



# Annual **REPORT**

**WE SERVE ALL AGES & ALL  
STAGES OF VISION LOSS**

# 2023



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# A MESSAGE FROM

the President



Board Chair

The Lighthouse of Houston has been serving people with vision loss of all ages and levels for 84 years. We offer services, programs, and employment that are accessible and affordable for everyone, no matter their age, income, or background.

Last year, our Board of Directors adopted a new strategic plan, which includes a new vision and mission statement. Our 4 strategic priorities aim to improve the lives of the people we serve and their families. Those priorities are Community and Empowerment, Technology and Innovation, Partnerships and Philanthropy, and Commitment and People. Our vision is to create a life without limits for people with vision loss, and we are determined to make sure that they have equal opportunities in every situation. Our mission is to enable and empower people who are blind or low vision to achieve their full potential, and we are committed to creating inclusive communities with accessible resources that support personal and family well-being, learning, development, and employment.

We are proud to say that 53% of our workforce is blind or has low vision. Most of them work on contracts related to our Premium Business services, such as call/contact center, document management, or kitting/ packaging business services. But we also hire for other positions as well.

Helen Keller once said, "Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much." We are very grateful and thankful to our donors, volunteers, community partners, staff team members and board of directors for their dedication and passion to support our mission. Together, we can make a real difference.



Jenna Dhayer,  
President

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jenna Dhayer".

Dave Donat,  
Board Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David J Donat".



# Our Vision

**A life without limits  
for people who are  
blind or low vision.**



# Our Mission

**To enable and  
empower people  
who are blind or low  
vision to realize their  
full potential.**

# Our Leadership



**Jenna Dhayer**  
President



**Shelly Zander**  
Vice President



**Terry Vaughn**  
Vice President of  
Operations and Sales

## Board of Directors

### Executive Committee

Jenna Dhayer-President  
David Donat-Chair  
Kim Colburn-Secretary, Chair-Elect  
Bruce Gourd-Operations Chair

Chris Reinecker-Finance Chair  
Christine Stevenson -Human Resource Chair  
Daniel Williams-VP Operations  
Doug Yeager-Nominating Chair  
Jeffrey Smith-Services Chair

### Members

Ashok Kumar Garg  
Caitlin Bakhtiary  
Chelean Zander-VP  
Cody Biller  
Cope Bailey  
Erin Applegate  
LA Beck  
Lonnie Knowles

Mazher Poonawala  
Merle Petty  
Michael McCulloch  
Michael Twa, OD, PhD  
Ruhi Soni, MD  
Victoria Hillard  
Vivecca Hartman

# Programs & Services

Clients Served

LOW VISION CLINIC

180

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

684

GROUP SUPPORT

527

ADULT & YOUTH PROGRAMS

8210

TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION & TRAINING

198

COMMUNITY & RECREATION

75

RESIDENTIAL & ASSISTED LIVING

4901

INFORMATION & REFERRAL

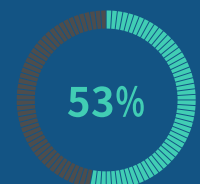
845

VOLUNTEERS

161

Clients Served **15,781**

In 2023, we had 79 employees, 53% were blind or low vision.



# Low Vision Clinic A Year in Review

Our Low Vision Clinic offers a full range of services to people with low vision, including comprehensive low vision exams, personalized care and therapy, one-on-one assistance with vision rehabilitation exercises and adaptive aids, and the latest in adaptive technology.



I was totally unprepared. Most of my interactions are with Dr. Eldred. She's just highly knowledgeable and believes there is an answer for everything. Sometimes my retinologist will say something that I just don't understand, and I can ask Dr. Eldred about it. I couldn't have done it without her.

-Barbara Teague, Client

I think that not enough people know that we exist and that we are here to help people. We need to be here to help parts of the population in Houston that might not be able to be assisted otherwise.

-Dr. Kia B. Eldred McGee, OD, FAAO

## DEPARTMENTAL MILESTONES

In 2023 we joined in a new partnership with U of H Optometry to perform residency rotations. We had 9 interns from UH rotate through the Lighthouse Low Vision Services. "Given the number of visually-impaired individuals, a low vision rotation in optometric education is essential for practitioners to become proficient in evaluating the visual functioning of a compromised visual system. This proficiency enables the optometrist to treat, manage, and communicate with visually-impaired patients using low vision rehabilitation, training, assistive technology, and resources specific to these patients." – Dr. Swati C. Modi, Clinical Associate Professor and Clinic Director, Center for Sight Enhancement at the University of Houston College of Optometry.

