right decision by putting them in the Lighthouse Summer Program.”

Elly du Pré, DPA

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

Executive Director

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### OCTOBER

**Saturday, October 4**

“Blessing of the Animals” and “Essential Oils and your Pets/Service Animals” in the Lighthouse of Broward Sensory Garden.

**Sunday, October 12**

Experience a “Sukkot” from the Jewish Faith Tradition (Limited Space) in the Lighthouse of Broward Garden.

**Friday, October 24**

Share the Vision: Dining in the Dark 2014.

**Friday, October 31 and**

**Saturday, November 1**

Autumn Market!

**NEWS YOU CAN USE:** A recorded message of the monthly newsletter including calendar of activities and other announcements is now available at ext. 143. Call the Lighthouse and when you hear the greeting, enter 143.



Family works on painting during a KIDS Camp event.

# Rita Messner—don't try to hold her back!

When Rita Messner gets hold of a plan, nothing will stop her. And this determination is true of how she found the Lighthouse of Broward.

Rita learned that a Lighthouse speaker was coming to her community meeting and rushed over because she had wanted to make a donation that would help people who are blind. She got to the meeting room and the doors were closed because the management was waiting for the food to be delivered. Undaunted, she found the back door, went in and introduced herself to the speaker, Jerry Cohen.

They hit it off, and she came for a tour. This was in 2011 and now, in her third year of contributions, she also volunteers at the Lighthouse as often as she can.

"I love children," was how she began her conversation with Jerry. That is why she visits the summer camp regularly and this year joined in to help with the spring egg hunt—the famous EggStravaganza, where she got involved with serving the lunch and registration.

Since she doesn't drive, the Lighthouse is too far from her home for regular volunteering but, after seeing the swimming classes this summer, she has resolved that she will be in the pool with the KIDS campers next year.

"I've been very hard of hearing for many years and I guess that got me thinking about how important vision is. But really, I see that the Lighthouse treats everyone with respect and kindness and I wanted to be involved

with an organization like that. That's why I've named the Lighthouse in my will and even right now I make sure the kids have the iPads and other things they need."



*Rita and the Easter Bunny.*

## Work and Play, Earning and Learning



*Mahdi Rizvi, who grew up attending KIDS, now takes full advantage of all the TeenLIFE program offers.*

As you can tell from this newsletter, at Lighthouse of Broward we are very proud of the KIDS Camp. But we are equally proud of the teenagers whom we serve.

Besides visiting the camp where they interacted with the younger children and made lunches for the staff, they came to LHOB to hone up on their computer and life skills.



*Jairo Padilla—a 3 year attendee in TeenLIFE, stayed at FAU for a whole week.*

Also, many of them were earning money at summer jobs.

As if that were not enough, they spent a week in a Mock College Experience – in the dorms and classrooms at Florida Atlantic University. Included this year was a Visual Arts course that is taken by many freshmen. It was modified to a week long course with instruction



*Keaira DeShong, also a KIDS alumna, gets hands on experience with art and design techniques.*

from professors with the assistance of teachers of the visually impaired. The teens with visual impairments built an understanding of art concepts and design while FAU appreciated the opportunity to build a more inclusive art appreciation community.

Just like our campers, these teenagers had a summer filled with activities and accomplishments.

## Playing, learning and preparing for school success *(continued from page 1)*

keeps him up with his reading and he continues being engaged in other school based activities. Payton is socializing more and playing a lot when he comes home.”

Like other children their age, these young children also enjoy the beautiful days at the pool where they are becoming really good swimmers. Again, the fun also builds important skills. Being a child in Florida means it is important to know about water safety and, in the case of blind

children, handling themselves in the water also means being able to find the edge of the pool, listening for instructions amid all the noise and developing coordination and muscles that also will be needed for safe travel with a cane when they are older.

When Director of Programs, Karen Parparian, lists a summary of camp activities, it

sounds like those you would want at any camp... baking, arts and crafts, water parks, the fantastic fire truck, the annual back-by-popular-demand drum circle. “They did cool things with colored spaghetti, went bowling and to the movies and they got to pet the staff mascot Charley.”

The children also learned quite a bit about



*KIDS campers with fire fighter feel the power of the water.*

health this year. A personal trainer worked with them on exercising. They each got a cinch sack, a visor, and a water bottle that they were able to decorate as they wished. They used the sacks all summer and took them home as mementos.

And let us not forget that they got to hang out just a little bit with their idols, the teens who came all summer, too. Many of the campers hope that someday they will be tall like them and in the teen program, working and earning money.



*Bella learning braille.*



SAVE THE DATE

**LIGHTHOUSE OF BROWARD'S**  
*Dining in the Dark*

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2014  
6:30 P.M. COCKTAIL RECEPTION & SILENT AUCTION  
7:30 P.M. DARK DINING & LIVE AUCTION

**HYATT REGENCY PIER SIXTY-SIX**  
2301 SOUTHEAST 17TH STREET, FORT LAUDERDALE

GOURMET DARK DINING EXPERIENCE DESIGNED TO PIQUE THE SENSES WITH CAPTIVATING FLAVORS, TANTALIZING TEXTURES AND DELICIOUS AROMAS COMPLEMENTED BY FINE WINES.

TICKETS: 954-463-4217, EXT. 115  
SPONSORSHIPS: 954-463-4217, EXT. 141  
INFO: WWW.LHOB.ORG

### Free Telecommunications Equipment for Qualified Deaf-Blind Floridians *A.J. Sondassi, FTRI Outreach Specialist*

As a part of the 21st Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act of 2010, the Federal Communication Commission funded the National Deaf Blind Equipment Distribution Program (NDBEDP) in which Florida Telecommunications Relay, Inc. (FTRI) administers for the state of Florida. To learn more about NDBEDP or learn if you are eligible, please visit [www.icanconnect.org/florida](http://www.icanconnect.org/florida) or [www.ftri.org](http://www.ftri.org), email [ndbedp@ftri.org](mailto:ndbedp@ftri.org), or call FTRI at 1-800-222-3448.



To learn more about special equipment for deaf-blind people, go to [www.LHOB.org](http://www.LHOB.org)