



# LIGHT LINE<sup>tm</sup>

A MONTHLY BLOG FROM MIAMI LIGHTHOUSE FOR THE BLIND

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## Listen Up! That's Your "Pill Reminder" Talking to You

Miami Lighthouse is delighted to introduce to its visually impaired clients an innovative new device from Walgreens called the *Talking Pill Reminder*. The nation's largest drugstore chain launched the device nationwide on June 3rd, followed by the company's President & CEO Gregory Wasson personally talking about the Talking Pill Reminder to Miami Lighthouse CEO Virginia Jacko during a luncheon visit to our Center on June 6th. The initiative for developing the device is the result of a collaboration between Walgreens and The American Council of the Blind (ACB).

The luncheon visit by the Walgreen Co. executive team also included Miami Mayor Tomás Regalado, Miami Lighthouse Board Directors José Abrante and Ray Casas and Vice President of Business Development for Leon Medical Centers Marcus Perez.

The Talking Pill Reminder is available free of charge with prescription medications that Walgreens dispenses to its pharmacy customers who are blind or who have visual impairments. The devices also are available in Walgreens drugstores for purchase for a retail price of \$9.99. It attaches easily to prescription containers, can be recorded to speak the information on the customer's prescription medication label, and also has an audible alarm to remind patients when to take a medication.



Miami Lighthouse Board Directors José Abrante and Ray Casas, CEO Virginia Jacko, Mayor Tomás Regalado, Walgreen Co. President & CEO Greg Wasson and Leon Medical Centers Vice President of Business Development Marcus Perez.

At the Miami Lighthouse, client introduction to the remarkable new product is being overseen by Raquel Van Der Biest, our certified Low Vision Specialist and head of the Personal Management Program.

"The ability to identify the medication in a particular bottle is critical," says Van Der Biest. "A sighted person takes it for granted they can read the label on the bottle, but for the visually impaired, this new device is a significant advance in personal independence when it comes to the taking the proper medication and being reminded by an alarm when to do so."



Raquel explains the Walgreens Talking Pill Reminder to a low vision client. The small round device is placed on the top or bottom of a pill bottle and has two buttons. The timer button sets an audible alarm, is slightly larger than the audio button and has two raised dots. The smaller audio button allows a 30-second recording of the name of the medication, its purpose and dosage interval and has one raised dot.

## ■ Summer Camp Offers "Gift of Independence"

Our Miami Lighthouse summer camp program is well underway, with students enjoying the all important gift of independence for a few short months. Approximately 150 low vision and blind students, between the ages of 5 and 22, are currently on the campus each day, studying Braille and technology literacy, music, arts and crafts, and just plain having fun.

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## ■ Profile Of The Month

### *Meet Raquel Van Der Biest, OTR/L & CLVT*

Step into Raquel Van Der Biest's "office" and you'll find yourself in an area consisting of three training kitchens. As the head of our Personal Management Program for the past three years, her instruction focuses on home management and independent living skills for visually impaired clients of all ages.

An important part of the training that Raquel and her staff impart to their clients is the management of medication, just one of the reasons that they are all so delighted with the arrival of Walgreens Talking Pill Reminder. Her staff includes teacher of the visually impaired Judy Jackson and Nathalie Trujillo, an Occupational Therapy intern from Florida International University (FIU). Raquel is the internship preceptor for numerous graduate students pursuing occupational therapy careers with an interest in vision rehabilitation.



Each year Raquel coordinates our annual on-site CE Seminar "Engaging the Low Vision Community through Education, Research and Service" for Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists and Nurses offered in collaboration with FIU.

"My work here at Miami Lighthouse is extremely rewarding and fulfilling, especially when we are able to provide training to seniors affected by age-related eye disease in the use of low vision devices, such as the Talking Pill Reminder, that helps them remain independent."

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*Contributed by Joan Spector*



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