

⋮Lighthouse⋮

Vision Loss Education Center

SARASOTA • MANATEE • CHARLOTTE • DESOTO • HIGHLANDS

eNewsletter - March, 2021

Marty: Knowing That You're Not Alone



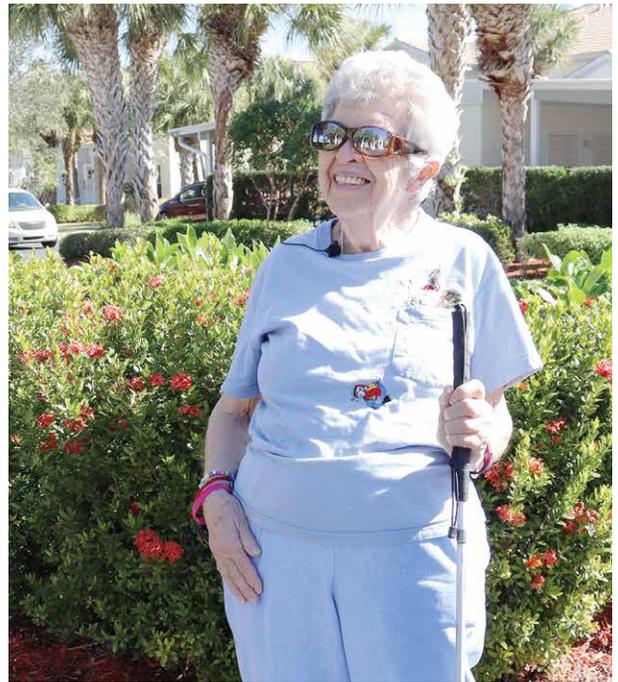
Originally from upstate New York, Marty and her husband became “snowbirds” after retiring. She enjoyed living in New York during the summer and in Florida during the winter where they played golf and enjoyed other fun activities.

While enjoying retirement, Marty noticed something different about her vision, but she could not pinpoint the issue. Visiting her optometrist, he told her to see a specialist for specific issues regarding her retina and a diagnosis of macular degeneration. “I had no idea what he was talking about,” she said, but she scheduled an appointment to be seen. Over time, Marty’s macular degeneration, glaucoma and retina issues continued, but treatment by eye specialists has at least slowed the progression of the diseases.

Marty was extremely independent when she was diagnosed, but last July, she was directed to stop driving, for her safety as well as the safety of others. Marty says that she hasn’t stopped doing things she enjoys, just figured out another way to do it. She briefly moved in with her daughter, in an area accessible to public transportation, so she could still travel around town when needed.

Marty learned about the Lighthouse through a former coworker and contacted Lighthouse Vision Loss Education Center to register for services. She took the bus to attend classes in Port Charlotte and enjoyed being around others who were affected by vision loss; everyone was in various states of vision loss, but they were there for a common cause - to remain independent.

Since the Coronavirus, the classes have transitioned to virtual learning. Marty, who was not computer literate before the pandemic, feels that she's gotten more out of the courses online because she's able to attend more classes than if she had to attend in person. She takes the Assistive Technology course to learn more about using electronic devices, Adjustment to Vision Loss courses and even the cooking and crafts classes.



Lighthouse Instructor Maddy Spencer taught her it's OK to use a "Red and White Mobility Assist Device" (White Cane), and not worry about what other people think. "It's how you navigate and not run into things. It goes in front of you and feels the road and the floor so you're not tripping over something. It makes you more aware, safer," Marty said. Zena, her 4-year-old cat, knows to stay out of the way when Marty is using the white cane.

Marty says a big part of her experience with Lighthouse is, "Knowing that you're not alone. There's other people out there, more than you think, that have eye problems." She noticed another individual in class, who was quilting, though she was almost totally blind. Marty was curious how she was able to continue quilting after losing her eyesight and the woman responded that she still uses her fingers the same way she did before losing her vision. This motivated Marty to start knitting again, something she stopped after having cataract surgery.

Marty's advice to anyone with vision loss is, "Go to the Lighthouse. Call them immediately, don't wait. Don't stop doing everything. I still make cookies, I still knit. Let your family help but don't let them be overprotective."

