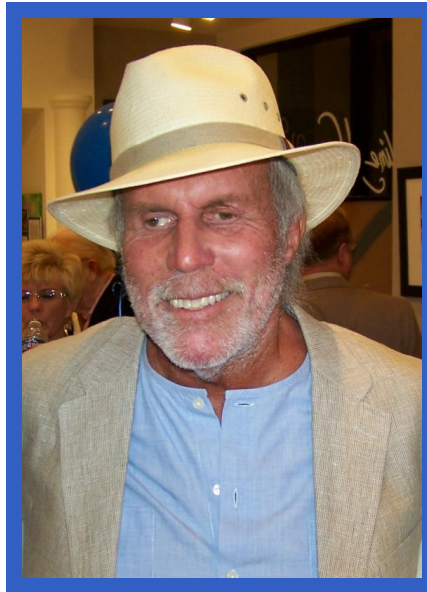


July 2026 Newsletter

Honoring Art Bookbinder's Legacy



The Late Art Bookbinder

Lighthouse of Collier (LOC) is proud to shine a light on Arthur (Art) Bookbinder's legacy and generosity. LOC was recently honored to receive a generous gift of \$427,373.90 through his estate. This meaningful gift truly reflects his lifelong commitment of empowering individuals who are blind and visually impaired.

Art and his wife Sue played an instrumental role in establishing LOC nearly 20 years ago. He understood the many challenges of having vision loss after being diagnosed with Retinitis Pigmentosa in his 30s. Art's diagnosis was a turning point that transformed his personal experiences into a mission driven purpose.

He later became a nationally recognized leader in the low vision technology industry. His professional expertise, combined with his unwavering passion for independence and accessibility, helped to shape Lighthouse of Collier into what it is today.

Art's "word" was generosity. Lighthouse CEO Robin Goldstone Garcia says, "We are so grateful for Art Bookbinder's lasting generosity. He was not only a dedicated supporter of Lighthouse of Collier but was also a true friend and mentor to our team. His belief in our work lives on through this gift, which will help ensure that individuals in Collier County who are blind and visually impaired receive the vital services and support they need."

The Lighthouse family is profoundly grateful to Art and Sue Bookbinder for the lasting impact they made on our organization and on the countless individuals whose lives they touched.

Art ultimately lost all his vision, but his character and kindness towards others never wavered. He won several awards including the Against All Odds, Overcoming Obstacles Award from Collier County Commissioners in 2018. LOC is a living testament to Art's dedication to our mission. His legacy is reflected in every child attending summer camp, every adult mastering assistive technology, and every senior regaining confidence in daily living.

Although Art passed away in 2020 and Sue earlier this year, their commitment to Lighthouse of Collier continues through this extraordinary gift and the lives it will impact for years to come. The Board of Directors will thoughtfully determine how these funds can best advance our mission and serve future generations of individuals who are blind or visually impaired.

Those inspired by Art and Sue's lifelong commitment to Lighthouse of Collier may make a gift to the Arthur Bookbinder Fund or directly to Lighthouse of Collier to help continue the work they cared so deeply about.

This remarkable legacy was recently featured in Gulfshore Business. Click below to read the full story.

[Lighthouse of Collier receives \\$427K estate gift | GB Daily | gulfshorebusiness.com](#)

A Partnership That Makes a Difference

This month, Lighthouse of Collier welcomed a generous furniture donation from Bascom Palmer Eye Institute Naples that has beautifully refreshed our spaces in our lobby, conference room, and multipurpose room.

The updated furnishings have already made our facility feel warmer, more accessible, and better equipped to support the many classes, support groups, and events that take place throughout the year.

The project was made possible through the collaboration of Dr. Richard Peterman, his wife and Lighthouse of Collier staff member, Cynthia Eddy, and the dedicated Bascom Palmer team. Employees, nurses, Lighthouse staff, clients, and volunteers all pitched in to move and arrange the furniture. They

made this big move in the Florida heat with smiles on their faces, too! Their actions demonstrate their selflessness and commitment to improving the lives of people with vision loss in our community, turning what could have been an ordinary delivery into a true community effort.

While the furniture itself has enhanced our spaces, the partnership behind it is what matters most. Bascom Palmer Eye Institute continues to be a valued community partner by connecting individuals with vision loss to Lighthouse of Collier where they receive the rehabilitation services, training, and support they need to live independently.

