

From The Dallas Lighthouse News Desk



Employment Services

Offers a variety of high-quality employment services to the business community. We train and place highly-qualified, pre-screened employees for Customer Service, Telesales and other Call Center positions. The Dallas Lighthouse provides direct hire, contract placement and temporary placement personnel to meet a variety of needs. Training is also provided for employers on a number of topics, including Job Accommodations and Tax Incentives.

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

I'm Blake Lindsay, Manager of Communications. As a longtime broadcaster with total blindness since infancy, it is truly my

pleasure to bring you monthly motivation, education, and entertainment dedicated to inspiring and supporting people with all levels of visual impairment. Throughout the past 17 months, we have updated you on current progress with assistive technology.

Part of DLB's excellent educational approach is to build up your assistive technology access expertise. The Dallas Lighthouse team believes it is also advantageous to inform the public about current accomplishments from those who are legally and totally blind.

We will continue to share your success stories to help initiate additional employment and educational opportunities. Professional development stories through these newsletters often inspire and empower us to achieve.

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 supportive 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

Transformation:

Steven Fontaine joined our Dallas Lighthouse family in July, 2007. He knew nothing about sewing, but Steven accepted the position with the right attitude and was a quick learner. For more than four years, Steven worked well in the Sewing Center; however, he hoped that someday he would have the opportunity to use his computer and telephone skills in our Business Services division. In November 2011, his wish became a reality.

Dallas Lighthouse signed a contract for call center work that would be performed in-house at our facility. The Stone Eagle Group was responsible for this employment opportunity, which has allowed Steven to transfer to Business Services and utilize the communication skills that he hoped to be able to use for the good of our organization.

In addition to Steven's work with Dallas Lighthouse, he also has an extraordinary talent for singing and performing before a live audience. While enrolled in the HARTT School of Music in Connecticut, Steven further developed his awesome talent. He then moved to New York City, where he performed in theater and other venues for seven years.

From performing in classic shows like *Carousel*, to more contemporary shows such as *Crazy for You*, Steven took pleasure in sharing his wonderful singing ability. However, he related, "I enjoyed the rat race, but I was ready to take a break from it."

In 2013, Steven took advantage of an opportunity to work with Microsoft. This occasion enabled him to further his Section 508 compliance and web content accessibility guidelines skills. "This is my calling to help people with visual impairment not have to struggle the way I've had in the past with navigation on sites that aren't Section 508 compliant," Steven stated. Steven has worked with our brand-new training module for customer service professional care. This Dallas Lighthouse program opens doors to employment in various call centers.

Currently Steven is instrumental in fulfilling plans for the newest arm of Dallas Lighthouse's business services division, known as Digital Accessibility. This new endeavor will serve clients who are eager to make sure that their websites, software, mobile applications and electronic documents meet the U.S. Access Board's latest Harmonization of Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 (WCAG) and Section 508 Compliance. This is a

great time to be in digital accessibility as the nation and world continues to move forward with digital technologies.

Throughout his first two months on our team, Steven had some remaining low vision. Retinitis Pigmentosa (RP) is the cause of his sight loss. Steven is a terrific traveler. He credits Alexa Poynor, who was his orientation and mobility specialist, for his excellent navigation skills.

Traveling with his dog guide Robert, Steven takes public transportation or Paratransit when the weather creates the need for curb-to-curb service. Steven enlightens people on the do's and don'ts of dog guides through Dallas Lighthouse's monthly Blindness Sensitivity Training class.

Steven still performs each week at church and with the Turtle Creek Chorale, a men's chorus that includes over two-hundred gifted voices. They perform 3 main stage shows each year at the Moody Performance Hall in the thriving arts district in downtown Dallas, as well as other venues. This large group sings anything from classical to contemporary music. We are also inspired when Steven entertains us at our holiday party.

During Steven's free time, he enjoys movies and TV. He also appreciates it when he can help a newcomer become familiar with our facilities. We are delighted to have multi-talented Steven Fontaine, as a member of our Dallas Lighthouse family.

The gift of sight: Montreal surgeon implants bionic eye in blind woman

Sandra Cassell embraced her 2-year-old son, Evan, as he climbed into her lap at Maisonneuve-Rosemont Hospital Thursday morning. He peered into her eyes and she stared back at him, smiling with the boundless love of a proud mother.

