



### **Miami Lighthouse for the Blind Unveils Blind Soccer Mini Pitch on February 24**

*This event marks a milestone in empowering blind and visually impaired youth through sports*

**MIAMI, FL** – [The Miami Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired](#), celebrating 95 years of providing hope, confidence, and independence to blind or visually impaired people of all ages, is hosting a dedication of its blind soccer mini pitch at 10AM on Monday, February 24<sup>th</sup> at Miami Lighthouse Academy located at 601 SW 8th Avenue.

This event marks a major milestone in the organization’s new Comprehensive Blind Soccer Initiative. Miami Lighthouse has developed a first-of-its-kind comprehensive curriculum to coach blind soccer and teach young early learners 1-4 years old.

In collaboration with the U.S Association of Blind Athletes (USABA), the Comprehensive Blind Soccer Initiative aims to overcome challenges faced by blind and visually impaired children and young adults across Miami-Dade County who could benefit from participating in a team sport.

“Sports are an important part of education and growth as a child, and blind and visually impaired children deserve the opportunity to participate just as sighted children do,” said Virginia Jacko, President and CEO of Miami Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired. “We are proud to open our blind soccer mini pitch to empower our students and teach them foundational skills, such as, tracking an auditory ball and echolocation, to soccer techniques including dribbling, passing, and kicking. This reinforces our Miami Lighthouse motto that, ‘It’s Possible to See Without Sight™.’”

As a recipient of the highly competitive Children’s Trust Innovation Award, Miami Lighthouse’s Comprehensive Blind Soccer Initiative aims to reach 85 youths age one to twenty-two years old and teach them the game of blind soccer. Nine Miami Lighthouse employees and three community soccer experts were provided the training from USABA to earn their Blind Soccer Coach Credentials. Through soccer, participants will foster skills such as camaraderie, teamwork, sportsmanship, as well as strategies to emphasize cognitive awareness paired with physical activity.

The event will feature remarks by Dr. Jose L. Dotres, Superintendent of Miami-Dade County Public Schools, and James R. Haj, President and CEO of The Children's Trust, highlighting the importance of inclusive sports programming. Miami Lighthouse's Comprehensive Blind Soccer Initiative is supported by The Children's Trust, Anthony R. Abraham Foundation, U.S. Association of Blind Athletes, Honda USA Foundation, AJNFF Family Foundation, Dixie Landscape and SFM Services.

**About Miami Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired**

For nearly a century, Miami Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired has been working to build a more inclusive society for the blind and visually impaired. Through education, training, research and vision enhancement, Miami Lighthouse for the Blind provides hope, confidence, and independence to people of all ages. Miami Lighthouse serves over 28,000 program participants annually from blind babies to seniors. For more information, please visit [www.miamilighthouse.org](http://www.miamilighthouse.org).

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