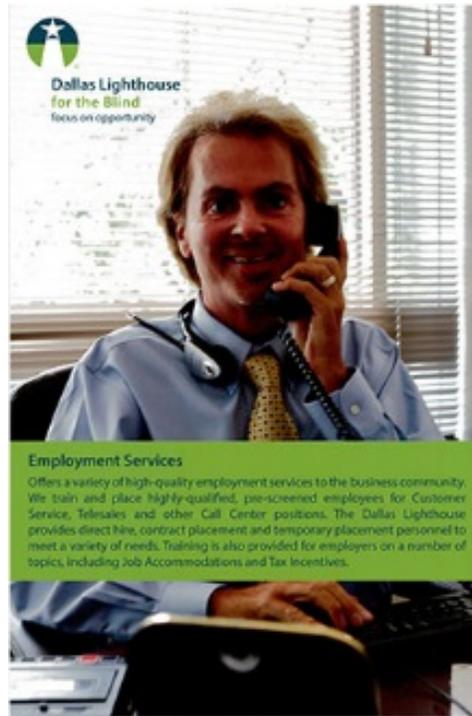


From the Dallas Lighthouse News Desk

By: Dallas Light House for the Blind

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

I'm Blake Lindsay, Manager of Communications. As a longtime presenter, totally blind since infancy, it is truly my desire to bring you monthly motivation, education, and entertainment dedicated to inspiring and supporting people with any level of visual impairment. Throughout the past 19 months, we have updated you on the progress of assistive technology development.

Part of DLB's excellent educational approach is to build up your assistive technology access expertise. The Dallas Lighthouse team

believes it is also valuable to inform the public about current accomplishments from those who are legally blind and totally blind.

We will continue to share your success stories to help initiate additional employment and educational opportunities. The professional development stories through these newsletters regularly inspire and empower us to achieve even more.

DLB's Good News You Can Use 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 large 11-county, 7,600 square mile North Texas territory.

Thank you for subscribing to Good News You Can Use. Please share this valuable information with your 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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**A Special Tribute to a Recently Retired DLB Employee, with
an Incredible 39 Year Career
By Blake Lindsay**

For nearly four decades, Toni Grissom worked with the Dallas Lighthouse for the Blind. She was assigned to our eyeglass cases department. Toni has been an inspiration to the entire DLB team for several reasons. Not only did she take pride in her work each day, but Toni consistently overcame unique hurdles that didn't break her stride to succeed.

Toni is deaf, and has only tunnel vision, restricting her peripheral view. While that would have been enough to halt most people from succeeding in the workplace, she also is challenged with a disorder known as autism.

Toni's mother, Billie, has been an educator for 50 years. Billie has a masters and a PhD in Special Education from Texas Woman's University. At the time, TWU was the only graduate school in North Texas, offering specialized training for teachers to work effectively with uniquely challenged children. Billie was inspired by her special needs daughter to proceed. Up until World War Two, no child with special needs, such as Toni's, was even allowed to go to school.

The only exception was for deaf and blind students, who were all required to enroll in the separate state schools in Austin. "I'm happy that things have improved so much with today's schools

being required to teach special needs children," Billie acknowledges. "They deserve a good future."

As Billie studied through extensive literature, the opportunity to learn specific characteristics of autism was presented. This specialized education enabled Billie to conclude that autism was Toni's condition. Billie was relieved to learn this by the time Toni was age 8. Not having known her exact diagnosis would have made the situation additionally perplexing in proposing accommodating solutions for Toni.

As a young child, Toni was easily angered by the frustration caused by communication limitations. Soon after she entered into school, Sign Language became a true liberation for her. She eagerly learned this form of communication by duplicating letters of the alphabet that her mother taught her nearly every day.

During Toni's sophomore year in high school, her mother's colleague at Region 10 had a daughter who was blind. Billie's fellow worker shared encouraging information about the Dallas Lighthouse, and how Toni could likely gain training and employment. Billie followed through with the helpful advice. Soon Toni was accepted to take part in Dallas Lighthouse's summer program. Her mother recalls the opportunity to transition into the work world, following Toni's 10th grade year. "She fit right in," said Billie. "She fell in love with the team at Dallas Lighthouse.

