



GRAND OPENING OF MIAMI LIGHTHOUSE CHILDREN'S CENTER TO SHOWCASE

A BRIGHT FUTURE FOR BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED CHILDREN

Miami Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired will give an audience of civic leaders and community philanthropists a glimpse into the future during the grand opening ceremony for its new Miami Lighthouse Learning Center for Children™ and dedication of the Mary M. and Sash A. Spencer Campus of Miami Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired. The grand opening and dedication will take place on Wednesday, August 16th; beginning at 11 a.m. at Miami Lighthouse, located at 601 Southwest 8th Avenue, Miami.

In addition to celebrating the opening of the new 72,000-square-foot Miami Lighthouse Learning Center for Children™, the event will feature an exhibition of cutting-edge devices, software and technologies designed to assist the visually challenged. Jorge Hernandez, Computer Technology Services Instructor, and John Garcia, Manager of Vision Solutions, will feature new and exciting technology available for the blind and visually impaired, such as, braille-to-audio teaching equipment, the latest in digital print magnification devices, computer speech applications, and Apple computer products, including accessible iPads.

Speakers at the Miami Lighthouse Learning Center for Children™ grand opening ceremony will include City of Miami Mayor Tomas Regalado, Miami-Dade County Public Schools Superintendent Alberto Carvalho, and President & CEO of The Children's Trust James Haj. Miami Lighthouse's Early Intervention Blind Babies Program was named the 2016 Program of the Year by the Children's Trust. This most prestigious award recognizes Miami Lighthouse's Early Intervention Program, in particular, for including parents as teachers. Representatives from MCM and the architectural firm of Wolfberg Alvarez Partners will also participate in the dedication ceremony along with financial supporters of the project and Miami

Lighthouse Board Directors. The event will also feature musical performances by Pre-Kindergarten and schoolchildren participating in Miami Lighthouses' nationally acclaimed Music Program.

The Lighthouse Learning Center for Children™ will accommodate the expansion of Florida's first-of-its-kind fully inclusive pre-kindergarten for visually impaired students and their sighted peers. Miami Lighthouse piloted this unique Pre-Kindergarten with 15 students in 2016/2017 in partnership with Miami-Dade County Public Schools and the Early Learning Coalition, to more easily transition blind and visually impaired students to public schools. For academic year 2017-2018, 40 visually impaired and sighted children ages one to four are enrolled with the capacity to expand to 100 children. All classrooms will follow the inclusion model (50% students with and 50% without visual impairment).

Miami Lighthouse was established in 1931 and has been providing services to the blind from the same location. With the completion of the Lighthouse Learning Center for Children™, the facility has grown into a 115,000-square-foot landmark. Today Miami Lighthouse is recognized as a national center of excellence in vision rehabilitation that serves more than 14,000 program participants annually with an array of programs that enable blind and visually impaired persons of all ages to achieve independence.

For more information about Miami Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired, visit www.miamilighthouse.org, or call 305-856-4176.

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It's Possible to See Without Sight™