Seeing Beyond Reflection

Everyone has a story, and our clients tell how each moved past vision loss with Lighthouse training. Seeing Beyond Reflection is a new feature on our website. Read their stories now.

<https://lighthouseeducationcenter.org/programs/seeing-beyond-reflection/>

Seeing Beyond Reflection

Stories of Hope, Empowerment and Independence

Ray Reinvents Himself



Ray was a professional and had it all until his eyesight began to fail him. After being introduced to Lighthouse, Ray has a whole new career.

[Click here to read or watch Ray's story.](#)

Michael Keeps Pushing



When Michael was diagnosed with Stargard's disease at a young age, he maintained a normal life and let nothing stop him from moving forward.

[Click here to read or watch Michael's story.](#)

Millie Lives "Her Best Life"



Imagine being only four years old and losing your eyesight. That was Millie's world, but perseverance and her love for life is on full display.

[Click here to read or watch Millie's story.](#)

It's March Madness at the Lighthouse!



ZOOM to WIN!

Attend daily online Zoom sessions and receive one entry for each session. A random drawing will be held at the end of the month for great Lighthouse prizes to assist you in living with a visual impairment.

The more you attend, the more chances you have to win! Prizes will be announced later in the month.

Nicole Mobley joins Scholarship Committee



Lighthouse Development Associate Nicole Mobley has joined **The Community Foundation of Sarasota County Scholarship Committee**. The Foundation partners with volunteers from the community to review scholarship applications which awards approximately \$2 million each year to the next generation of leaders shaping the community. <https://www.cfsarasota.org/students/scholarship-opportunities>

Scholarships are available to all students pursuing higher education and designed to satisfy a wide variety of academic interests

and fields. Scholarship applications are divided between students under 24 years of age and students 24 years of age or older.



Lighthouse Teens' Cooking Club

The teens in our Young Adults Program made Oreo Icebox Cakes together, via Zoom. In a previous session, they chose a recipe.

Participants were tasked with looking up the ingredients on the Walmart website and calculating the cost, including tax.

Lighthouse sent gift cards to each to purchase the items with their families.

Everyone said it was delicious they would definitely make it again.

We discussed:

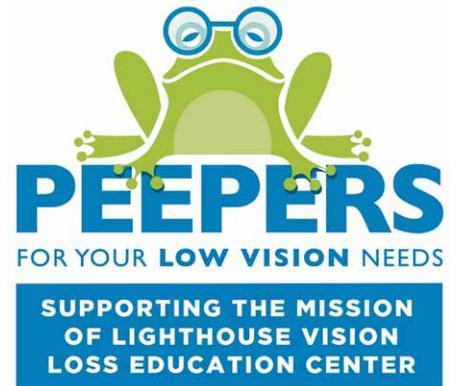
- Gathering all materials prior to cooking
- Washing your hands for safe food handling
- Techniques for measuring liquids and solids
- How to label measuring cups for better visibility
- Using color contrast when measuring and mixing for better visibility
- How to identify peaks when whipping liquid ingredients



Peepers Online Store March Special



LED Pocket Light
Now 20% off
March 1 - 31 only!

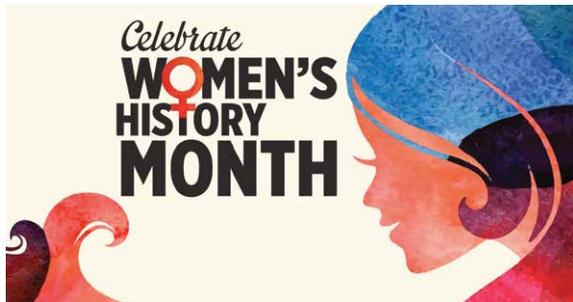


[Shop Peepers Online](#)

An LED light bar outputs 170 lumens of intense light. The magnetic clip gives you convenient hands-free lighting by attaching to virtually anything. The reinforced plastic body design is water and impact-resistant, making this light basically indestructible. 3 AAA batteries included.

- Bright, uniform LED light
- Makes it easier to see with low vision, particularly Macular Degeneration.
- Light up objects and labels in low-light environments.

March is Women's History Month



March is Women's History Month, celebrating contributions women have made and the achievements of women throughout American history.