That simple exchange of glances would have been impossible almost a year ago. For the past 16 years, a rare eye disease — retinitis pigmentosa — slowly robbed the Lachine resident of her eyesight to the point where she needed a white cane to cross the street.

But on Feb. 8, a medical team at Maisonneuve-Rosemont Hospital succeeded in partially restoring Cassell's vision by implanting a prosthesis in her left retina, turning it into a bionic eye. The four-hour operation, led by eye surgeon Flavio Rezende, represents a medical first in Quebec.

"I never thought I'd be able to see again," the 42-year-old social worker said.

"But now I can see. I see light, I see contrasts of different things, in black, in white and grey. It's like an ultrasound picture."

Where once Cassell needed to slide her cane in front of her when crossing the street, she can now make out the white stripes of the crosswalk. Where once she was unable to see her son running toward her, she can now hold out her arms to pick him up. "My hope for the future — because Dr. Rezende has spoken about future innovation — is that the next generation (of technology) will be in color, in high definition and will have facial recognition, which I don't have."

There is no cure for retinitis pigmentosa, a genetic disorder affecting about 1.2 million people around the world. Until her operation, Cassell had to rely totally on the skills she acquired at the former Montreal Association for the Blind, now part of the MAB-Mackay Rehabilitation Centre.

Even after the operation, Cassell had to learn to see again with the help of therapists at the Institute Nazareth Louis-Braille.

"It's very challenging, in terms of the surgical technique and the rehabilitation of the patient," Rezende explained in an interview after Thursday's news conference. "A patient who has been in the dark for years, for them to understand and relearn how to see in a different way — in a digital environment, if you will — is nothing but challenging."

Still, it has all been worth it, for both the patient and the medical team, Rezende insisted.

"This innovative technology gives hope to people with vision loss caused by degenerative diseases of the retina," he added. "We are proud to be part of this revolution."

The bionic eye was developed by Second Sight of California.

The [Argus II Retinal Prosthesis System](#) requires a person with severe retinitis pigmentosa to wear special glasses with a camera on the bridge. The video images taken by the camera are processed by a smartphone-sized computer worn around the waist.

The images are then transmitted wirelessly to the eye implant, which is a tiny electrode array that looks like a computer chip that is embedded in the retina.

The electrode array bypasses the dead cells of the retina for ones that are still active, and those cells convert the pulses into signals for the brain.

At a cost of \$150,000, the prosthesis will not be made available for everyone with vision problems. Only those patients with profound retinal dystrophy (which includes retinitis pigmentosa) will be eligible for the implant.

Article & Video Link:

<http://montrealgazette.com/news/local-news/the-gift-of-sight-montreal-surgeon-implants-bionic-eye-in-blind-woman>

North Texas Giving Day

Communities Foundation of Texas' ninth annual North Texas Giving Day is this Thursday, September 14, aiming to set yet another national record! Please go to NorthTexasGivingDay.org and help the Dallas Lighthouse for the Blind. Your donation will be multiplied by bonus funds and prizes! New this year, you can schedule your North Texas Giving Day gifts today. Simply go to NorthTexasGivingDay.org between now and September 14, and you will be able to schedule your gift to the DLB.

You can stretch your dollar further with 1:1 matching funds secured by nonprofits. Last year 272 nonprofits raised over \$5.7 million in matching funds allowing them to raise 20% more than nonprofits who didn't.

North Texas Giving Day is powered by Communities Foundation of Texas, a 64-year-old community foundation that has presented North Texas Giving Day since 2009. The foundation professionally manages more than 950 charitable funds for families, companies, foundations and nonprofits and has awarded more than \$1.6 billion in grants since its founding in 1953.

Every donation will be eligible for bonus funds from Communities Foundation of Texas on an amount up to \$10,000. Donations over \$10,000 will also be entered into a drawing for a prize for the Dallas Lighthouse for the Blind.

You will be helping us serve people who lose their sight at age 55 and older. Independence and quality of life are Dallas Lighthouse's primary goals. We're on a mission to serve the blind and let them know that they can be triumphant and hopeful.

DLB prides itself on providing essential training. Using proven techniques that work, the DLB customizes our methods to each individual and takes the time to assess them on a personal level.

Another service you are supporting is the Dallas Lighthouse's [Assistive Technology Lab](#) where blind or visually impaired individuals can learn the essential skills needed to take full advantage of assistive technologies available.