"It takes a special person to work with people like Toni. There have been some fabulous individuals that we've been so fortunate to have worked with her. It was their patience, perseverance and what they've done with Toni that has made the difference. Staying busy with doing something Toni is capable of is the biggest thing in her life."

Toni's primary supervisor, Margie Harris, arrived at Dallas Lighthouse about the same time Toni did. "Through our challenges Toni and I grew together," said Margie. "She was an

excellent worker who I loved working with. There are many things she did in contributing to our work here at the DLB, but she especially loved working with the carousels.

“Even though I never knew sign language well, Toni was usually able to communicate enough with her hand gestures. If it became too complicated, I leaned on my colleague Jennifer who knows sign language. I wouldn’t have changed this opportunity for the world,” Margie declared.

The DLB team has observed firsthand how very important the contribution special loving parents can make when they maintain productive expectations for their uniquely challenged child. We witnessed Toni becoming more and more independent through the years.

She even managed moving into her own apartment conveniently across the street from the Dallas Lighthouse. This made her mother Billie Grissom proud indeed. “My daughter is now capable of serving me a meal,” Billie said with a huge smile in her voice.

All of us at the DLB realize the benefits of an enduring experience ending in success. We value the winning partnership and friendship that Toni and Billie Grissom have brought us for nearly four decades.

“I am eternally grateful to the Dallas Lighthouse for the Blind. I don’t know what in the world would have become of us,” Billie testifies.

Dallas Congressman Pete Sessions stopped by last month to videotape a special message for the Dallas Lighthouse for the Blind in recognition of National Disabilities Employment Awareness Month.

Enjoy this special message! I want to give a very special thanks to Congressman Pete for his continuous support of the blind and visually impaired.

[Watch the video here!](#)

Strategies and Life Skills: By Dr. Jamie N. Lindsay, D.O.

November is Diabetes Awareness Month.

Today we want to draw your attention to type 2 diabetes, its causes, risks, and how to prevent it.

The stats:

In America, type 2 diabetes is, unfortunately, pretty common. According to the CDC, of the 30.3 million people in the US who have diabetes, 90% to 95% of them have type 2.

In the last 20 years, the number of adults who have been diagnosed with diabetes has more than tripled. Many diagnosed are over the age of 45. Diabetes is the number 1 cause of kidney failure and lower-limb amputations and is the 7th leading cause of death in the US.

The Causes:

People with type 2 diabetes have higher than normal blood glucose levels because their body doesn't handle sugar normally. People are classified as diabetic if they have a fasting blood glucose over 125 mg/dl on two separate occasions. Over time, high levels of glucose in the blood causes complications that affect quality of life and limit people's ability to enjoy an active lifestyle as they age.

Being overweight and inactive can be significant contributing factors to the development of type 2 diabetes.

The Risks:

Did you know that if you are diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, your healthcare provider is likely to recommend that you take anywhere from 1 to 4 medications daily? And you'll probably need to have regular follow up appointments and blood tests at least every 3-6 months.

Complications from having type 2 diabetes can include heart attacks, strokes, blood vessel disease, kidney disease, poor wound healing, chronic numbness, tingling feet, blindness, amputations, and death.

The Good News:

The good news is that in many instances, type 2 diabetes can be prevented and the risk for developing type 2 diabetes can be decreased by maintaining a healthy body weight, healthy body fat percentage, eating a nutritious diet, exercising regularly, and getting seven to eight hours of sleep each night.

Please see the links below for more information.

<https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/basics/type2.html>

www.NuStartHealth.com

**FDA Panel Endorses Gene Therapy for a Form of Childhood
Blindness**

Gene therapy, which has had a roller-coaster history of high hopes and devastating disappointments, took an important step forward Thursday.

A Food and Drug Administration advisory committee endorsed the first gene therapy for an inherited disorder, a rare condition that causes a progressive form of blindness that usually starts in childhood.

