



LIGHTHOUSE
FOR BLINDNESS & VISION LOSS
OF COLLIER COUNTY

June 2026 Newsletter

Florida Legislative Offices visit LOC

Staff members who represent the offices of FL Senator Kathleen Passidomo, House Representative Lauren Melo, and House Representative Yvette Benarroch visited Lighthouse of Collier to learn more about the essential services we provide to individuals who are blind and visually impaired. They toured our center and explored adaptive technology tools, aids, and appliances.

Their visit to LOC and their on-going support is a testament to how state support strengthens independence, access, and the quality of life of everyone we serve. We are so grateful for them!



Jorge Rodriguez with Rep. Melo's office, Zoraida Druckman with Sen. Passidomo's office, and Shavontae Dominique with Rep. Benarroch's office visited LOC this month.



Jorge volunteered to participate in our ILS class. Clients used their sensory skills to identify different articles of clothing.

**A BIG THANK YOU to
Bascom Palmer Eye Institute!**



The nurses at Bascom Palmer in Naples smile next to the donations they collected for our Children's Summer Camp.

We want to give a HUGE thank you to all the amazing nurses at Bascom Palmer Eye Institute in Naples! They kindly donated water and snacks to our Children's Summer Camp. We are so appreciative of their support!

Witnessing our VR Program in action



LOC VR client Maria takes down notes while running our receptionist desk.

LOC VR client Maria volunteered to run the front desk when our receptionist Maggie was out of the office. She answered phones, greeted guests, and performed administrative tasks with confidence and professionalism. These types of opportunities are meaningful experiences that not only build confidence but also give people a strong sense of purpose. Thanks for all your hard work, Maria!

June 8-14 marked Vision Rehabilitation Week

Vision Rehabilitation Week is an annual awareness campaign that highlights life-changing services for the millions of individuals living with vision loss in the U.S.

Vision rehabilitation services, like the ones offered at Lighthouse of Collier, dramatically increase confidence, safety, and independence. Our programs give children and adults with vision loss the skills, confidence, and support they need to thrive in the community. Educating the public about our services, mission, and overall impact on the community is vital to ensure no one faces vision loss alone.

If you're interested in learning more about our services or would like us to present to a group, please contact Victoria at 239-430-3934. We're always happy to talk about our services and the lives we impact every day!

***Blind Inspirations* podcast**

LOC Assistant Director and Counselor 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 fourth episode addresses his perspective using VoiceOver.

Carr admits he didn't like using it and wanted to avoid learning it altogether. However, he says Rick changed his perspective after watching him use it effortlessly.

Carr now uses VoiceOver every day. You can watch his fourth episode by clicking on this [link](#).

June is Cataract Awareness and Fireworks Safety Month

Cataract Awareness and Firework Safety Month is a good reminder of how important it is to protect our eyes at any age. A cataract is a clouding of the eye's natural lens. The lens is located behind the pupil and acts like a camera to focus light onto the retina. A cataract makes vision appear foggy, blurry, or faded. Symptoms include seeing a halo around lights, seeing double, and having to change your glasses or contact lens prescription often. Aging, trauma, and medical conditions like diabetes can cause them. The National Eye Institute reports more than 50 percent of Americans who are 80+ either have cataracts or underwent surgery to remove them. You can prevent cataracts by protecting your eyes from the sun, making eye-healthy food choices, and avoiding smoking.

June also highlights the importance of firework safety. Always wear safety goggles when handling fireworks, stand at least 500 feet away from the launch spot, and keep water nearby. Never try to light a firework if it fails to work the first time. Immediately dispose of it. For a worry-free holiday celebration, opt to see a professional fireworks display. They are not only safer and more exciting, but they are also far less risky for you and your precious eyes.

Overview of this month's

Transition Program activities

Five students in our Transition Program went to a STEM Camp in Orlando! They participated in a Universal Studios Sponsored Educational Program called “Jurassic World VelociCoaster: Breaking Down the DNA.”

Students uncovered the collaborative world of ride design. They learned about the different materials used in ride development. They also had verbal explanations of visual concepts and used large-print, braille/digital formats that were compatible with screen readers.