# Behavioral Health A Year in Review

Mental health is often impacted when a person loses their vision. Our Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) specializes in the treatment of various mental health concerns associated with vision loss, including depression, anxiety, stress, anger issues, family issues, relationship issues, and many others. We provide one-on-one counseling to individuals, family members and caregivers impacted by a loved one's vision loss.



Taking care of your mental health while you are going through the adjustment to vision loss is very important and will help you better cope with your loss and learn ways of doing things. Your life may have been changed forever because of your vision loss, but counseling can help you understand that your life is definitely not over.

- Melinda B. Benjumea, LPC



## DEPARTMENTAL MILESTONES

Group support clients created their own community of support and began exploring the cities restaurants together. Helen Keller once said "Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement. Nothing can be done without hope and confidence." Through one on one and group community support, individuals find the confidence to achieve their full potential.

# Technology Education & Training A Year in Review

Learning and knowledge are power, and our focus is providing people who are blind or low vision with access to the right technology and trainings that best fit your needs and goals. Our staff are trained to evaluate you on a variety of assistive technology devices, software, and programs, as well as provide the necessary training to enhance your technology skills. We also provide employment training programs and classes that focus on preparing people for the workforce and enhancing job skills to increase employability. Whether you are a new job seeker or looking to build new or enhance employment skills, we aim to provide you with the training necessary to enable you to achieve your employment goals.



## DEPARTMENTAL MILESTONES

We had the pleasure of meeting with Dr. Tian "Tim" Chen, Assistant Professor of Mechanical Engineering at the University of Houston, to discuss his innovative new project. He's using 3D printing technology to make art more accessible for those with visual impairments, allowing them to experience art in a new and exciting way. He's not only making art more accessible but creating a brand new type of art along the way. We're so excited to be part of this project and can't wait to see the positive impact it has!

# Adult and Youth Programs A Year in Review

Our youth and adult programs, activities and events are designed to enable and empower individuals who are blind or low vision to realize their full potential by enhancing social skills, self-esteem, confidence, independence, personal and family well-being. We provide programmatic, social and recreational activities and spaces to belong and connect, such as our Adult Day Program, Youth Day Camps, Family Events, Parent's Night Out, Choir, Bingo Nights, Art Classes and so much more. Sighted family members, friends and caregivers are encouraged to participate in activities and events.



## DEPARTMENTAL MILESTONES

We received our Childcare License from the Health and Human Services Commission and brought back Youth Camp and other Youth Programs and Events. Our License covers children ages 5-12 and a capacity of 68 people.

It's very important for kids, especially, to be with other kids who are just like them because they learn to share experiences with each other, to communicate with each other about their visual impairments, and I feel like it helps to set them up for self-advocacy in the future, because it gives them a little bit more confidence in who they are. Maddy has made some lasting friendships with kids who are visually impaired. Some of her best friends are all at the camps she's gone to, and that really anchored here at The Lighthouse of Houston making those connections and friendships.

Hilary Rodriguez

# Residential Assisted Living A Year in Review

Deaf Blind Assisted Living residential care program for 6 clients who are deaf and blind with multiple disabilities (DBMD). This program is licensed through the Health & Human Services Commission (HHSC) Deaf Blind Multiple Disabilities Medicaid Waiver program. We provide 24-7 compassionate care for these 6 clients, as well as 4 blind clients who participate in adult day care programs during the day.

Lighthouse Living Centers 1 and 2 are located in Southwest Houston and offer independent living for low income, disabled individuals. Multi-Family housing HUD 202, Section 8 subsidized rent is determined by the individual or family's income level including allowable expenses. Each center offers one and two-bedroom units. We have 108 residents living in 79 units.



**Lighthouse Living Centers invited the City of Houston's Fire Department to provide a safety day event where our residents learned about general fire safety.**

# Event Highlights

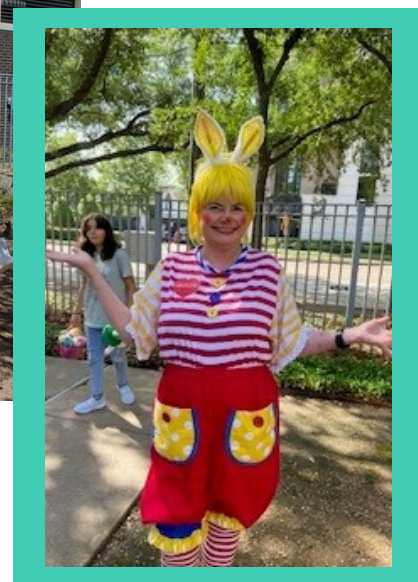


Over \$225,000 was raised for The Lighthouse of Houston at this year's charity golf event!



