

THE VISIONARY



LIGHTHOUSE
OF BROWARD

Nothing is going to stop Khyree!



LHOB Camp Coordinator Paul Nichols, Khyree Federick, Andreas Mills, LHOB Director of Programs Karen Parparian. Khyree is reading braille, Andreas is reading large print. Reading aloud and comprehension are two of the skills being practiced. Khyree definitely knows the answer to the question and his left hand is holding his place on the line where he found it.

Enthusiasm is what Khyree is all about. His mother, Sharay Williams, is proud and a little concerned at the same time. "I tell him, 'what if you fall and I'm not there to help' but he just says 'Mom, I've got this!'" He grabs his cane, jumps out of the car and runs up the steps to the house.

Khyree is 9 years old and growing up fast and strong. But his mother remembers the day that she and the family suddenly realized that he

couldn't see as if it was yesterday. He was 8 months old and wouldn't reach for his toys. His eyes rolled but he didn't find his mother's face when she spoke his name. Khyree was her first child. "I was terrified. We all figured it out at the same time."

Sharay took Khyree to Bascom Palmer Eye Institute, and Children's Diagnostic and Treatment Center. That visit led to the infant program at Broward Public Schools where Paul

Nichols told the family about the Lighthouse of Broward.

The Schools and the Lighthouse have a close working relationship.

Children have so much to learn today. Sighted children can learn so much just by watching. But a child who is blind or visually impaired needs to learn all the same things without the benefit of vision. This is where the relationship between the schools and Lighthouse of Broward is so vital. The schools provide all the academics, and because of our generous donors support, the Lighthouse provides the important "Expanded Core Curriculum" to our students to be successful in life.

Lighthouse of Broward's Expanded Core Curriculum includes Braille, assistive technology to learn computer skills, and mobility training to learn how to navigate their environment and gain independence.

All children want to have fun. This is why we also teach cooking, bike riding, swimming, learning to play with other kids and having adventures. All of these activities and more help our students meet challenges that all children face.

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Message from the Executive Director



Two questions I was asked recently: What do you see when you meet a new client? What makes you the most proud about the Lighthouse of Broward?

These two questions are closely linked. Each person who comes to the Lighthouse shares one key characteristic and it's not what you might think. No matter what it says on the eye report, each child is unique in the way vision loss affects his or her daily life. Each parent has a very personal way of responding to caring for a blind or visually impaired child and also raising other children, keeping a job (or two) and handling the rest of life's challenges. My answer to the question is this—The common characteristic is Courage.

Children like Khyree, our star in this month's issue, have an indomitable spirit. Each of our children in the David and Jean Colker KIDS Keys to Independence program is the only child in their class at school with a vision impairment. Most of the time, they are the only one in the whole school. Imagine all the challenges of being in public school today and think about being that—Different? Special? Alone? Courageous!

So, that brings me to what makes me proud about the Lighthouse of Broward. The teachers. The staff.

Our close partnership with Broward Public Schools. We have built a close-knit, strong support network that includes a powerful parent group, individual counseling for parents and children, and a playgroup that teaches self-confidence and self-understanding, year-round activities where siblings and the Lighthouse KIDS can play together and have a safe space to prepare for all those challenges. Information, guidance, specific skills training all come together and the KIDS camp is the centerpiece. The Lighthouse of Broward is the pre-eminent resource for the local visually impaired community—serving individuals who are blind and their family members, professionals in related fields, elected officials, and students preparing for careers in eye care, psychology, and more.

In this issue, you also will see a few pictures of the teenagers who are in the Lighthouse program we call TeenLIFE (Learning Independence From Experience). Only a few years ago, they were in KIDS camp. They have become a close group of friends who are encouraging each other to learn, to think about jobs, to take an overnight visit to a college campus, to become beautiful young adults. Isn't that what we all want for our children?

Which brings me to one more question: Doesn't it make you proud to support the Lighthouse of Broward? We are grateful for your financial assistance and pledge to continue our acclaimed programs.

Elly du Pré, DPA

Elly du Pré
Executive Director

UPCOMING EVENTS

SEPTEMBER

- September 6 – Trivia Club
- September 13 – Lifetime Learners
- September 20 – Alumni Association Meeting
- September 21 – Pony Day for Babies, Kids & Transition clients.
- September 26 – Vets Coffee Talk
- September 27 – Book Club

OCTOBER *(Events supporting 40th Anniversary Share The Vision Campaign in bold)*

- October 2 – **Ruby Luncheon honoring volunteers – Global Grille, downtown Ft. Lauderdale**
- October 4 – Trivia Club
- October 4 – **Blessings Barks and Blues—blessing of pets and service animals (including police horses, K-9 and dog guides) in Lighthouse's award winning Sensory Garden**
- October 11 – Lifetime Learners
- October 11-12 – **Third Annual Autumn Market—showcasing the businesses of blind entrepreneurs, Lighthouse of Broward.**
- October 15 – **White Cane Day**
- October 18 – Alumni Association Meeting
- October 19 – Babies & Kids Halloween Party
- October 25 – Book Club
- October 25 – **Dining in the Dark/Guess Who's Coming to Dinner—signature fundraising event for 40th Anniversary**
- October 26 – Teens Halloween Party
- October 31 – Vets Coffee Talk

NOVEMBER

- November 1 – Trivia Club
- November 8 – Lifetime Learners
- November 15 – Alumni Association Meeting
- November 28 – Vets Coffee Talk
- November 29 – Book Club

DECEMBER

- December 6 – Trivia Club
- December 7 – KIDS Holiday Party
- December 13 – Adult Client Holiday Party
- December 14 – Teens Holiday Party

Nothing is going to stop Khyree! *(continued from page 1)*



Khyree Federick reading aloud. Andreas Mills listening.

