

Welcome to Our May Edition of Good News You Can Use from the Dallas Lighthouse for the Blind.

I'm Blake Lindsay, Manager of Communications. As a broadcaster who has been totally blind since infancy, I am genuinely delighted to bring you monthly motivation, education, and entertainment focused on inspiring and supporting people with visual impairment. Throughout the past 13 months, we have focused on useful assistive technology news, along with educational opportunities supporting proper preparation. The Dallas Lighthouse team believes it is imperative that we educate our sighted community on this technological progress and show what people with low or no sight can accomplish.

We will continue to share success stories in this realm to help initiate additional employment and educational opportunities for those who are blind or visually impaired. Professional development stories through our newsletters are designed to encourage us to do our part in making more helpful things happen for each other.

DLB's Good News You Can Use also brings you updates on Dallas Lighthouse expansion projects, special activities to get you engaged, employment opportunities, and services for people

with visual impairment within our 11-county, 7,600 square mile North Texas territory.

Thank you for subscribing to Good News You Can Use. Don't forget to share this newsletter with family and friends!

(Click on the links below in the table of contents, or use your screen reader commands to guide you to specific sections in this Newsletter.)

If you are having trouble navigating the links, please let me know and I will send you the word file as an attachment in an email.

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Inspirational Story of the Month

By Blake Lindsay

At nearly 22-years-old, Michelle Flood Luce lost her sight from diabetes. She was approaching completion of her college years. "I was majoring in speech and drama, already contemplating graduate school because I didn't think I was ready for the real world," she recalls. With noticeably fading sight, Michelle was only 6 credit hours from graduating. She had practically earned her Bachelor of Arts for speech and drama at North Texas State University, now known as UNT.

Even with the distinct challenges following rapid sight loss, Michelle remained determined to finish those last 6 hours of college courses from home. In 1972, personal computers were not affordable for the general public, nor were computers technologically feasible for people with visual impairment. So, through mail correspondence and an accommodating reader for relaying finals, Michelle completed her degree.

Soon, Michelle secured a prosperous 31-year career with AT&T, formerly Southwestern Bell Telephone Company. Prior to obtaining this particular career path, she embraced an opportunity that coincided with the original dream she had worked four years to fulfill. Michelle performed as Helen Keller in "The Miracle Worker" in a downtown Houston Theater. It wasn't long before she returned to part-time acting as a lady who was elderly and blind. In this production, her sight returned as soon as the sun rose.

Michelle managed several responsibilities at AT&T. She was frequently asked to be a speaker through United Way. Michelle promoted the significance of people with impairments contributing to society and paying taxes. She was also featured in advocacy videos.

Today, Michelle is retired and well-respected for maintaining a long-term successful career. She has served on the Dallas Lighthouse for the Blind Board of Directors for about 5 years. She naturally relates with blindness and appreciates the numerous educational and enduring employment opportunities at the DLB for those with visual impairment. “Serving the DLB has been a great learning experience for me,” Michelle says. “My United Way and CWA union work prepared me for advocacy, but I certainly had no experience in hiring and interviewing applicants for the ‘top job.’ I am so relieved and excited that we have such a great team. My 4-plus years have seen change and growth in so many ways. I hope to have 2 more years of the same.”

Michelle senses the benefit from her previous sight. “I remember physical beauty. I remember the sky. I know the colors. I remember things that I can explain and I am very glad to have known those things. Losing my sight was a blessing in disguise to say the very least. I’ve felt things that I never would have before. I read more; I think more; I’m deeper.” We are grateful to Michelle for her expertise, relatability to blindness, and serving on our board of directors.

Check Out the Accommodating Tools in the DLB Store

Lauren Merritt regularly adds beneficial items for people who are legally and totally blind for purchase. Some of the merchandise includes a hand-held CCTV video magnifier, ladies and gentlemen's talking watches, unisex braille watches, Uno, Dominoes, fit-over anti-glare shades (available in amber, gray, and yellow), and readers with powers of 3, 3.5, and 4.

