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PRESS RELEASE

## MIAMI LIGHTHOUSE ACQUIRES HEIKEN CHILDREN'S VISION PROGRAM

### Mobile Vision Care Van Visits Miami-Dade Schools

MIAMI--June 29, 2007 – In a move heralded as a new way of doing business in the not-for-profit community, Miami Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired has acquired the Heiken Children's Vision Program, a community health outreach established in 1992 by the Dade County Optometric Association in memory of Dr. Bruce Heiken.

“Miami Lighthouse will continue and expand the life-changing services the Heiken Children's Vision Program has provided to Miami-Dade County students over the years,” said Miami Lighthouse CEO Virginia A. Jacko. “Early detection is key in treating and preventing a range of vision disorders. The acquisition is a perfect fit, and will allow these valuable services to schoolchildren to be maintained and multiplied.

“We are especially pleased to have the Instant Vision Program, which is a fully-equipped optometric office on wheels that travels to schools in low-income areas. My hope is that we will eventually have a whole fleet of these,” CEO Jacko said.

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The Dade County Optometric Association created the Children's Vision Program because thousands of public school students failed routine vision screenings every year, then never received follow-up eye exams and corrective lenses.

CEO Jacko said that it is important to recognize Health Foundation of South Florida as the catalyst that brought the leadership of the two organizations together to consider the idea of merging Heiken into Miami Lighthouse for the Blind.

The merging of nonprofits to make better use of resources is an emerging trend, according to Dr. Steven Marcus, President of the Health Foundation of South Florida. "Many small non-profits are one dimensional in providing a significant major program but have all the expenses of administrative staffing, office overhead and accounting and legal compliance," Dr. Marcus said. "By consolidating the Heiken Fund with the Miami Lighthouse for the Blind, a larger agency with similar interests, all of the resources for overhead can go directly to servicing the children benefiting from the vision van eyeglass program." The Heiken fund had been the only county-wide charitable organization providing free comprehensive eye care to all needy K-12 schoolchildren.

"By acquiring the Heiken Program, Miami Lighthouse broadens its organizational mission to include eye wellness, as well as vision rehabilitation," CEO Jacko said.

Since 1931 Miami Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired has provided an impressive array of rehabilitation services and training to give blind and visually-impaired people of all ages hope, confidence and independence.