We are so grateful for Bascom Palmer's generosity and for everyone who contributed their time and energy to this project. The renewed spaces at our facility will serve the community for years to come. Every conversation, class, and new connection that happens here reflects what is possible when organizations work together to make a difference.



Dr. Richard Peterman, Alex Machado, and Angel Madera smile in the Bascom Palmer lobby as they prepare to load heavy furniture onto a U-Haul truck.



Lighthouse of Collier client and dedicated volunteer, Jose, played a key role in the move by carefully organizing and securing the donated furniture inside the truck as it was loaded.



LOC Assistive Technology Instructor Sead Bekric carries a chair into our facility.



The donated furniture is already making a difference by providing a welcoming space for people to connect, learn, and participate in Lighthouse programs.



Kids and volunteers enjoy the new furniture while working on a summer art project in the multipurpose room.

It's a *Wrap*!

Our Children's Van is Getting a New Look

Thanks to the extraordinary support of the Naples Children's Foundation (NCF), Lighthouse of Collier's Children's Program now has a dedicated van to serve children and families throughout our community. NCF approved a grant that enabled LOC to purchase the van for our Children's Program. We are proud to partner with NCF as we work together to empower children with vision loss and provide life-changing programs and services for their families.

Our Children's Program van is about to hit the road with a fresh new look! The custom vehicle wrap has been designed to celebrate the children and families we serve while increasing awareness of Lighthouse of Collier throughout our community. The design features four children engaged in activities that reflect independence and confidence. One child is walking with a guide dog, another is reading Braille, and two children are using white canes.

The inspiring message, "*Empowering Children with Vision Loss*," appears on both sides of the van, alongside the Lighthouse of Collier logo and the NCF Blueprint Partner logo. The back of the van includes our phone number displayed within an eye chart graphic, along with a QR code that makes it easy for community members to visit our website and learn more about our programs and services. The image below is a preview of the finished design. We are excited to see the completed wrap on the road where it will proudly serve as a traveling symbol of the partnership between Lighthouse of Collier and NCF.



July Marks Eye Injury Prevention Month

Eye Injury Prevention Month serves as an important reminder that many vision-threatening injuries can be avoided with simple safety precautions. According to

the American Academy of Ophthalmology, approximately one million eye injuries occur each year in the United States, and an estimated 90% are preventable.

Whether you're working on a home improvement project, using power tools, handling household chemicals, or participating in recreational activities, wearing appropriate protective eyewear and following safety instructions can significantly reduce your risk of an eye injury.

All of us at Lighthouse of Collier understand how vision loss can change your life. While our mission is to empower individuals who are blind and visually impaired to live independently, we also believe that protecting the vision you have is just as important. In honor of Eye Injury Prevention Month, take a few extra moments to safeguard your sight because prevention is one of the best ways to preserve your independence.

Blind Inspirations Podcast

Lighthouse of Collier Assistant Director of Client Empowerment & Program Services Rick Hart recommends the YouTube series *Blind Inspirations*, created by Bobby Carr. Through personal stories and practical insights, Bobby shares his experiences living with vision loss and offers encouragement to others navigating similar challenges.

In Episode 5, Bobby discusses inattentional blindness—a phenomenon in which people fail to notice something that is clearly visible because their attention is focused elsewhere. He explains how this concept can affect everyday life and offers a simple but valuable reminder: when you become overwhelmed or frustrated, pause, take a few deep breaths, refocus, and try again.

Whether you are living with vision loss, supporting a loved one, or simply interested in learning more, *Blind Inspirations* offers thoughtful perspectives and practical strategies for everyday life. You can watch Episode 5 by clicking on this [link](#).

Exploring New Technology for the Blind and Visually Impaired



Patriot Vision Industries Representative Haley Lan stopped by LOC to show staff how to use different devices. She helped Rick Hart strap on the Patriot Viewpoint.



CEO Robin Goldstone Garcia tries the Patriot Viewpoint while Assistive Technology Specialist Sead Bekric looks on during a hands-on demonstration. The device features 1x-22x+ magnification, new enhanced voice commands, and 11 high contrast, color modes.

Getting Crafty for the Fourth of July!