The address is

4306 Capitol Avenue

Dallas, TX 75204

(214) 420-9426

Expanding TV Accessibility for People with Visual Impairment

Finally, it is feasible for a person without sight to navigate and delight in the many services available through cable and satellite TV. Ten years ago, this useful technology would have been nothing more than a magnificent dream. In addition to these tools, we have also been empowered to expand our appreciation

for movies, TV shows, documentaries and more through audio description which explains visual dialogue.

This beneficial service has noticeably increased throughout the past 20 years. Audio description for video helps fill in those “what just happened” voids which average audio cannot always fulfill. American Council of the Blind (ACB), National Federation of the Blind (NFB) and others played a major role in investing the necessary time and effort for urging our legislators to create mandates for audio description which are presently being implemented.

The audio description victory, along with tremendous technology supporting the countless menu options on modern boxes, is one more significant step toward increasing independence for people with visual impairment.

Eric Foreman is totally blind and formerly an Assistive Technology Instructor with the Dallas Lighthouse for the Blind. Microsoft offered Eric a wonderful opportunity to help improve accessibility for users without sight.

He has kept up with advancing technology since childhood. Eric recalls the (not so good old days). “Back when I had my first box with Charter, I was in college. I had to have someone read me the menus. I had to memorize how many times to go up or down and press okay for launching what I wanted.” Eric is optimistic about what has occurred in the past decade on TV accessibility. “Recent technology offers the ability to go through your guide without assistance.”

"This includes setting the DVR and scrolling through "On Demand" programming. We now have access to things we never did before. It is so pleasing that we've finally come to a time where we've got assistive technology integrated into the box."

He mentions it's also becoming more affordable for those who don't have a lot of extra funds at their disposal. Being a regular reader of Good News You Can Use, Eric was eager to offer us accommodating links and contacts for participating providers.

Comcast (Voice Guidance)

<http://corporate.comcast.com/news-information/news-feed/how-to-make-voice-guided-tv-a-reality-with-the-click-of-a-button>

Comcast's Accessibility Support Center for Customers with Disabilities:

Toll-Free: (866) 668-6703

Spectrum (Guide Narration)

<http://www.spectrum.net/support/accessibility/talking-guide-spectrum-guide-support/?domain-redirect=true>

Spectrum Accessibility Line:

Toll-Free: (844) 762-1301

Cox Communications (Contour 2 Voice Guidance)

<http://www.cox.com/residential/support/tv/article.cox?articleId=%7B4e5bf5b0-f281-11e4-5b67-000000000000%7D>

Cox Communications Accessibility Support Line:

Toll-Free: (888) 266-1304

DISH Network Accessibility features

<https://www.dish.com/accessibility/>

Dish network does not have an accessibility line. The basic number for customer service is:

Toll-Free: (800) 333-3474

Direct TV (Talking Guide)

<https://www.att.com/esupport/article.html#!/directv/KM1164910>

Direct TV does not have an accessibility line. The basic number for customer service is:

Toll-Free (800) 531-5000

Thank you, Eric, for developing, embracing and sharing technology. The gift of independence is truly “Good News.”

DLB Training and Employment Opportunity

Dallas Lighthouse for the Blind is seeking vision impaired individuals interested in a Call Center career. We have a 4-week training on call center and advanced computer navigation. Individuals must have computer and assistive technology proficiency. Upcoming classes are being held Monday through Thursday from 8 am to 4:30 pm on the following dates:

May 22 – June 15, 2017

June 19 – July 13, 2017

If interested, please contact Lauren Merritt at

lauren.merritt@dallaslighthouse.org or call

(214) 420-6577

To submit a resume and set up a brief computer assessment, even if you do not have the current computer skills needed, you can get free training from our Assistive Technology (AT) group in a future class.

Your career is waiting!

DFW Spring/Summer Sports for People with Visual Impairment

Andrew Bernet is a True Advocate and Inspiration for the Blind and Beyond. He is currently an O&M instructor, as well as a wellness coach with the Fort Worth Lighthouse for the Blind.

