



The Beacon

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INDEPENDENT ONCE MORE

Eye Surgery Recipient Hopes for a Brighter Future

Darrell's eyesight started deteriorating in 1999. For a few years, he believed all he needed was glasses. Continually worsening eyesight finally made it obvious he needed to see an optometrist, where he received a shocking diagnosis. He had cataracts and detached retinas.

Darrell had always lived an adventurous life. As a flight attendant, he had traveled to five continents. When his vision started to go he was employed with a large industrial refrigeration company in Atlanta. At age 42, his increasingly darkening world made it impossible to work. His family moved in to assist him in with his daily life. Eating was particularly difficult; he had to use a flashlight to see his food.

Every doctor gave Darrell the same prognosis: once his eyesight was gone, there would be little to no chance he would ever see again. Without insurance, Darrell could not afford the sight-saving surgeries. Shaken, but determined, he researched all possible financial assistance. Medicaid and Social security would only cover the cost for the retinal reattachment, leaving Darrell to shoulder the cost for cataract surgery. Without cataract removal, retinal reattachment would be pointless. For the first time in his life, Darrell began to lose hope.



His search for assistance finally led him to the Lighthouse. Within a month, his cataracts were removed. He has received retinal re-attachment, and his world is bright once again.

"It was astonishing to be able to see again. I had forgotten all the shades of green in trees. I could hardly believe how colorful the world is."

Now that Darrell's vision is improving, he looks forward to getting back to work. Darrell has found inspiration in the organization that reached out to him when he needed it most. He wants to find ways to reach out to others who are struggling with vision loss.

"I want people to know that there is always hope. No matter how desperate the situation, you need to keep searching and trying. I came close to giving up, then found the Lighthouse—my last lifeline."



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91% of eye surgery recipients feel more independent.



Lighthouse Impacts Atlanta Schools

Partners with the GOA and the VSP Mobile Eye Program

80% of what a child learns is visual, leaving children with poor vision very little opportunity for educational advancement. Caren Kaplan, a Lighthouse clinic coordinator, and Rosalind Harris, the clinical social worker with the Whiteford Community Program, saw a need to screen students in the Edgewood community, which includes Whiteford Elementary, Coan Middle School, and Crim High School. When we screened the students in September, an astonishing 50% had impaired vision.

We then partnered with the Georgia Optometric Association (GOA) and the Vision Service Plan (VSP) Mobile Eyes Program to provide eye exams and new eyeglasses for over 60 children identified as visually impaired. The students' joy and the teacher's gratitude were electrifying! The work is not done; children who were unable to attend the special event can receive exams at one of the four Lighthouse clinic locations in Atlanta.



“Our members are excited to participate in a project that has real impact on how well students learn—which translates into success well beyond their school years.”

-Dr. Tom Spetainick, President of GOA



Tackling Hearing Loss Among Teens

Are the effects of loud noise on hearing always immediate?

Research shows that prolonged exposure to noise above 85 decibels can cause hearing loss. At risk are the thousands of young musicians who participate in high school bands and orchestras. The sound levels from many instruments, especially drum line and other percussion instruments, are between 90 and 120 db, and practice can last for hours.

Band members expect to occasionally experience temporary hearing loss. More dangerous (and less known) is that prolonged exposure to these levels can lead to gradual hearing loss, sometimes 10, 20, or even 40 years later. Approximately 15 percent of Americans between the ages of 20 and 69 have high frequency hearing loss caused by exposure to loud sounds or noise at work or in leisure activities.



Sharifa (above) spreads the word about hearing loss prevention.

The good news is that noise-induced hearing loss is preventable when ear protection is used. Earplugs can reduce sound by 20dB, significantly lowering the risk of gradual hearing loss. The Georgia Lions Lighthouse Foundation, in partnership with the Georgia Academy of Audiology and the State of Georgia's Hearing Commission, is launching a statewide effort aimed at informing young musicians, music educators, and parents on the importance of hearing protection. Hearing advocates will make educational presentations at high schools and challenge families to "Adopt-A-Band" by investing in hearing protection. The goal is to make Georgia a "Safe Ear" state and allow young musicians to hear for a lifetime.

Help bring hearing loss education to your community!

Contact Sharifa at SPeart@lionslighthouse.org for more information.



A Lion in the Lighthouse

John Rudert helps others. It's in his blood. His mother was a nurse in World War 2, and his family boasts members who are doctors and civil rights advocates.

John's altruistic spirit found an outlet in 1975 when he was living in Pennsylvania. He was approached by his supervisor to join the local Lions Club chapter. His first project was raising funds for a local blind man to receive an experimental vision treatment in Philadelphia. (Even though the gentleman's condition didn't improve, he too joined the Lions Club.) John also got into the doughnut and cake-making business, wheeling a cart filled with delicious pastries around local fairs to raise money.



John bring the Recycled Eyeglass trophies to the office.

When he moved to Atlanta in 1996, he got involved with the Norcross Lions Club, where he has put his talents to use ever since. His passion is woodworking, and when he's not exhibiting his work at trade shows, John crafts pieces for charities. He made beautiful carved bowls for Night of Spectacles and he most recently contributed his expertise to help create the unique eyeglasses prizes for the See Now. Hear Now. Run Now. 5k. "The trophies wouldn't have been half as meaningful without John's involvement," says Sarah Liz Buckley, race coordinator. "He saw our vision and brought it to life."

Now John is entering a new stage of Lionism, having accepted the nomination for District D Director. Along with his wife Trudy, who is the cabinet secretary, John looks forward to meeting Lions from around the state and working together to meet the needs of the community and support the Lighthouse' services, whether through volunteerism or fundraising. With a personal legacy of service, John is more than qualified to lead the way.

Help Support Our Work!



By signing up for a giving program, you can help provide a stable source of funding for the Lighthouse. There are benefits, too!

Luminary Society

Luminary Society members provide a huge source of funding for the Lighthouse!

Donors who qualify make gifts of at least \$88 a month or \$1,000 a year.

Luminary Society members receive two tickets to Night of Spectacles, (valued at \$100 each), a membership pin, and recognition in publications.

1949 Club

We were started in 1949, and we want you to be a part of our legacy!

Donors who qualify make gifts of at least \$49 a month or \$588 a year.

1949 Club Members get a membership pin and recognition in the Annual Report.

Legacy Society

Include your Lighthouse in your estate plans and join the Legacy Society!

To get an immediate tax benefit, consider a charitable gift annuity.

For more information about charitable gift annuities, contact Sarah Epting at 770-738-4679 or by email at SEpting@lionslighthouse.org