This amazing opportunity promoted socialization by interacting with others. It also got our students out of their comfort zones. A couple of program objectives included exploring academic and professional interests connected to themed entertainment and explaining the importance of how research influences decision making. The trip supported equitable access, fostered independence, and reinforced the message that innovation thrives when diverse perspectives are intentionally included.

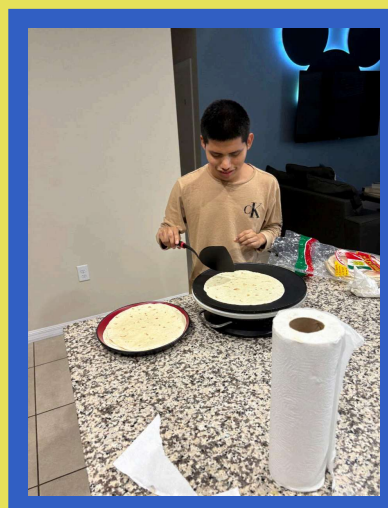
Students also participated in a cooking lesson, went on a college tour at Valencia College, and participated in a hands-on group engineering lab that focused on shore erosion.



Teacher of the Visually Impaired (TVI) Kayla Butler snapped a quick photo with her students and TVI Jason Shaffer after arriving in Orlando.



LOC Transition student Andrew works on a STEM circuit.



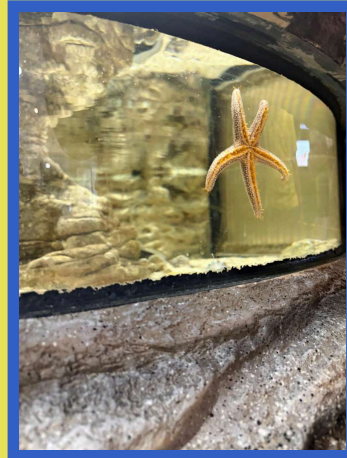
LOC Transition student Calli stands in front of the iconic Universal Studios sign.

LOC Transition student Rubelio heats tortillas on a kitchen counter.

Rookery Bay Retreat



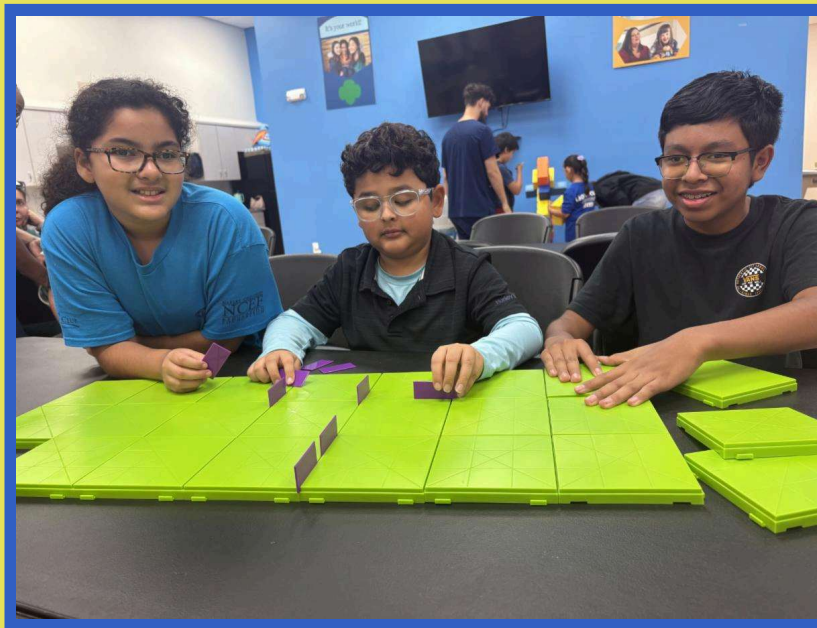
Students in our Children's Program had a blast at Rookery Bay. They learned about different marine life at the Estuary Encounter Touch Tank. They saw a sea star, spider crab, and lightning whelk! Students used their sensory skills during this activity.