He's an excellent computer user, and he knows how to read and write Braille. Pretty extraordinary for a person who lost his sight just under 8 years ago. "I'm fortunate to have networked with all the right people to prepare me," said Andrew.

His primary hobbies include participation in sports for the blind and visually impaired, like Beep Baseball. Andrew is team captain and is also active in Goalball. He encourages others who are blind to get connected with these sports. Here is Andrew's report for Good News You Can Use.

The Lone Star Roadrunners are getting ready for the 2017 Beep Baseball World Series. This will be a weeklong tournament which happens annually. The tournament this year is being held in West Palm Beach, FL. The dates for the tournament are July 23-30. Practices are held at the Dunlop Sports Center Soccer Fields located in Arlington, TX. The street address for this complex is 1500 NW Green Oaks Blvd. The team is comprised of people from all around the DFW metroplex. Practices are held on Sundays from 3-5pm. If you are interested in finding out more about our team, feel free to contact either Coach Graham Mathenia or Captain Andrew Bernet. We look forward to having you come and check us out!

Graham Mathenia

Coach

lonestar@nbba.org

(817) 705-1520

Andrew Bernet

Captain

lonestar@nbba.org

Beneficial Free Offers

To learn more about self-defense, read AFB VisionAware's new section,

[Dealing with Crime or Domestic Violence As a Person with a Disability.](#)

This section offers advice and resources on

[domestic violence](#), "[sightless self-defense](#)," and how you can [protect yourself from identity theft](#).

Yoga Classes at the Dallas Lighthouse

In an effort to accommodate more DLB employees, our yoga get-together is now on Fridays from 1:15 to 2:15 PM. Join Bruce and others in the auditorium for some exercise and camaraderie. He has participated in Blindfold Yoga, increasing his knowledge on coaching people with visual impairment.

Bruce Boyd is a caring volunteer with a healthy goal. He desires for us to be in good health and good shape. You can count on yoga at the DLB nearly every Friday from 1:15 to 2:15 PM. The Dallas Lighthouse purchased 10 mats and 10 foam yoga blocks for this program, but you are welcome to bring your own, in case the demand is too great. Tipping \$2 per session is encouraged to express our appreciation to Bruce.

Please RSVP with Blake Lindsay if you are interested in joining us.

Call (214) 420-9419

or email Blake at

blake.lindsay@dallaslighthouse.org

DLB's Proposition for Free Fun!

Bring your friends and meet new ones as you join our host Al Rodriguez for Dallas Lighthouse for the Blind's Bingo Night on Friday, May 19.

Look forward to free prizes, free food, and best of all...free fellowship. DLB Bingo is on the third Friday evening of every month from 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM.

We look forward to seeing you there!

A Modern Tool Enhancing Vision for the Visually Impaired

For 40 years, Judy Garrett enjoyed the profession of teaching school. She has dealt with deteriorating vision from macular degeneration over the past 22 years. Cataract surgery offered some relief, but Judy still encountered difficulty reading bills and everyday visual routines.

Claudia Torres working with the Dallas Lighthouse for the Blind's Serving Our Seniors (SOS) program invited Judy to come by and try out a device called seeBoost. "I was anxious to come to the Dallas Lighthouse for the Blind and find a solution for vision loss," Judy recollects. "I was so pleased when I put seeBoost on for the first time. The empowerment I gained was overwhelming. There was a man across the room I wouldn't have been able to see before. I could actually see the red and orange in his shirt."

On January 12, 2017, electro-optical medical device manufacturer Evergaze LLC entered into a five-year agreement with Dallas Lighthouse for the Blind to distribute Evergaze products to its affiliated network of nonprofit organizations nationally. This agreement includes the sale, distribution and customer support for the new seeBoost[®] miniature wearable device that Judy recently benefited from. seeBoost[®] is designed to assist people experiencing vision loss where conventional refractive techniques fail, including loss of vision due to age-related and juvenile macular degeneration (AMD, Stargardt disease), retinitis pigmentosa (RP) and diabetic retinopathy.