The recommendation came in a unanimous 16-0 vote after a daylong hearing that included emotional testimonials by doctors, parents of children blinded by the disease and from children and young adults helped by the treatment.

"Before surgery, my vision was dark. It was like sunglasses over my eyes while looking through a little tunnel," 18-year-old Misty Lovelace of Kentucky, told the committee. "I can honestly say my biggest dream came true when I got my sight. I would never give it up for anything. It was truly a miracle."

Several young people described being able to ride bicycles, play baseball, see their parents' faces, read, write and venture out of their homes alone at night for the first time.

"I've been able to see things that I've never seen before, like stars, fireworks, and even the moon," Christian Guardino, 17, of Long Island, N.Y., told the committee. "I will forever be grateful for receiving gene therapy."

The FDA isn't obligated to follow the recommendations of its advisory committees, but the agency usually does.

If the treatment is approved, one concern is cost. Some analysts have speculated it could cost hundreds of thousands of dollars to treat each eye, meaning the cost for each patient could approach \$1 million.

[Spark Therapeutics](#) of Philadelphia, which developed the treatment, hasn't said how much the company would charge.

But the company has said it would help patients get access to the treatment.

Despite the likely steep price tag, the panel's endorsement was welcomed by scientists working in the field.

"It's one of the most exciting things for our field in recent memory," says [Paul Yang](#), an assistant professor of ophthalmology at the Oregon Health and Science University who wasn't involved in developing or testing the treatment.

"This would be the first approved treatment of any sort for this condition and the first approved gene therapy treatment for the eye, in general," Yang says. "So, on multiple fronts, it's a first and ushers in a new era of gene therapy."

Ever since scientists began to unravel the genetic causes of diseases, doctors have dreamed of treating diseases by fixing defective genes or giving patients new, healthy genes. But those hopes dimmed when early attempts failed, and sometimes even resulted in the deaths of volunteers in early studies. But the field may have finally reached a turning point.

The FDA recently [approved](#) the first so-called gene therapy product, which uses genetically modified cells from the immune system to treat a form of leukemia.

And recently, scientists [reported](#) using gene therapy to successfully treat patients suffering from cerebral adrenoleukodystrophy, or [ALD](#), a rare, fatal brain disease portrayed in the film *Lorenzo's Oil*. Researchers are also testing gene therapy for other causes of blindness and blood disorders such as sickle cell disease.

The gene therapy endorsed by the committee Thursday was developed for [RPE65-mutation associated retinal dystrophy](#), which is caused by a defective gene that damages cells in the retina. About 6,000 people have the disease worldwide, including 1,000 to 2,000 people in the United States.

The treatment, which is called voretigene neparvovec, involves a genetically modified version of a harmless virus. The virus is modified to carry a healthy version of the gene into the retina. Doctors inject billions of modified viruses into both of a patient's eyes.

In a [study](#) involving 29 patients, aged 4 to 44, the treatment appeared to be safe and effective. More than 90 percent of the treated patients showed at least some improvement in their vision when tested in a specially designed obstacle course. The improvement often began within days of the treatment.

"Many went from being legally blind to not being legally blind," said [Albert Maguire](#), a professor of ophthalmology who led the study at the University of Pennsylvania, in an interview before the hearing. If approved, the treatment would be marketed under the name Luxturna.

Article link:

http://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2017/10/12/557183740/fda-panel-endorses-gene-therapy-for-a-form-of-childhood-blindness?utm_source=twitter.com&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=npr&utm_term=nprnews&utm_content=2039

DLB's Top Training with Access Technology

For those of us who are legally or totally blind, access technology has considerably improved our lives. Screen readers, braille displays, and screen magnification software continues to be enhanced. We are able to easily read printed text, the Internet is

effortlessly accessed, and we can read our mail and more with camera-equipped devices.

Those committed to using access technology find additional opportunities for employment or expanded education.