Our Technology Lab trainers are approved by the Texas State Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services, Division for Blind Services.

These highly trained specialists are legally or totally blind themselves, which helps navigating these assistive technologies with relatability to people with visual impairment. We appreciate every donation to our mission.

Thank you in advance for your generosity. Enjoy our video. Link is

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCEle_aQ_41cQTXH1gRrZTJw

Take Advantage of Top Access Technology Training

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 with camera-equipped devices.

For those committed to using access technology, you will find 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 instructors are blind and low vision adds value and relatability for quality training.

Dallas Lighthouse technology instructors also teach clients to be competent iOS users, making customers proficient with the Apple

iPhones and iPads. These products have built-in accessibility features that persons who are blind and with low vision find useful.

Learn more about growing your technology skills by calling Bill Herzler at

(214) 420-5081.

Or, email him at

Bill.herzler@dallaslighthouse.org

Come Have Fun at DLB's fundraiser

There are over 150,000 North Texans who are blind and visually impaired. The Annual Dallas Lighthouse for the Blind Golf Tournament provides free services that lead to employment opportunities and improved quality of life for residents with visual impairment within our community.

Join us this Monday, September 18th at Las Colinas Country Club for lunch, prizes, and a day of golf.

Sponsorships beginning at \$300. Your donations will be appreciated.

Visit

www.dallaslighthouse.org/golf for more details.

And be sure to check out
[our golf tournament promo.](#)

We hope you will contribute to this special need.

Join Us for the 2017 Dallas White Cane Day Solo Travel Independence Celebration

Invite your families and friends, and be a part of our extraordinary celebration with other North Texans who have visual impairment. Our festivities are on Monday, October 16, beginning at 10:00 A.M., continuing until 1:00 P.M. Celebrate and support solo travel independence and much more.

This year is the 53rd anniversary since President Lyndon B. Johnson's appropriate White Cane Day proclamation was initiated in 1964.

The fall weather is usually perfect to begin the festivity with our healthy walk around Dallas City Hall. Afterwards, we'll gather in the front lobby for our inspirational program. We commence with Dallas Mayor Rawlings' proclamation, followed by inspiring speakers. In addition, a tasty lunch will be provided by our steady sponsor Raising Cane's Chicken Fingers. Please RSVP to Blake

Lindsay by Wednesday, October 11. Your response will ensure we have adequate food and minimal waste.

Email

blake.lindsay@dallaslighthouse.org

or call Blake at (214) 420-9411.

We look forward to North Texas White Cane Day Celebration on Monday, October 16, 2017, 10:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.

Dallas City Hall is located at 1500 Marilla St, Dallas, TX 75201. Volunteers will be on hand to greet you upon your arrival, as well as making certain you find our festivities.

AT&T is inviting the blind/low vision community to take part in the AT&T Experience More campaign.

Through a social campaign, AT&T is celebrating how blind/low vision individuals “experience more” through their actions, passions, technology and more. The campaign includes a content series, national sweepstakes and meet-and-greets with accessibility training at AT&T retail locations across the country. The campaign extends through October, National Blindness Awareness Month. A microsite will serve as the campaign hub, experiencemore.att.com.

The campaign includes a content series of videos and podcasts showcasing some extraordinary individuals and their ongoing pursuits to Experience More. Sample AT&T Campaign Ambassadors who will be featured in the content series:

- Christine Ha – MasterChef Season 3 winner
- Erich Manser – Ran the Boston Marathon with Aira technology guiding him
- Michael Hingson – Escaped the World Trade Center attack on 9/11 descending 78 flights of stairs with the help of his guide dog
- Erik Weihenmayer - Adventurer, athlete, activist, and motivational speaker and the first blind person to climb Mt. Everest

Innovative Technology - Aira

Throughout the campaign, we will feature Aira, an assistive technology that connects the blind with a network of agents via smart glasses. Agents see what the blind person is looking at via a small camera on the glasses so they are able to provide real time directions, feedback or assistance. Aira and AT&T have teamed to bring this service to life for the blind community.

Finally, AT&T will host several meet-and-greet events at retail stores across the country featuring campaign ambassadors.

We will also offer device accessibility training at these events. Events are planned for Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Denver, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, New York City, San Francisco and Washington, D.C.