"We have collaborated with Dallas Lighthouse during the past year to assist in a number of field trials through their adaptive technology lab as we continue to develop and improve

seeBoost[®],” said Patrick Antaki, president of Evergaze. "We are extremely pleased and honored to be aligned with premiere organizations such as Dallas Lighthouse and their national affiliates who for decades have provided numerous services to people who are blind and vision impaired."

Hugh McElroy, president and CEO of Dallas Lighthouse for the Blind said, "Our decision to support Evergaze with distribution of the seeBoost[®] device was compelling due to the results we witnessed firsthand during product testing and development at our facilities. We also wish to do our part to help other nonprofit organizations across the U.S. to introduce seeBoost[®] to their employees and clients in order to maximize the number of people whose quality of life may be improved by this miniature wearable device.”

”SeeBoost will help me use the little vision I have and make the most of it,” said Judy. “I can clearly see images across the room.”

If you believe this brilliant breakthrough can help improve your view, please contact Lauren Merritt with the Dallas Lighthouse for the Blind (DLB) for important information.

Call (214) 420-6577

Email

Lauren.merritt@dallaslighthouse.org

“I love seeing nature and looking at all the things God has given us. Seeing colors is the most exciting thing of all to me. I missed that when losing my vision,” Judy affirms.

Flying Cars in Only Three Years?

Dallas will be the first U.S. city to use flying cars This isn't a joke—we're serious. Flying cars are literally on the horizon. Uber and the City of Dallas have announced that Dallas will be the first U.S. city to test out the future of transportation. Known as VTOL (vertical takeoff and landing) aircrafts, these new flying cars will transform the Dallas skyline and traffic jams. Called the Elevate Project, Uber has chosen two cities to launch VTOLs in: Dallas and Dubai. Ross Perot Jr.'s development company, Hillwood, will build vertiports for the flying vehicles in “hubs of activity” like Arlington's entertainment district and the American Airlines Center.

Testing will launch in 2020, with five vertiports planned for the city, according to Mark Moore, a NASA engineer working on the Elevate project for Uber. Why Dallas? According to Uber's chief product officer Jeff Holden, Dallas is a perfect launch pad because of its "rich history of aviation," according to the [*Dallas Morning News*](#). In addition, Dallas has been noted for its rapid population growth and the high number of pilots in the area.

Uber sees a future where people commute in flights as short as a blink, with vertical landings everywhere from airports so backyards thanks to Hillwood's vertiports. Though wild with possibilities, there are a lot of obstacles between putting an idea on paper and taking to the sky such as the high cost of operations. Other companies like Google also have their eye on the sky. Move over, Space.

Article Link:

<http://planoprofile.com/2017/04/25/dallas-will-be-the-first-u-s-city-to-use-flying-cars/>

Follow Dallas Lighthouse on Social Media

Discover what's happening at the DLB through our YouTube channel. We are adding interesting interviews and much more.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sVTqHPzOkX8>

If you have not yet liked our [Facebook](#) page, we would appreciate you doing so.

We are also on Twitter (@DallasLighthous) and Instagram (@DallasLighthousefortheBlind)! Follow DLB and share!

Top Access Technology Training for People Who Are Blind or with Low Vision

For those of us who are blind or who have low vision, access Technology has considerably changed our lives. Screen readers, braille displays and screen magnification software became available for our use in the early '90s and continues to be

enhanced. We are able to easily read printed text. The Internet is effortlessly accessed and we can read our mail with camera-equipped devices. These inventions are outstanding solutions for our education. They also provide opportunities for employment for those committed to using access technology. This valuable access technology instruction is offered at the Dallas Lighthouse for the Blind's technology training center.

Keeping up with technology increases our confidence and capabilities, which benefits us by expanding our employment and education opportunities. There are state-approved instructors teaching access technology at the Dallas Lighthouse for the Blind. The fact that these instructors are blind and low vision add to the value of the training, making the instructors relatable to the clients, as well as demonstrating the need to use technology without the option of turning the access technology off for convenience. This puts the client at ease knowing that the instructor knows how the technology works.

In addition to screen readers and screen magnification programs, Dallas Lighthouse technology instructors also teach clients to be competent iOS users making customers proficient with the Apple line of products. iPhones and iPads have built-in accessibility features that persons who are blind and with low vision find useful.