Lighthouse of Collier clients celebrated our nation's 250th birthday by creating festive Fourth of July decorations that brightened our lobby.

They transformed everyday materials into colorful decorative firecrackers using recycled toilet paper rolls, paint, tissue paper, stickers, and glitter. They also hand-painted wooden stars to add an even more patriotic flair to the display. The completed decorations were proudly displayed throughout the lobby, creating a cheerful and welcoming space for all to enjoy throughout the month of July.

This activity encouraged creativity, self-expression, and the use of tactile techniques while giving clients the satisfaction of contributing something meaningful to our environment.



Lighthouse clients decorate colorful firecrackers for our lobby. Volunteer



Lighthouse clients Charlie and Jose proudly create patriotic decorations with

Melody Bales offered a helping hand when needed.

guidance from art instructor Cindy Eddy during the weekly art class.



Lighthouse camper Cindy proudly displays the American Flag she created during arts & crafts, using paint and gold stars to add her own creative touch!

Children's Summer Camp

Stepping Into the Spotlight

Lighthouse of Collier's Children's Summer Camp continued to provide campers with meaningful opportunities to learn, explore, and build confidence through hands-on experiences in the community.

One camp highlight was a visit to the Community School of Naples where Naples Performing Arts Center staff welcomed campers behind the scenes to explore the world of theater. Students had the opportunity to touch and try on costume pieces and stage props before stepping onto the stage to experience what it feels like to perform in a theater setting.

Campers also enjoyed a special visit with The Naples Players crew, who introduced theater activities that encouraged creativity and imagination. We extend our sincere thanks to the Community School of Naples, the NPAC staff, and The Naples Players for helping create memorable experiences that inspired learning and fun throughout the summer.



Campers experience the magic of live theater as stage effects, including a fog machine, bring the performance to life.



Campers Ella and Layla enjoy explore the stage during their behind-the-scenes visit to the Community School of Naples.



The Naples Performing Arts Center brought theatrical props and costumes for our students to explore. Campers used tactile exploration during this activity.



Campers strengthened their orientation and mobility skills with guidance from dedicated volunteers throughout the day's activities.



Camper Erik expresses his creativity during one of the many hands-on art activities offered at summer camp.

Shining a Light on July's Client Success



LOC client Jo Epperson

Lighthouse of Collier staff members share a monthly story of a client whose determination and accomplishments inspire us all. This month, Teacher of the Visually Impaired, Dani Gonzalez, spotlights her client, Jo Epperson.

At 91 years young, Jo is a shining example that determination and a positive attitude can overcome many challenges. Despite living with low vision, Jo refuses to let her visual impairment define her or limit her independence. She continues to take charge of her daily life by making her own appointments, scheduling transportation, and staying connected with friends and loved ones.

Recently, Jo embraced learning new technology by taking it upon herself to master the Meta Smart Glasses. Her enthusiasm for learning and adapting has truly been inspiring. Jo enjoys using the glasses to read restaurant menus, access printed information, and ask informational questions that keep her mind active and engaged.

Since discovering the benefits of the Meta Smart Glasses, Jo has become an advocate within her community. She eagerly shares her experiences with others and never misses an opportunity to let someone try the glasses for themselves. Her willingness to encourage others and promote independence through assistive technology has touched many lives.

Jo reminds all of us that age and vision loss do not have to be barriers to living a full and independent life. Her resilience, curiosity, and commitment to maintaining her independence make her a truly deserving Client of the Month.

Community Outreach in Action



Lighthouse of Collier Fund Development & Public Relations Manager Victoria Scott Saphia highlights the organization's mission and life-changing services during a presentation to the Bonita Springs Rotary Club.

*Please contact Victoria at victoria@lighthouseofcollier.org if you're interested in adding Lighthouse of Collier to your speaker's list.

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.

Bobby Carr is starting a new adaptive fitness lab in August. His first class is already filled. We'll keep you posted on the next available class!

WINK Meteorologist Oceana Hayden is next month's Tuesday Talks speaker. She will give a presentation on hurricane preparedness.

Check our website for additional details as they become available. Activities can be found [here](#).

We hope you had a wonderful Fourth of July! Thank you for being a part of the Lighthouse of Collier family. Stay cool, stay safe, and enjoy the rest of your summer!



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