Working full time and raising Khyree and his younger siblings takes a lot of time, patience and planning. Sharay says she's so happy that the Lighthouse keeps her informed of Khyree's progress, even though she can't always come to the family meetings. She knows that the Lighthouse is in her corner.

This partnership has really paid off for Khyree. Over the past three and a half years, his school work has been supported by Lighthouse summer camp activities. He now reads Braille at the highest level and is starting to work on the technology that opens up the whole world to people who are blind... just as it does to those of us

with vision. In school, Khyree's fingers fly across the page. After reading the whole story in Braille his arm shoots into the air. He knows the answer to the question and isn't shy about letting the teacher know it.

Khyree passed the very tough Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test (the dreaded FCAT) and will be

entering fourth grade in the Fall where he will be learning the BrailleNote and Victor Reading Machine.

That will help when he competes again in the National Braille Challenge. Last year he took First Place in his age and Braille skill level in the Broward County competition. Who knows... maybe this year he'll go all the way to Los Angeles for the national finals and a trip to Disneyland.

The future is what it's all about.

Sharay's face beams when she hears that Khyree has what it takes to go to college. He'll be the first in her family to reach that lofty goal. She remembers being shocked the first time he tied his shoes, but now she'll tell any other mom of a child who is blind, "Keep pushing! Don't take blindness for a weakness and don't give your child a pity party. Try anything and get your family to go along with it."

Building Good Memories

Dave and I always felt so grateful for our wonderful lives and our children's health. We wanted to share our good fortune with people who were not as lucky as we.

From our first visit to the Lighthouse of Broward, we were very impressed with their wonderful work. They needed so much and we knew that we had found a place where we were needed. We wanted to help people living in the dark make their lives the best they could be. That is why we chose to establish the David and Jean Colker KIDS Camp endowment at LHOB. Yes, we have given, but we have gotten so much more knowing that we helped others have a better life.

My father told me that when you are old you spend a lot of time sitting and remembering. He said, "Make good memories for when you are old." Being at the camp has allowed me to create many wonderful memories. I will always remember holding the hand of a 6-year-old boy so shy he would not lift his head and later that day hearing him spontaneously burst into a song he had learned at camp. My memories are refreshed when I see a beautiful young lady with lovely manners who I have seen at camp every summer since she was a child.

That is how I think of the David and Jean Colker KIDS Camp



David and Jean Colker making a good memory.

endowment—a place for building memories. David and I not only created beautiful memories for ourselves, but were able to give the wonderful children at the LHOB a lifetime of wonderful memories.

Thank you

The David and Jean Colker KIDS Program receives no government funding and relies entirely on support from the community.

Thank you to the following for your essential support:

United Way Approves 3 Year Funding for KIDS

In the award letter of May 23, 2013, United Way of Broward, CEO Kathleen Cannon stated, "Your efforts in the community are impressive, and we wish you continued success. Congratulations!" The Lighthouse is grateful for a grant of \$50,000 per year for 2013 – 2016, which allows us to plan more effectively for the 6 to 13 year olds we serve.

Negley Flinn Foundation

For almost ten years, the Negley Flinn Foundation has been a steadfast supporter of the KIDS program and this year is no exception. Ms. Flinn lived in Broward County and her long-time employee is the grandmother of Kendra Washington, former KIDS camper and now in the TeenLIFE program. Thank you to Negley Flinn for \$10,000 for the David and Jean Colker KIDS Program.

Deaver Phoenix Foundation

When Shane Kelley visited the Lighthouse a few years ago, he was very moved by the KIDS camp. He and his twin brother Sean run the family foundation which has become an annual supporter with a gift again this year of \$10,000. Thank you to Deaver Phoenix Foundation for helping us keep the KIDS program going strong.

And, as always, thank you to dear friends of the Lighthouse of Broward, David and Jean Colker.

Wish List:

"Can Do" videos for parent meetings – helps them to understand the developmental stages of their children and how to help them at each stage. **\$50 each, \$400 for full set of 8 videos.**

iPad with cellular capability for staff to use at home visits with parents and children. Allows faster enrollment of new children and also is used with the children for the many games that build eye-hand coordination. As kids grow they get bored with the same old games and the iPad has a never-ending supply of new ones. **\$700.**

Financial gifts are always welcome. Money or financial instruments are invested conservatively and annual interest is used to support the camp and year-round activities for children 6 to 13 years of age. Please call Elly du Pré, Executive Director for more information: **954-463-4217 ext 114.**



"Having fun, building confidence and having real life experiences that some day will translate into having their own apartments and making friends in college or at work."