



Contact:

Virginia Jacko, President & CEO

Direct line: (305) 856-4176

[vjacko@miamilighthouse.org](mailto:vjacko@miamilighthouse.org)

## **MIAMI LIGHTHOUSE TO EXPAND MUSIC INCLUSION PROGRAM WITH JOHN S. AND JAMES L. KNIGHT FOUNDATION GRANT**

**MIAMI** —November 30— [Miami Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired](#) will expand its nationally recognized Music Inclusion Program for young adults to include both sighted and blind talented adults, with a \$125,000 grant from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. The Knight Arts Challenge is a five-year, \$40 million initiative to help bring the South Florida community together through the arts.

The Knight Foundation award will be augmented by matching funds from the Children’s Trust and an anonymous philanthropist to double the program’s capacity to generate quality music. The enhanced music production program will enable more talented community vocalists and musicians to perform in the Lighthouse’s state-of-the-art Henry and Inez Stone music production studio.

President and CEO Virginia Jacko stated, “We look forward to the community enjoying beautiful music by both sighted and visually impaired performers working together.”

Miami Lighthouse clients have produced a total of five albums. A new album, *Holiday Joy and Love*, has just been released. It features visiting artists, instructors and students from the Miami Lighthouse Music Inclusion Program which is funded by the Children’s Trust.

Two albums, *Instrumental Magic* and *Vocal Magic*, were produced by the legendary Henry Stone winner of 23 gold and platinum labels and a former client of the Miami Lighthouse recognized by many as the founder of the Miami Sound. The talented instructors at the Miami Lighthouse have produced two additional albums *A Better Chance* and *It’s Not Impossible* featuring teenagers participating in the Lighthouse Music Inclusion Program.

Program participants need to audition and, if selected, can learn sound engineering techniques, music instruction and performance. Performances are being scheduled throughout the state with a focus on performances at Miami schools and a major performance in one of Miami's large venues. Instructors include world-renown classical guitarist and sound engineer Antonio Cobo, sound engineer Harold Cobo, international pianist Julio Fumero, and vocal coach Rachelle Fleming, a Ph.D. student studying at the University of Miami Frost School of Music.

Miami Lighthouse has received praise from Dean Shelton Berg of the Frost School of Music, University of Miami, and from Brian Charlson, Vice President of Computer Training, Carroll Center for the Blind, Newton, Massachusetts:

The Miami Lighthouse Better Chance Inclusion Program, where the participants, both blind and sighted, write their own lyrics, arrange and compose music, and perform, is a national model for work readiness skills utilizing music appreciation, exploration and instruction. Because of technology, the playing field is level for talented blind musicians and vocalists.

Dean Shelton Berg, *Frost School of Music, University of Miami*

While many agencies, including my own, have conducted short mini courses on the subject of music engineering using computer technology by those who are blind or visually impaired, only Miami Lighthouse has succeeded in making it a complete training course. Your instructors have a deep understanding of how to instruct individuals in the use of computers to compose, arrange and mix music using the latest in adaptive technology. At least as important, your students appear to be fully engaged in the learning process with the clear understanding that this will lead to future employment either as a freelance consultant or as the employee of a pre-existing company. Best of luck with this impressive program.

Brian Charlson, *Vice President of Computer Training, Carroll Center for the Blind, Newton, MA*

###

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 second consecutive a four-star ranking from Charity Navigator, the independent evaluator of not-for-profits, in recognition of its fiscal responsibility. The ranking notification letter states: "Only 18% of the charities rated by Charity Navigator have received at least 2 consecutive 4-star evaluations, indicating that Miami Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired consistently executes its mission in a fiscally responsible way, and outperforms most other charities in America." The ranking is based on 2008 financial statements. Visit [www.miamilighthouse.org](http://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.*

###

For more information on the Knight Arts Challenge, visit [www.KnightArts.org](http://www.KnightArts.org).

**About the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation**

The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation advances journalism in the digital age and invests in the vitality of communities where the Knight brothers owned newspapers. Knight Foundation focuses on projects that promote community engagement and lead to transformational change.

For more, visit [www.knightfoundation.org](http://www.knightfoundation.org).