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 pins, 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 readers with powers of 3, 3.5, and 4. We'll keep adding more. 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

The Dallas Lighthouse for the Blind is seeking people who can sew and also people with call center skills. DLB's HR department recently introduced a convenient way for you to keep up with DLB's 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 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, September 15. We have moved bingo back to the DLB auditorium.

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 hearing and seeing you back in the DLB Auditorium!

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

The Dallas Lighthouse invested in 10 mats and 10 foam yoga blocks for this program. Let's express our appreciation to Bruce by participating.

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

Call (214) 420-9411. Or email Blake at

blake.lindsay@dallaslighthouse.org

Poetry Contest for Braille Users

After the success of NBP's inaugural photo contest, we're launching a new competition--this time, we're looking for

awesome braille poems on the theme of "The Five Senses." The poem must be an original work fewer than 125 words, written using English Braille American Edition or Unified English Braille.

We will be awarding \$100 worth of prizes to one winner in each category: grades K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12, or adult. Whether you've written a heartfelt sonnet, a creative acrostic, or a laugh-out-loud limerick, we can't wait to read it!

To submit your entry, email a .brf file to marketing@nbp.org or mail a hard copy to Poetry Contest, National Braille Press

88 St Stephen Street

Boston, MA, 02115.

Questions? Email

marketing@nbp.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.

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCEle_aQ_41cQTXH1gRrZTJw

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

We are also on Twitter (@DallasLighthouse) and Instagram (DallasLighthousefortheBlind)!

Follow DLB and share!

The Useful Influence of Life Lessons by Blake Lindsay

I am the only one of five children in my family to be blind. I was born to sighted parents. Nine months into my life it was discovered that I had a cancerous and potentially life-threatening disease called retinoblastoma.

Up until then I had complete sight. My parents were in their mid-twenties when my condition was diagnosed.

At age seventeen, Mom and Dad sat me down and carefully detailed their rare experience. My mother was the first to notice my lack of alertness during feeding times and a cloudy appearance in my eyes. Her motherly instincts told her that something was definitely wrong.

Not wasting any time, my parents took me to our family doctor, then to an eye doctor and very quickly to a nationally renowned specialist. It was a bit of a whirlwind for my mom and dad.

Our family doctor diagnosed possible strabismus. The eye doctor was more concerned and considered that it might be a detached retina, but wanted me to see a specialist. Within a few days I was examined by a team of doctors at the Indiana University Medical Center in Indianapolis, where the diagnosis of retinoblastoma was made.

This of course was quite a shock for my parents, grandparents, relatives and friends. Not only was I going to be blind, but also my family was in a rush with the disease to keep cancer from harmfully spreading to my brain through my optic nerves and ending my life.

Mom and Dad were tactfully informed that the prescription to save my life was to remove my eyes at the optic nerve as soon as possible. After hearing those crucial facts, my parents quickly inquired about the possibility of transplanting one of their eyes with the hope that their contributions would save my sight. Despite their willingness and generosity, they learned that their loving offer was not going to benefit me in any way. It is my understanding this type of surgery is still not helpful today.

The tremendous impact which I have received over the years from knowing my young parents would do anything in their capacity to salvage my sight has benefited me greatly in a completely different and wonderful way.

Here I was, not even a full year old, and my parents had already established four classic examples for me. First, they demonstrated how to respond with poise and confidence to shocking news, rather than reacting in complete panic when faced with devastating information.

Mom and Dad had to function in great faith, believing that God was in complete control. Second my parents have always communicated that my situation will benefit others facing life challenges or family catastrophe.

Third, Mom and Dad showed me that in most devastating situations; the worst part will pass quickly. Finally, my parents proved to me the importance of staying proactive and always believing that the best is yet to come.

The wonderful ways in which their extraordinary story has encouraged me and taught me through most of my adult life has evolved into my sense of gratitude. I am deeply appreciative for having heard all of the facts and my parent's feelings regarding our unique and challenging family event.

This lesson has reinforced the meaning of generosity. I also learned that when our lives make a drastic and unexpected turn, I will try to think of everything I can feasibly do, including making a genuine sacrifice like my parents were prepared to do.

This, without a doubt, has helped me to focus on any positive aspect I can find in whatever negative circumstances I am facing.

Since I have no recollection of seeing, I have rarely felt sorry for myself. I am thankful that my eyesight was all that was taken and my life was spared.

It feels great to be alive! When possible, please impact people with your own significant life lessons. Let's keep each other encouraged.

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.

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