



PRESS RELEASE

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SOUTH FLORIDA RESIDENTS GATHERED AT MIAMI LIGHTHOUSE TO CELEBRATE THE NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED WHITE CANE DAY

(Miami)— Friday, Oct. 15th was White Cane Day in Miami and across the nation. The blind and visually impaired community of Miami-Dade County assembled at Miami Lighthouse to commemorate this historic day celebrating the independence of the blind and visually impaired community.

Beginning at 9:00 A.M., an estimated 200 blind people of all ages walked from the Miami Lighthouse, across 8th Street and down to 7th Avenue and then continued the celebration with food and music. The keynote speaker for this year was Sandra Hix, President of the Local Chapter of the National Federation of the Blind. The event was sponsored by Standard Chartered Private Bank and Amerigroup Community Care. According to board director John Harriman, Senior Director of Standard Chartered, "it is fitting that our bank sponsored this important event as our motto is 'Seeing is Believing' and today our bank is celebrating World Sight Day." Steven Roca from Amerigroup Community Care accepted a plaque honoring Amerigroup's continued dedication to supporting White Cane Day over the years.

The walk included program participants from the Miami Lighthouse, many representatives from the community, especially members from the local Coral Way Colombian Lions Club who provided the breakfast, and other community leaders. Lunch was provided through the generosity of Burger King Store 12778.

City National Bank and Union de Ciegos Hispanos en Estados Unidos Inc. sponsored the White Cane Day Pre-Event Celebration held on September 24 at My Destiny Banquet Hall. More than 175 guests enjoyed a night of music, delicious food and dancing, as well as numerous raffle prizes. All White Cane Day event proceeds benefit the Social Group Activities (SGA) Program. SGA offers leisure activities for adults at the Miami Lighthouse that aid in perfecting dexterity necessary for Braille. Field trips to local parks, museums and other areas of interest, group discussions and language classes are also available.

For the Miami-Dade and Monroe County individuals who are blind or have significant vision impairment, White Cane Day is considered to be "Independence Day," symbolized by the white cane and dog guide that assists many people for safe travel and mobility. The long white cane

and guide dog also represent its owner's ability to live independently and contribute to the community.

The purpose of White Cane Day is twofold: it celebrates the abilities and achievements of people with blindness or visual impairments in continuing to live independently. Also, October is also designated as National Disability Awareness Month.

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NOTE TO ASSIGNMENT EDITORS/PRODUCERS:

To schedule morning shows or other studio interviews, please contact Virginia Jacko at (305) 856-4176 or vjacko@miamilighthouse.org.

Miami Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired is located at 601 S.W. 8th Avenue, Miami, FL 33130. Since 1931, Miami Lighthouse has provided vital rehabilitation and low vision services and training to give blind and visually impaired people of all ages hope, confidence and independence. In 2009 Miami Lighthouse received its third consecutive four-star rating, the highest rating, from Charity Navigator the independent evaluator of not-for-profits in recognition of its fiscal responsibility. This rating reflects Miami Lighthouse's continued stewardship and places it among the elite 13% of not-for-profit organizations nationwide to achieve such a distinction. The rating is based on 2009 financial statements. Visit www.miamilighthouse.org for more information.

MIAMI LIGHTHOUSE MISSION STATEMENT:

*To provide vision rehabilitation
and eye health services
that promote independence,
to educate professionals, and
to conduct research in related fields.*

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