

June 4, 2016

Dear Mrs. Jacko:

My name is Yamil, and I am the proud father of Kaden, a student at the Miami Lighthouse. Kaden is 10 years old and has just been accepted to Miami Art Studio, the magnet middle school, where he will be able to continue through high school.

As the parent of a child who has been visually impaired due to ocular cancer as a toddler, I can't imagine what it would be like not having the Miami Lighthouse in our lives. You hold our hands and help us cross all of the important steps in our lives, truly everything, from Braille, the latest technology, parental support, even emotional support. Everyone on your team knows our family and is always available for us.

This summer Kaden will be a participant in the Lighthouse program where he will learn Braille Music. He is also enrolled in your Science & Technology Program where he will learn to use JAWS, the computer screen reading software, on his iPad. In other words, he will learn everything I can't teach him, to prepare him for middle school.

We live in the Redlands and travel one hour each way on Saturdays to come happily to the Lighthouse. During summer camp, the Lighthouse van will pick Kaden up so I can leave for work early in the morning with his Mom who is a nurse. We know he really loves it at the Lighthouse because he has to get up at 5:30 to be, and he never complains. You know a kid loves something when he awakes early on his own and is excited about the day.

My dream for Kaden is to be independent. These are the things I am talking about from my heart. His Mother and I want to thank you and your team from the bottom of our hearts. We will always be grateful for your important role in our son's life.

Sincerely,

Yamil

Dear Miami Lighthouse:

I want you to know how proud I am that Julian is attending the Miami Lighthouse Pre-K program. While Julian is one of the sighted children in the class, I thought you would find it interesting to hear that our son overheard my husband and I talking about someone being blind when he said "Mommy, what is blind?" I explained to him that some people have problems with their eyes and cannot see, and asked if he knew anyone who was blind. His answer came quickly. "No, I never met anyone who was blind."

That says a great deal about this remarkable school program he is attending with both visually impaired and sighted schoolmates. In my mind it is simply beautiful and I wanted you to know about it.

Thank you for letting Julian have this wonderful experience.

Sincerely,

Anisia mother of Julian

Dear Miami Lighthouse:

My daughter Daniela loves the Pre-K program at the Miami Lighthouse. She's four now, but she's been coming to the Lighthouse since she was one year old. The Pre-K program has been wonderful for her. She is getting such professional services, and the teachers are her favorites.

Daniela is visually impaired, but honestly, she loves all the other children in the class and I don't think she has any idea that some are sighted and others aren't. Actually, I don't think that she is really aware that there is anything different about her own vision, since she has been visually impaired all her life. What she really is interested in is learning her braille letters and having fun tactilely exploring books.

Thank you, Miami Lighthouse, for this wonderful opportunity for my daughter.

Yours truly,

Ania mother of Daniela

Dear Miami Lighthouse:

My son Memphis is four years old and one of the sighted children in your Pre-K program. He loves his class, all the other kids, and especially the teachers. Ask him about his special interests and he'll tell you he loves to learn about science and animals.

Since he started class he's learned to trace his name and is getting really good at counting. Halloween was very special for him this year with all the kids in the class dressed up in costumes to go trick or treating.

Thanks for giving my son such a wonderful opportunity to learn and make such good friends with so many different people. As far as Memphis is concerned, he loves them all and is gaining so much from the experience.

Sincerely,

Yasmine mother of Memphis

Dear Miami Lighthouse:

My daughter Zakhia is one of the visually impaired students in your Pre-K program and I wanted you to know that she is absolutely loving it. She can't wait to get to school every morning. She's happy with everybody in the class, and knows the names of all her classmates, both those with sight and those who are visually impaired.

I see so much progress in her learning. I wish you could hear her sing along to the songs on her iPad and watch her as she learns the sounds of the alphabet letters. Zakhia has been coming to the Lighthouse since she was a baby. I can't tell you how excited we were when we heard about the Pre-K program and the Director, Isabel Chica, told us she was accepted.

Thanks, Miami Lighthouse. You are making a big difference in my daughter Zakhia's life.

Sincerely,

Craisha mother of Zakhia