



LIGHTHOUSE
FOR BLINDNESS & VISION LOSS
OF COLLIER COUNTY

April 2026 Newsletter

BREAKING NEWS!
Thank you Naples Children Foundation



Lighthouse of Collier officially bought a van for its Children's Program! LOC CEO Robin Goldstone Garcia signed all the paperwork and drove the van off the lot at Tamiami Ford on April 20. The picture shows LOC Fund Development & PR Manager Victoria Scott, Teacher of the Visually Impaired Kayla Butler, Robin, and Tamiami Ford Product Specialist Mike Castle smiling for a photo with the van. We want to give a BIG thank you to the Naples Children Foundation for making this all possible! The van will ease transportation struggles for kids and their families. It will also make it easier on our staff who had to rely on rental vans in the past to drive students to different activities. We still need to get the van wrapped with the LOC and NCF logos. Stay tuned for the final look!

***Blind Inspirations* podcast**

LOC staff member Rick Hart encourages everyone to watch *Blind Inspirations* on YouTube. It's about a man named Bobby Carr who shares his personal story on living with vision loss. His second episode

addresses the "spotlight effect." People who are blind and visually impaired may feel like everyone is watching and judging them due to their disability. Carr encourages people to change their mindset. Most people are thinking about themselves. He says, "I may be the mirror that will inspire somebody else." You can watch his second episode by clicking on this [link](#).

ILS classes this month



LOC Program Director Kerry Birchall shows a client how to safely cut lettuce.



Kerry shows another client how to safely cut a tomato.



The photo on the left shows LOC client Beverly smiling as she cuts lettuce. Her husband Steve smiles at the camera while standing next to her. The photo on the right shows a group of clients chopping items on cutting boards.



Thank you to our amazing Program Director Kerry Birchall for stepping in to teach a couple of our ILS classes this month. Clients learned how to make sandwiches and yogurt parfaits. They also chopped their own vegetables and fruit. Opportunities like these give people who are blind and visually impaired the ability to prepare food safely on their own. Thank you for our wonderful CEO Robin Goldstone Garcia for taking the great shots!

Tuesday Talks



Clients filled the room during this month's Tuesday Talks session featuring low vision optometrist Dr. Nicole Patterson. She discussed all aspects of a typical low vision examination and explained how it can help patients maximize the use of their remaining functional vision. The room was so packed that some clients had to sit in the hallway!



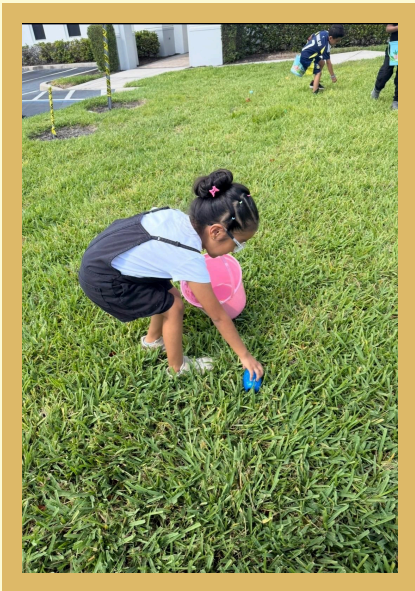
Dr. Patterson is an educator and nonprofit leader with more than 20 years of clinical, academic, and administrative experience. She is dedicated to supporting individuals with visual impairments through evidence-based care, organizational leadership, and community service.

Overview of this month's Children's Program activities

Students in our Children's Program had a blast participating in our auditory Easter Egg Hunt on April 18. We want to give a BIG thank you to the International Association of Bomb Technicians and Investigators (IABTI) for providing us with the eggs. We also want to thank Sgt. Anthony Perfetto with the Collier County Sheriff's Office Bomb Squad for making the connection with IABTI and covering the shipping costs for us. We are so grateful for our community partners who step up when we need them most!



Robin and Sgt. Perfetto smile for a photo with the auditory eggs.

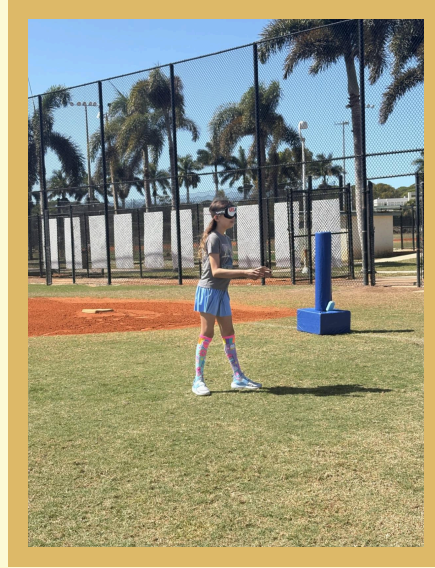


A young girl picks up a blue auditory egg lying on the grass.



