

## **Miami-Dade County Animal Services in Partnership with Miami Lighthouse for the Blind Raises Awareness for Service Animals on International Guide Dog Day**

**WHAT:** Miami-Dade County Animal Services, in partnership with the Miami Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired, is pleased to announce a special event to raise awareness for the vital role of service animals. On April 30<sup>th</sup>, International Guide Dog Day, representatives from both organizations will gather for a press conference to unveil “SUPER EVA” Seeing Eye Dog painting—a tribute to Eva, the retired guide dog of Miami Lighthouse’s President and CEO, Virginia A. Jacko.

“SUPER EVA” will be displayed at Miami-Dade Animal Services as a reminder that even service animals can be adopted once they retire. “‘SUPER EVA’ is a symbol of both Miami-Dade County Animal Services and Miami Lighthouse’s mission to raise awareness of the critical role of service animals and provide essential support to individuals with vision loss” said Miami-Dade County Mayor Daniella Levine Cava.

“We are genuinely honored to showcase this beautiful artwork at our shelter,” said Annette Jose, Director of Miami-Dade County Animal Services. “It not only underscores the profound impact service animals have on the lives of individuals who are visually impaired but also serves as a powerful reminder that many retired service animals, like Eva, deserve a second chance at adoption, allowing them to thrive in loving homes.”

“We are thrilled to partner with Miami-Dade County Animal Services to raise awareness about service animals,” said Virginia A. Jacko, President and CEO of Miami Lighthouse. “‘SUPER EVA’ was made by program participants in our Senior Group Activities Program (SGA) honoring the impact that guide dogs have in the lives of people with visual impairments.”

Miami Lighthouse’s SGA Program has received vital Miami-Dade County Community-Based Organization (CBO) funding since 2010 and aims to serve 150 seniors providing essential services that address the unique challenges faced by seniors living with vision loss, helping them lead independent, fulfilling lives.

**WHO:** Miami-Dade County Mayor Daniella Levine Cava; Annette Jose, Director, Miami-Dade County Animal Services; Virginia A. Jacko, President & CEO Miami Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired; Miami Lighthouse Artists will be available for interviews.

**WHEN:** April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025 at 9:30 a.m.

**WHERE:** Miami-Dade County Animal Services  
Pet Adoption and Protection Center  
3599 NW 79 Avenue, Doral, FL 33122



*“SUPER EVA” painting, a stunning 36” x 36” mixed media artwork, captures the spirit of Eva, who has dedicated many years of loyal service to Virginia Jacko, President and CEO of Miami Lighthouse. Now retired, Eva has been adopted and enjoys the life of a beloved family. In this vibrant portrait, Eva is depicted as a proud superhero, standing boldly in shades of black and grey, adorned with a bedazzled multi-colored guide harness. Her smiling face features black beaded ears, a pink beaded mouth, and blue foam glasses, while a purple glitter cape trails behind her in the breeze. Eva's portrait is set against a backdrop of soft purple and pink hues, with a mirror tile walkway beneath her paws. A triangle superhero symbol emblazoned with the Miami Lighthouse for the Blind logo is featured on her forehead. This work of art celebrates Eva's legacy as a loyal guide dog and honors the contributions she made to Virginia Jacko's life. Eva was raised and trained at Guiding Eyes for the Blind in Yorktown Heights, New York.*

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