The Lighthouse of Houston choir lit up the Sugar Land Space Cowboys stadium with an inspiring rendition of the national anthem. What a day to remember!

The Lighthouse of Houston's Beeping Easter Egg hunt makes hunting for eggs accessible and fun for kiddos who are blind or have low vision. The smiles say everything about the meaningful experience the families had during the event.



# Strategic Plan

## **New Strategic Plan**

The Board of Directors and Lighthouse Leadership approved a new strategic plan, mission and vision. The plan was developed through collaborative conversations with stakeholders from the community, staff and volunteers.

## **Community & Empowerment**

We will foster communities of belonging with accessible resources that enable personal and family well-being, learning, development and employment.

## **Technology & Innovation**

We will drive full accessibility by embracing technology and innovation.

## **Partnerships & Philanthropy**

We will establish partnerships that expand our reach, resources, and capabilities.

## **Commitment & People**

We will develop a people centered organization that values compassion, empowerment, operational excellence, and people development to create inspired delivery.



# New Initiatives



## Community & Empowerment

### Initiatives:

- Create and provide education and vocational employment trainings and support mechanisms for people exploring a fulfilling career.
- Grow youth and adult programs and create programs and learning opportunities for families and caregivers.
- Create and provide social and recreational programming and spaces for people to connect.
- Grow employment by selling Business Service Lines to provide solutions for Federal, Commercial and Nonprofit companies.
- Expand health services by providing more comprehensive offerings.

## Technology & Innovation

### Initiatives:

- Invest in systems and processes that support accessibility, connectivity and client growth.
- Invest in facilities and equipment that support a fully accessible environment.
- Drive technology, innovation, development, integration and accessibility through collaborative partnerships with technology driven companies.
- Rebuild website to be more informative, interactive and accessible.
- Utilize website, social media and other online platforms to increase visibility and access to resources and programming for families and individuals.

## Partnerships & Philanthropy

### Initiatives:

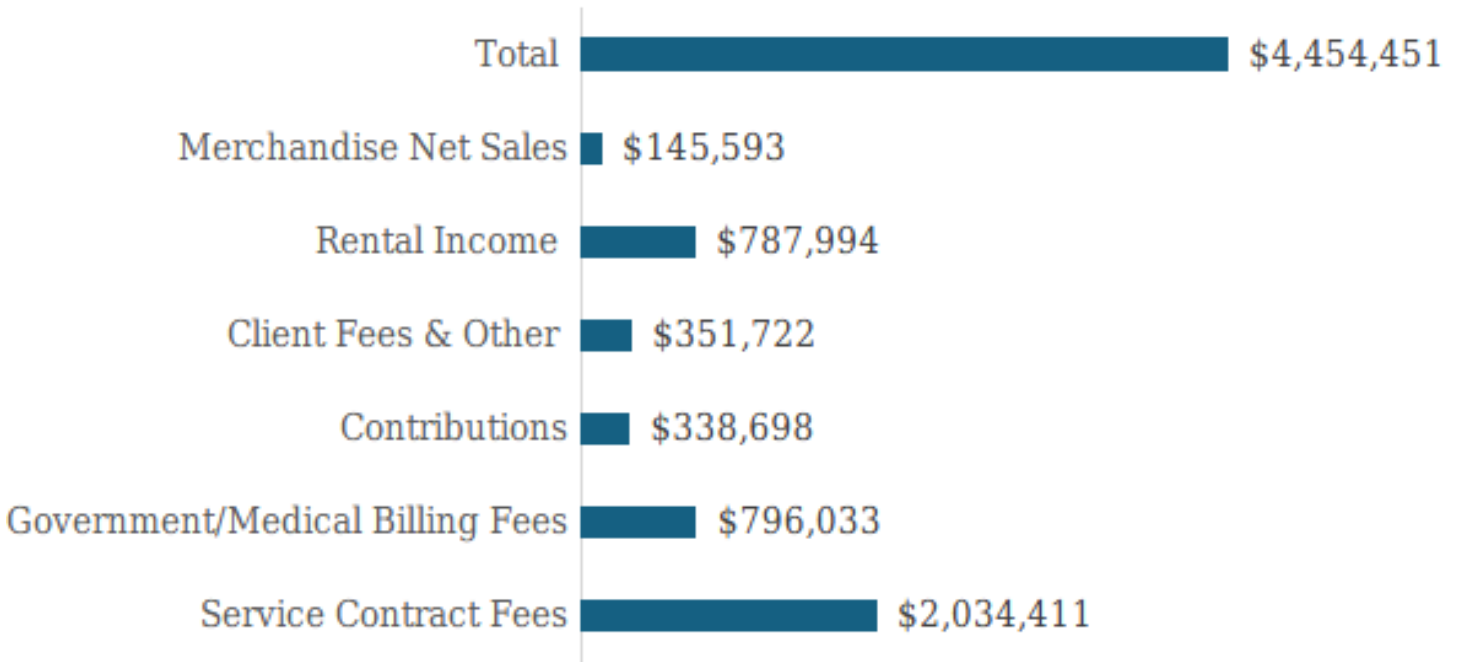
- Build brand awareness amongst staff, board, donors, volunteers, and community.
- Create marketing plans that focus on storytelling, board, donors, volunteers, and community.
- Develop intentional, strategic partnerships with organizations and people that align with our mission.
- Increase opportunities for volunteers and companies to engage.
- Increase giving opportunities to grow and diversify our fundraising portfolio.