<https://womenshistorymonth.gov/about/>

Women encompass 73 percent of all nonprofit employees nationally. In the CEO job, 45 percent are female. At Lighthouse, 77% of our small but highly

professional full time staff are women, including our CEO.

<https://lighthouseeducationcenter.org/our-team/>

March is Workplace Eye Wellness Month

Each year, nearly 25,000 Americans visit the emergency room due to a workplace eye injury. Workplaces with machinery, power tools and chemical exposure have long required protective eye goggles.

There is a newer threat to eye wellness, the computer or laptop screen staring you right

in the face. Hours of desktop work can bring eyestrain, headaches and temporarily blurred vision. A pair of prescription computer glasses lets you read without strain and blocks UV light.

In order to keep your eyes fresh follow the simple **20/20/20** rule. For every **20** minutes of looking at something in the near to intermediate range you should spend at least **20** seconds focusing on something at least **20** feet away. This really works.



Braille Bunny



[Available on Etsy](#)

This Braille Easter card is for the young and young at heart! The card is made of Kraft Paper and comes with a coordinating envelope.

The front of the card reads: Happy Easter! The inside of the card reads: Somebunny Loves You!

When you pull down on the tab with the fluffy bunny tail and the word "pull" in Braille on it, you're in for a surprise! Your white paper bunny ears will pop up and out of the braille card!

Transcriber included for our sighted friends!

Maddy Spencer is the owner of Feelmydots, an Etsy shop for Braille enthusiasts and customized cards. She is the Rehabilitation Manager for the Independent Living Program at Lighthouse.

[Feel My Dots on Facebook](#)

A State of Vision License Plate Supports Lighthouse

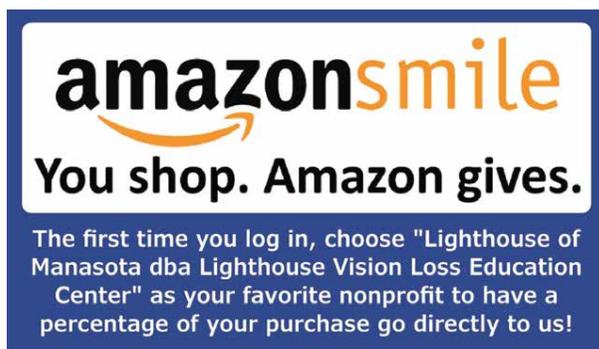
Support the blind and visually impaired community regain independence by purchasing "A State of Vision" license plate when you renew your auto tag. Funds from the sale of "A State of Vision" license plates are distributed to Florida Agencies Serving the Blind, Inc., which funds direct-support services to blind and visually impaired people. Specialty tag gift certificates are also available.



This license plate is a reminder of our mission of hope and empowerment for the vision impaired. The Florida-inspired colors will also look great on your car! Information is on our website:

<https://myfloridaspecialtyplate.com/a-state-of-vision.html>. Purchase yours today!

Keep On Smiling, at Amazon



When you sign up online with Smile.Amazon.com, the company will donate a percentage of your sales to Lighthouse. It doesn't cost a penny more, and the shopping experience is the same. The first time you log in, choose "Lighthouse of Manasota dba Lighthouse Vision Loss Education Center," as your favorite nonprofit to receive a portion of the funds. Once you sign up, every time you order from Amazon, a portion of the sales will go directly to Lighthouse. Thank you!

Make an Impact Today and Join our Monthly Giving Sustainers Club!

Our **Sustainers Club** is a monthly giving program with 100% of every dollar going directly toward changing the lives of those living with vision loss. Our programs are NO COST to our clients and teaches them daily living skills, mobility training, job readiness, technology training, self-sufficiency and so much more. As a member of our **Sustainers Club, you can be assured that your gift each month will provide hope, empowerment and independence to those we serve.**

Why Giving Monthly Matters:

- It fits your budget
- It plans for the future
- It builds our community
- It's easy, flexible and effective
- It supports the blind and visually impaired!



OUR MISSION: To educate and empower those affected by vision loss so they may enjoy happy, healthy and independent lives

[DONATE](#)

Connect With Us!

www.LighthouseEducationCenter.org | info@LighthouseEducationCenter.org

941-359-1404



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