This valuable instruction is offered at the Dallas Lighthouse for the Blind's technology training center by state-approved instructors. The fact that these teachers are legally or totally blind adds value and relatability for quality training.

Dallas Lighthouse technology instructors also teach clients to be proficient with Apple iPhones and iPads. These products have built-in accessibility features that people who are legally blind or totally blind find useful.

Learn more about expanding your technology skills by calling Melva Henderson at (214) 420-6585. Or, email her at Melva.henderson@dallaslighthouse.org

A Great Book for People with Low Vision Recommended By Dr. Bill Takeshita

Insights into Low Vision is a fantastic book designed to help people with low vision. The book is divided into many chapters and written by experts in the field of low vision. The book discusses how to find eye doctors who specialize in low vision, glasses to improve the vision of people with low vision, magnifiers and sunglasses, computer technology, and how to live independently with low vision.

I have been visually impaired for many years and have never learned of all of the techniques described in this book!

The book is printed in large print and written in a way that is easily understood. The readers will learn about visual aids to improve their vision, computer software programs that will magnify the text and also read the print on the screen, assistive technology devices that will allow techniques for cooking with low vision, how to cope with low vision, and much more.

The book is ideal for adults with low vision as well as their friends and family members. People who serve and treat people with low vision will also find the book to be extremely helpful.

To order the book in large print hard copy, go to the link listed below:

<https://www.amazon.com/Insights-Into-Vision-Bill-Takeshita/dp/0996308008>

To order the book in Audio CD, go to the following link listed below:

<https://www.amazon.com/Insights-Into-Vision-V-D-Takeshita/dp/0996308016>

Social Security Announces 2.0 Percent Benefit Increase for 2018

Disability thresholds maximum earnings for the blind will be increased. Current maximum earnings will rise from \$1,950 monthly income in 2017 to \$1,970 to still be eligible for benefits each month in 2018.

Social Security also announces a 2.0 Percent Benefit Increase for 2018. The 2.0 percent cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) will begin with benefits payable to more than 61 million Social Security beneficiaries in January 2018. Increased payments to more than 8 million SSI beneficiaries will begin on December 29, 2017.

(Note: some people receive both Social Security and SSI benefits) The Social Security Act ties the annual COLA to

the increase in the Consumer Price Index as determined by the Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics.)

Some other adjustments that take effect in January of each year are based on the increase in average wages. Based on that increase, the maximum amount of earnings subject to the Social Security tax (taxable maximum) will increase to \$128,700 from \$127,200. Of the estimated 175 million workers who will pay Social Security taxes in 2018, about 12 million will pay more because of the increase in the taxable maximum.

Information about Medicare changes for 2018, will be announced soon at:

www.medicare.gov

The Social Security Act provides for how the COLA is calculated. To read more, please visit: www.socialsecurity.gov/cola

Link to Press Release:

<https://www.ssa.gov/news/press/releases/#/post/10-2017-1>

Beaverton Vegan Baker Is Legally Blind, but Has a Clear Vision of the Future

There's a new vegan bakery in downtown Beaverton, Oregon, and there's something special there that has a little to do with a wide variety of treats, and a lot more to do with spunk, grit and a vision -- or lack thereof.

If you had to pick one thing that stands out inside [Carina's Bakery](#), it would probably be the luscious baked goods inspired by baker and CEO Carina Comer's Scandinavian heritage. But you might also notice the dogs peering out from beneath the counter.

"I didn't really want to shut them in all day while I was working. So I knew that the counter was going to be three feet wide, and I just decided to put a crate in there," Carina said. "They can look out both at the customers and at me and they can be together."

Sutter and Ribbon are not only pets, they're guide dogs for Carina -- who's legally blind -- and her visually-impaired employee, Lora Ward.

Carina's other employees are also visually impaired.

"I'm legally blind and because of my love for baking and my struggle to find a place in the workplace, I wanted to open a bakery that employed people with disabilities," she said.

Signs alert customers that the workers at Carina's are all visually impaired and to be patient. Carina has installed adaptive devices to assist them. The scales speak. So does the cash register. "It takes us a little longer," Carina said. "We're still getting used to our adaptive system that has its own quirks."