A starfish is using its tube feet to stick to a glass wall inside the tank.

Children's Summer Camp is officially underway

Summer Camp is in full swing! Campers did a number of interactive activities at the Girl Scout House on their first day of camp. They will also visit the Naples Regional Library, go to River Park Aquatic Center, touch props at the Naples Performing Arts Center, and see *Annie* at The Naples Players. All these activities incorporate orientation and mobility skills that promote independence and increase confidence. Thank you to our amazing staff, volunteers, and the Naples Children Foundation for making this all possible!



LOC campers Destiny, Eric, and Christopher worked together to assemble a green puzzle. Nice teamwork, guys!



LOC camper Ezra is working on a STEM project.



Christopher, Cindy, and a volunteer made their own lunches.

Client success story this month

Meet Bobby Carr



Here is a behind-the-scenes shot of Bobby working on his podcast, *Blind Inspirations*.



Here is a behind-the-scenes shot of Bobby working on his podcast, *Blind Inspirations*.

LOC staff members are assigned a specific month to highlight a client in our newsletter. Rick was assigned the month of June and selected Bobby Carr.

"Don't hurt your good eye, and look these people up."

Those were the words Bobby Carr heard from his doctor at Bascom Palmer as he was handed a brochure for Lighthouse of Collier. Bobby wasn't sure what to think. He was still working, staying active, and trying to adapt to the changes caused by Usher Syndrome Type III, a progressive condition affecting both vision and hearing.

Like many people facing vision loss, Bobby initially believed he could handle everything on his own. However, he eventually reached out to LOC when daily tasks became more challenging. That decision became a turning point in his journey.

Bobby gained access to assistive technology, support groups, training, and a community of people who understood the challenges of vision loss. These experiences helped him develop new skills, maintain his independence, and build confidence for the future.

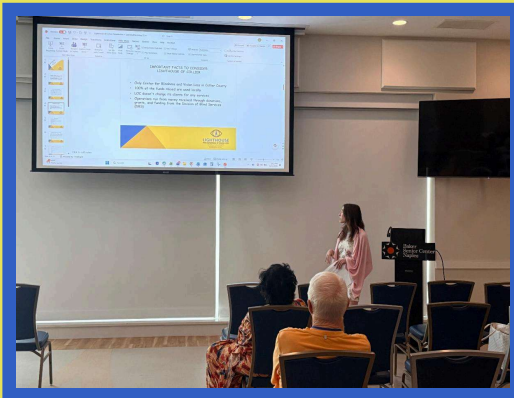
Today, Bobby uses those experiences to help others. Through his YouTube channel, *Blind Inspirations*, he shares practical strategies, personal stories, and encouragement for individuals living with blindness and low vision. His

goal is to show others that while vision loss may change the path, it does not end the journey.

Bobby believes that Usher Syndrome is something he lives with - not something that defines him. He continues to embrace new challenges, learn new skills, and inspire others to move forward with hope, resilience, and purpose.

Outreach events this month

LOC Fund Development and Public Relations Manager Victoria Scott Saphia and low-vision optometrist Dr. Nicole Patterson presented at Baker Senior Center on June 11. Residents got a unique perspective on our mission, history, and services. Dr. Patterson gave an educational overview of different eye conditions. Thank you for your valuable time and insight, Dr. Patterson!



Victoria gave a detailed presentation on our history, mission, and services.



Dr. Patterson spoke in great detail about different eye conditions, eye health, and more! She also answered questions.

Signing off on a high note



We *finally* captured a photo of these two! LOC Receptionist Maggie Saldana occasionally comes into contact with an Amazon driver who can't speak. The driver uses a tapping sound to let Maggie know he's at the front desk. Their ability to communicate with one another despite their disabilities highlights

the adaptability of human connection. Anything is possible if we simply give each other a chance to be seen and heard!

Upcoming Lighthouse Events/Announcements

**Summer Camp runs from
June 22 thru July 17, M-F from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
No Summer Camp July 3 in observance of the July 4 holiday.**

**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.***

Have a great Fourth of July! Here's to America 250!

Visit our Website



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