## Commitment & People

### Initiatives:

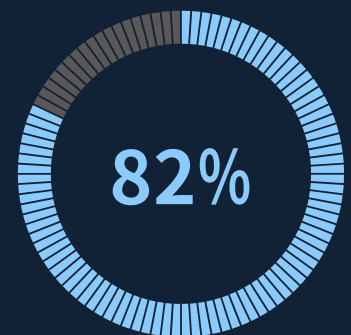
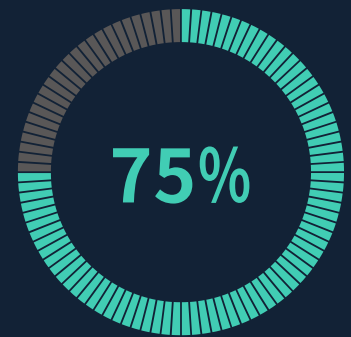
- Create a people centric culture that provides growth, learning and a sense of purpose for our staff.
- Implement evaluation processes to allow for continuous improvement that will create and maintain high-quality program and service delivery.
- Improve business procedures to create better efficiencies.
- Evaluate and improve Board engagement and development.
- Implement ongoing needs assessment for the blind and low vision community, both served and unserved.

# Financials



## We Are Exceeding The Standard

The industry standard for management and general expenses, as well as fundraising costs compared to direct program costs is 75/25%. We are proud to report that we exceed this standard, with an 82/18% split.



# Premium Business Services

The Lighthouse of Houston's Premium Business Services are designed to make your business more successful and efficient. We provide solutions that matter to businesses that want to reduce their overhead and increase their customer service. We are dedicated to continuing to hire and train the best, most qualified staff team of people who are blind or low vision to provide your company with the highest quality of service.



## Kitting and Packaging

Our experienced staff can kit, assemble, fold, and label ongoing, one-time, small or large projects.



## Document Management

We help organizations digitally transform by turning their piles of paper and stored paper files into digital assets they can easily access and manage. Our highly trained professionals can also manage onsite mailroom operations and offer digital mailroom solutions.



## Call and Contact Centers

Reliable call and contact center services that assist businesses in outsourcing to provide high client and customer satisfaction. Our support can be customized to ensure your needs are met.



**PREMIUM BUSINESS SERVICES, FORMERLY CONTRACT SERVICES, HAS PROVIDED JOBS TO 52 PEOPLE AND 79% OF THE PEOPLE ON THOSE CONTRACTS ARE BLIND OR LOW VISION (41 PEOPLE).**

## Our Premium Business Partners

- Ability One Program
- Army Reserve National Guard
- Aviation Laboratories
- Bayou City Hemp Company
- Department of the Navy
- Global Filtration
- Internal Revenue Service
- National Industries for the Blind
- Railroad Retirement Board
- Texas Department of Criminal Justice
- Texas Department of Health and Human Service
- Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
- Texas Workforce Commission
- University of Houston
- VA Hospital Long Beach
- Vandenberg Space Force Base
- WorkQuest and WorksWonders

# Partnerships & Volunteerism



Dear Lighthouse of Houston volunteers and partners, WE LOVE YOU! You are a gift, a gem, a blessing, and we can't thank you enough for choosing to volunteer your time working with people who are blind or low vision.