Carina relied on Scandinavian recipes for her menu and created new ones that are both savory and sweet. The Scandinavian almond cake is a bestseller.

None of Carina's baked goods contain any animal products.

"It fits in well with what I am trying to do with this bakery because I want people to feel like they belong and are being treated right, and I should do the same with the animals and the baked goods."

For Lora Ward (Ribbon is her guide dog), being able to bake with Carina is an honor, she said. "To maintain a lifestyle and to live, this is an awesome opportunity," Lora said.

Carina caught the baking habit when she was a child. Brain tumors as a child may have robbed her of most of her sight, but not her vision for the future.

"I've been in the kitchen since I was 5," she said. "And people didn't believe when I told them I was going to have a bakery. I

think my parents would have loved to have me go in a different direction."

Her grandfather, however, would understand. Standing beneath a Swedish flag that used to fly from his sailboat in Connecticut, Carina credited him for a lot of her success.

"He started with nothing and then built his own store and built it up from there," she said. "He inspires me a lot with the drive that he taught me and the entrepreneurship."

Carina's Bakery is on the ground floor of the new La-Scala apartment building on Southwest Lombard Street just south of Farmington Road.

The grand opening is tentatively set for November, but the bakery is up and running right now.

Article Link:

<http://katu.com/news/local/beaverton-vegan-baker-is-legally-blind-but-has-a-clear-vision-of-the-future>

Celebrating Solo Travel Independence and More

Each year since 1964, October 15th is the anniversary of President Lyndon B. Johnson's National White Cane Day proclamation. This year, this special day happened to be on Sunday, so we celebrated the next day.

We thank all of you who were a part of our extraordinary celebration and education with North Texans with visual impairment. Students attended from all over the metroplex. We celebrated solo travel independence and more.

The fall weather was perfect to begin the festivity with our healthy walk around Dallas City Hall. All customs of independent travel were represented. Some walked with white canes, while a

few benefited from dog guides. Some simply chose to walk with a sighted guide.

Afterwards, we gathered in the front lobby for our inspirational program, commencing with Dallas Mayor Rawlings' proclamation, read by Mayor Pro Tem Adam Medrano. Inspiring speakers such as Congressman Pete Sessions, alongside several speakers with visual impairment who have incredible testimonies, enlightened our attendees.

A tasty lunch was provided by our solid sponsor Raising Cane's Chicken Fingers. They came through with a hot fresh delicious boxed meal for us.

You can listen to or watch the video snapshot of this special occasion, at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sdT02VvCD8Q>

We look forward to seeing you at the 2018 North Texas White Cane Day Celebration!

Useful Tools for Sale in the DLB Store

We regularly add beneficial items for people who are legally or totally blind for purchase. Some of our merchandise includes a hand-held CCTV video magnifier, ladies and gentlemen's talking watches, unisex braille watches, talking clocks, signature guides, large print paper, large button phones, and TV remotes.

We also have oven mitts, 20/20 pens, and big sticky text dots to help you mark your appliances for convenience and accuracy.

There are also Uno playing cards, Dominoes, fit-over anti-glare shades (available in amber, gray, and yellow), and magnifiers with powers of 3, 3.5, and 4.

We're always adding more, so come visit the DLB store. We're here to serve you.

The address is
4306 Capitol Avenue
Dallas, TX 75204

If you have questions, call
(214) 420-9438

Employment Opportunities with the Dallas Lighthouse for the Blind

The DLB HR department recently introduced a convenient way for you to keep up with current job openings and apply for them when your talents fit the opportunity.

Go to
[Jobs at Dallas Lighthouse for the Blind](#)

We'll promptly follow through with an email including the next steps.

Valuable Free Offers

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, November 17.

Come enjoy free prizes, free food, and 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 hearing and seeing you in the DLB Auditorium at 4306 Capitol Avenue!