After receiving access technology instruction, people are able to obtain employment in a variety of fields. Access technology instruction gives people the opportunity to receive additional education which opens valuable doors.

Upon the completion of our education, it is always thrilling to observe the transformation that takes place in the lives of students who are blind or with low vision.

Count on the Dallas Lighthouse technology team to help you open life's doors. Learn more about growing your technology skills by calling Marci Duty at (214) 420-9401. Or, email her at Maricela.duty@dallaslighthouse.org

Free Falling with Purpose by Blake Lindsay

As a person who is totally blind, my life has certainly been interesting. I've learned that we all equally have hurdles to hop over in life, whether you have a small disability like blindness, or not. We can learn from one another's life lessons. For the

sake of educational entertainment, or a word I like (edutainment) I hope you too, are sharing your stories.

Several summers ago, my family traveled to Louisville, Kentucky for a five-day vacation. During this trip, seven-year-old Blake experienced the feeling of free falling. Yes, I took to the real high dive. My parents got me all excited reading the brochure of where we were vacationing and about a high diving board. I will never forget counting each step and excitedly reaching the diving board. I centered myself by carefully walking down the board until the tips of my toes were touching the end. Standing 12 feet above the water and completely fearless, I leaped into the air. My body tingled as I sensed my momentum gaining. With great excitement, I made that fearless jump more than a dozen times and certainly didn't realize that my high diving event was getting ready to abruptly end.

The adults and kids that were watching me began to tell me how brave I was for jumping at such a dangerous height. Many stated they would never do what I was doing, and that if I could actually see how high I was on that diving board, that I wouldn't either. They were sowing fear into my life. They thought they were complimenting me, but as I heard how daring it was, doubt and fear completely consumed my thoughts.

So, as I began the much slower climb up the high dive stairs for another flight from the diving board, I became utterly cautious, carefully counting each step on this ladder, which now seemed as tall as Mount Everest. When I finally reached the top, I started to panic as the words of the spectators replayed in my mind. I crept forward on the diving board at a snail's pace. When my toes felt the end where I had so excitedly leaped off before, terror literally took over as I froze on the edge of the board teetering out over the water.

Dad told me not to be afraid and that it was not an option for me to back-down now. He wanted me to face my fear and stand it down, but I was scared. Dad could be kind and stern, and also commanding and stern. Well, this time he commanded me to face this unnecessary fear since I had done it so many times before fright abruptly took a bite from my previous delight. He was simply trying to teach me the power of negative words and how they can cause us to miss out on some exciting episodes of our lives if we allow them to take root. Dad knew that I could make the jump at least one more time. He also knew "God does not give us a spirit of fear, but of love, power, and a sound mind" (I Timothy 1:7).

To give everyone my best effort in proving I was still a big boy, with eyes wide open I finally jumped off, not once, but twice for good measure, following my needlessly fearful experience.

I learned a positive, valuable lesson from this escapade – it's funny how people can infuse fear in others even when there is nothing to be afraid of. This is what my dad was trying to tell me that day by having me continue my jump, as I had enjoyed doing all day long.

Today I appreciate the fact that Dad did not want me to become the victim of the onlookers' unnecessary remarks and the doubt and fear they put into my mind. A few years ago, I also went on a sky dive adventure that you can see and hear by going to

<http://blakelindsay.com/videos/leap-of-faith/>

Do you have an upcoming event you want our readers to know about?

Email or call us with the details so we can share your good news. Would you like to share a personal story? Please email or call me to coordinate a 15-minute interview. Feel free to also

share a significant article about assistive technology or inspiring news and stories related to the blind community. Send us your comments, suggestions, and ideas by emailing

blake.lindsay@dallaslighthouse.org or by calling

(214) 420-9419.

Until next time, Dallas Lighthouse for the Blind encourages you to live your lives to the fullest. Stay tuned for more Good News You Can Use, serving people who are blind, visually impaired, and beyond.

Dallas Lighthouse for the Blind

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