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Contact: Cameron Ehren Sisser
Phone: 786-362-7515

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF FREE EYE CARE TO 65,000 UNDERSERVED CHILDREN

“Music Under the Stars: Bon Appétit Miami” on APRIL 20

On April 20th, Miami Lighthouse for the Blind will celebrate the 20-year anniversary of the Florida Heiken Children's Vision Program, which over the years has provided 65,000 children from low-income families with eye examinations and prescription glasses when needed. The invitation only event will take place at Miami Lighthouse located at 601 SW 8th Avenue from 7:00pm-10:00pm.

The anniversary will be recognized at the annual Miami Lighthouse *Music Under the Stars: Bon Appétit Miami*, with special guest José Feliciano and performances by the Miami Lighthouse Better Chance Music Production Program™ musicians, food from lots of great Miami restaurants and beverages by Bacardi. Music Under the Stars has become a much-anticipated highlight of the South Florida philanthropic season.

The Florida Heiken Children's Vision Program has been instrumental in helping underserved children achieve success in school and to avoid the behavior problems that all too often accompany school difficulty. Vision problems often are a factor in poor school performance, and studies have linked the problem to delinquency as well. “The children we serve have the potential for academic success because of their glasses, which their families would not have been able to afford” said Virginia A. Jacko, President & CEO of Miami Lighthouse.

The program uses four mobile units and an extensive network of in-office optometrists to provide comprehensive eye examinations with dilation to children who would otherwise have no access to eye care. Children who need eyeglasses--about three-quarters of those served--receive them free of charge through an agreement with a provider.

In 2007, the Miami Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired, Inc. acquired the Dr. Bruce Heiken Memorial Fund, now called the Florida Heiken Children's Vision Program, LLC as a division of Miami Lighthouse. With funding from the Florida Department of Health, this program has expanded to 42 Florida counties. Emphasis is placed on the largest school districts, i.e., Miami-Dade, the Fourth largest school district in the U.S.; Broward, the eighth largest school district in the U.S.; Hillsborough, the tenth largest school district in the U.S., and the greater Palm Beach area schools. Miami Lighthouse ranks among the elite 4% of U.S. nonprofits, having earned a 4-Star rating for five consecutive years from Charity Navigator, the nation's premier independent nonprofit evaluator.

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