Our yoga get-together takes place Fridays from 1:15 to 2:15 PM. Please join our thoughtful volunteer Bruce Boyd and others in the auditorium for some exercise and camaraderie. He has participated in Blindfold Yoga, increasing his knowledge of

coaching people with visual impairment. Bruce wants for us to be in good health and good shape.

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

Call (214) 420-9411

Or email Blake at

blake.lindsay@dallaslighthouse.org

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.

If you have not yet liked our [Facebook](#) page, we would appreciate you doing so. We are also on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

Follow DLB and share!

People without Sight Seeing through the Eyes of Considerate People with Sight By Blake Lindsay

Kids who are blind are just like ordinary sighted kids in terms of what it is they like best. Besides recess, my answer is quite simple: Field trips. I refer to the blind school field trips as "pure edutainment." Seldom have I heard this word used in people's conversations, however the unique expression appropriately defines our educational, entertaining field trips I remember so well.

One of my favorite field trips was attending the Murat Shrine Circus in Indianapolis at the Pepsi Coliseum. Being guests of the Shriners permitted students from my school to have access to some special privileges not offered to others. I was glad for that, because I finally got to meet an elephant. Not that I had been previously desiring to meet one, but it was nice to get a better

picture of what it meant when my cousin Joy used to tease me about having an elephant's memory.

The elephant I had the pleasure of meeting greeted me with a big wet kiss on my hand. I guess I considered this a friendly gesture that conjured up feelings of safety and security, because moments later I found myself taking my first elephant ride. It astounded me back then as it does today that an animal can weigh over three tons. Even more astonishing was visiting this elephant's three-week-old baby that weighed in at 500 pounds! I recall thinking, "Wow, that's more than three average-size adult humans." My elephant experience was the beginning of a new hobby, collecting elephant memorabilia.

Today, my compilation consists of two elephant lamps, a doorstop, a pillow on our couch, a toothbrush holder in our bathroom, and probably way more than enough elephant figurines on display.

That day, I also learned that a trip to the circus is not complete until you meet the person proudly known as the *Fattest Man in the World*. Before meeting this portly gentleman, I considered myself to be a big seven-year-old.

After all, I was four feet, five inches tall weighing in at an incredible 70 pounds. When I met this unnamed gentleman, I wrapped my arms around one of his legs to gain a better understanding of his physical stature.

This man stood six feet, three inches tall and weighed more than the three-week-old elephant I had met earlier in the day— 700 pounds!

"I'm going to be bigger than you someday," I firmly shouted.

Weighing ten times more than this seven-year-old and being nearly two feet taller, this grand personality wailed with laughter. I only grew to one-quarter of his 700 pounds and I lack five

inches in reaching his height. No wonder he found my comment so hilarious.

Many present that day were probably wondering how the kids with visual impairment knew what was happening during the circus performances. It was sheer generosity. The very familiar voice of a man by the name of Fred Heckman, who was the news director for the number one rated local Indianapolis radio station WIBC volunteered his narrative talent to bring the circus to life for those of us who could not use our eyes to visualize the sensational acts. Indiana Bell Telephone graciously made all of this possible by providing us with headsets, which allowed us to hear Mr. Heckman without disturbing the other guests.

He enabled us to have a greater understanding of how incredible a circus is and helped us to gain an appreciation and respect for the amount of time and energy that is required behind the scenes to prepare for such an enormous undertaking.

No one missed a single act thanks to his kindness. He was extremely vivid and colorful. I can still remember his great voice and wonderful way of describing in detail and with emotion what he was seeing so we could witness as well.

As people without sight, we are thankful to those with sight that want to make a helpful difference by letting us see things through your eyes.

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

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

Feel free to contribute 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) 420-9411.

Thank you for considering the Dallas Lighthouse for the Blind for your end of year financial donations. Your generosity will help us continue to improve our services in the 11 counties we assist through access technology training and much more. Also, please let us know if there's anyone you know needing our support.

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
Blake Lindsay, Manager of Communication
4306 Capitol Avenue
Dallas, TX 75204
www.dallaslighthouse.org