**"The smallest act of kindness is worth more than the grandest intention."**

Oscar Wilde

# Donors

*Thank  
You*

Action Imports  
Alexis Smith  
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Allan & Sue Cox  
Ana Garza Escobedo  
Ann Masterson  
Antonio Valadez  
AnzCo LLC  
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Catherine Fendrich  
Catherine LeBleu  
Cathy Mallia  
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Houston Spring Branch Lions Club  
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Inc. Massimo Zanetti Beverage USA  
Irma Smith  
Irvin Van Patten  
Jain and Jain PC  
James and Carolyn Hill

# Donors

*Thank  
You*

James Bryson  
James Davis  
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Jeffrey Smith  
Jenna Dhayer  
Jennifer Parrish  
Jerry & Gretchen Krueger  
Jet Waste Services  
JF Petroleum Group  
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John Downey  
John Kebodeaux  
JRS Hospitality LLC - Big Chicken  
Karen Moore  
Kathlene Wilson  
Kazim Akhtar  
Kerri Lyons  
Keurig Dr. Pepper  
Kroger  
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Larry & Melba Ainsworth  
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Laurel Thomas  
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Lil' Drug Store Products  
Liliam Funez  
Lions Clubs International District 2-S-2  
Lonnie Knowles  
Lynda Lane  
Marcia W Moore Estate  
Marciela Carrera  
Marion K. Chauncey Charitable Trust  
Marjorie Halvorson

Mark VII  
Marsha Block  
Mars Wrigley  
Martha Moore  
Marti and Billy Rosenberg  
Martin John Gambling  
Mary Rauh  
Mazher Poonawala  
Melba C. Wynne Foundation  
Melinda Benjumea  
Michael D. and Jeanette M. Twa  
Michael Geisler  
Michael McCulloch  
Millicent Goldschmidt  
Mitzie Norman  
Modelo  
Motiva  
Network For Good  
New K R Enterprises Inc.  
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Paulette Pugh  
Pepsico Foundation  
Pepsi Corp.  
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Prosperity Bank  
Ragna Henrichs  
Ralph Sharpe  
Ramsay Elder  
Ray and Merle Petty  
Reynolds & Reynolds Associate Foundation  
Robert and Gail Stone  
Ron Kline  
Ruhi Soni, MD  
Ruth Schumacher

# Donors

Sally Robinson  
Samit Soni  
Sandra Lusky  
Sanjay Patel  
Santhosh Rajaveloo  
Saunders Foundation  
Saundra Savage  
Schwab Charitable  
Scot Schroeder  
Sharney Foundation, Inc.  
Shell Oil Company Foundation Matching Gifts  
Shetal Upadhyay  
Shopco USA  
Silver Eagle Distributors Houston  
Smita Corley  
Solomon D Peah Sr  
Starbucks Foundation  
Stellar Bank  
Stephen Kimmel  
Stuart Saunders  
Sugar Land Lions Charity Inc.  
Susan and David Streit  
Susan Gould

Swedish Match North America LLC  
Swisher International  
Sysco Central Texas  
Texas Mutual Worker's Compensation Insurance  
Texon  
The Paul & Molly Parker Gift Fund  
The Sarofim Foundation  
Thomas Morrison  
Tom Kinack  
Tyler Parker  
United Way of Greater Houston  
United Way of Midland County  
USI Insurance Services  
Valero  
Vastine Hilsher  
Victoria Hillard  
Vivecca and Chris Hartman  
Warren SW Refrigeration  
White Tucker Company  
William D. Noel  
Woodforest National Bank  
WorkQuest



# CONTACT US TODAY

We are centrally located near Downtown Houston, have a convenient parking area and are easily accessible by METRO.



## LET'S CONNECT

For more than 80 years, The Lighthouse of Houston has been supporting individuals who are blind or low vision through our health services, assistive technology resources, community and support programs, vocational skills training, and internal employment opportunities. Learn more on our website or follow us on social media for updates.



Phone Number

**713-284-8402**



Email Address

**[info@houstonlighthouse.org](mailto:info@houstonlighthouse.org)**



Website

**[www.HoustonLighthouse.org](http://www.HoustonLighthouse.org)**



THE  
**LIGHTHOUSE**  
OF HOUSTON