Young children carry plastic buckets as they search for eggs on the ground.





Ella is a 10-year-old student with low vision. She has been with Lighthouse of Collier for about a year and participated in our summer camp program. She also regularly attends group activities. Here is her family's testimonial:

"Lighthouse of Collier has been an invaluable part of our family's journey with low vision. From the start, the staff has been welcoming, knowledgeable, and incredibly supportive by helping us understand how its programs can meet Ella's needs and build her confidence.

Some of Ella's favorite experiences have been through Lighthouse programs, including spending time with a seeing eye dog and learning how service dogs assist people with low vision. She also loved Lighthouse's summer camp - especially Fridays at the pool. As Ella says, "Who wouldn't want to go swimming on Fridays during the summer?" Swimming with other children with low vision helped her feel safe and confident, and the staff made sure the experience was both fun and empowering.

We're also grateful for the field trips offered on days when school is out. Ella's favorite activity was visiting IMAG with her friends. Museums can be challenging due to lighting, stairs, and crowds. However, participating with Lighthouse helped Ella practice skills that now make museum visits easier for our family.

As parents, Lighthouse programs like the Vision Fair have helped us learn about available technology and tools so we can make informed decisions in Ella's best interest. Knowing we can turn to Lighthouse staff with questions and receive thoughtful guidance has made a meaningful difference for our entire family."

The three photos from left to right include Ella smiling on a field trip, playing beeper baseball, and doing an arts & crafts project.

Outreach events this month



Members of the Delta Gamma Chapter at FGCU invited Lighthouse of Collier Fund Development & Public Relations Manager Victoria Scott and Teacher of the Visually Impaired Dani Gonzalez to their event on April 8. Victoria gave a detailed presentation and showed a video that demonstrates our positive impact on the community. Dani gave a sighted-guide training after the presentation.

Delta Gamma's philanthropy is centered around Service for Sight. It focuses on helping people who are blind and visually impaired through volunteering, fundraising, and advocacy. The FGCU chapter will donate a percentage of their fundraising profits from the event to LOC. We're so grateful for their support!



Victoria and LOC Program & Client Services Coordinator Cindy Eddy attended the annual Arthrex Volunteer Fair in Naples this month. Around 100 employees stopped today to learn more about our organization. Nearly everyone we spoke to did not know Lighthouse of Collier existed. It was a great opportunity to talk about our mission and showcase different volunteer opportunities to people. We hope to see Arthrex employees at future events. Every staff member gets eight hours of Volunteer PTO every year. Thanks for having us, Arthrex!

Florida Low Vision Initiative stopped by Lighthouse of Collier



Members of the Florida Low Vision Initiative (FLVI) from Tallahassee held a meeting at LOC with Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments (TSVIs) from Lee and Collier Counties to discuss how to better help students from Pre-K to 8th Grade. LOC and FLVI are two separate entities. However, the meeting served as an opportunity to hear

FLVI brochures were distributed at the meeting. You can call 850-739-FLVI (3584) or email kmroberts@fsu.edu for more information.

different insights on how to improve the lives of children living with vision loss.

Bride to Be!

Lighthouse of Collier staff threw a bridal shower for Bride-to-Be Victoria Scott April 13! Victoria is getting married next month in Naples. Cindy Eddy worked hard to put it all together for her. She brought homemade raspberry French toast, bacon, quiches, yogurt, granola, and fruit to the office. Victoria opened gifts and read a card staff members signed for her. It was a great way to celebrate Victoria's big day!



Victoria read a sweet card her coworkers signed for her.



Cindy put delicious brunch items on a table. She also decorated the wall in the conference room.



The LOC team bought a tiara and sash for her to wear!

Upcoming Lighthouse Events/Announcements

We are ALWAYS looking for new volunteers! Please email cynthia@lighthouseofcollier.org or

**stephany@lighthouseofcollier.org if you're interested in
volunteering at LOC.**

***Check our website for additional details as they become
available.***

Here's to a great May!

Visit our Website



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