



**We Serve All Ages &  
All Stages of Vision Loss**

# ILLUMINATIONS

**The quarterly newsletter of The Lighthouse of Houston**

**Winter 2021**

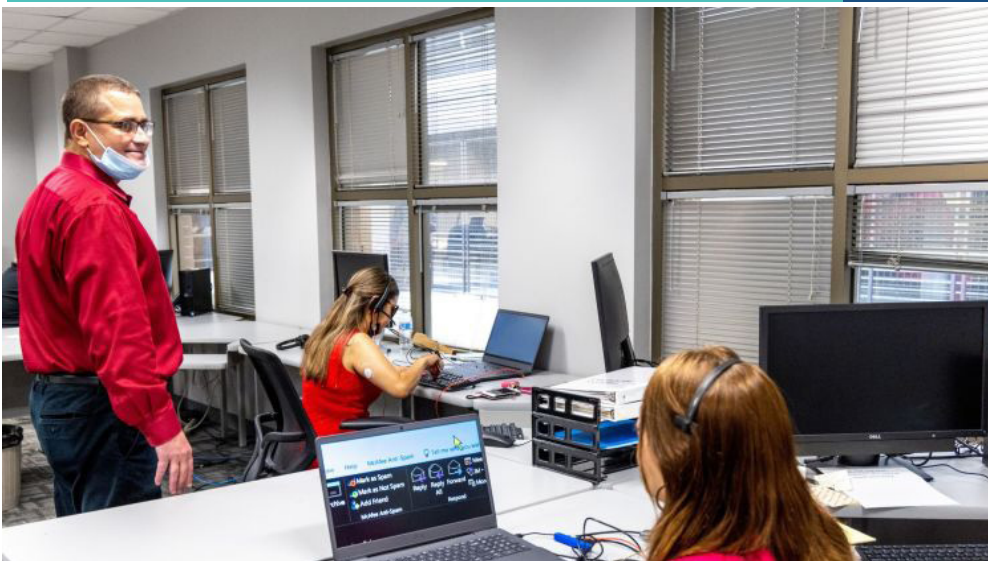
## LIGHTHOUSE STAFFS NEW UH FIXIT CALL CENTER

Thanks to a partnership with [WorkQuest](#), a private nonprofit that connects Texans with disabilities to work opportunities, the UH FIXIT call center is staffed by blind and low-vision operators from The Lighthouse of Houston.

The Lighthouse hosted a joint press conference on Sept. 20 at which Jason Smith, UH Vice President of Governmental Relations, called it a tremendous partnership that will lift up people who sometimes get lost in the shuffle.

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Lighthouse employees, including call center supervisor, Craig Tallent, are shown at work in the UH FIXIT call center. The center operates 24/7, is staffed by blind and low vision persons, and assists faculty, students and staff with non-emergency requests. (Photo by Ben Corda)



## A Message From Our President

The Lighthouse of Houston is here to support people of all ages who are affected by blindness or low vision. Our health and client services, as well as our employment opportunities help create independence for thousands of individuals per year. Our talented, compassionate, well-trained staff are available to support all stages of vision loss and blindness. We are dedicated to our mission to assist people who are blind or have low vision to be independent members of society.

**Jenna Dayer, President**

# #LIGHT IT UP!

A 60-day seasonal giving awareness campaign for The Lighthouse of Houston

The Lighthouse is currently engaged in a 60-day giving campaign called #LIGHTITUP! The goal of the campaign is to raise \$20,000 for general operational support of our programs & services, culminating in Giving Tuesday, on November 30!



Each week during the campaign, a new way to give to The Lighthouse will be in the spotlight, ranging from vehicle donations, to “dine out” nights, to shopping for the Lighthouse through Amazon Smile! For every \$1,000 milestone achieved, we will “light up” our digital animation to signify the progress toward our goal.

You can make a difference! To make a donation to The Lighthouse of Houston by Paypal, simply visit our donation page of our website at [www.houstonlighthouse.org/donate](http://www.houstonlighthouse.org/donate)

**HELP US #LIGHTITUP! THIS SEASON BY MAKING A DONATION TODAY!**

## SAN JAC OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY STUDENTS BRING THE SPIRIT!

For six weeks this semester, students pursuing their degrees as Occupational Therapy Assistants from San Jacinto College's South Campus have volunteered their time one day each week to work with clients in The Lighthouse's [Adult Day Care](#) program.

Graduates of San Jac's OTA program emerge with an Associate of Applied Science degree, able to patients develop, recover, and improve skills for daily living. They can then choose from a variety of employment opportunities, such as working with children with developmental disabilities, helping adults recover from strokes... or they can come back and work with our clients!

The class rotates every six weeks, and ended their tour of duty by coming in costume to celebrate the Halloween season with us.



## Volunteer with The Lighthouse of Houston!

The Lighthouse of Houston welcomes individuals or groups wishing to volunteer their support to the blind and low vision community. Volunteer activities include service projects, staffing of special events, and assisting clients in Reflections, our retail store. To be a volunteer, please [click here](#) to visit our website.





# Your Vision Health

with **Kia B. Eldred McGee, OD, FAAO**  
**Low Vision Diplomate**

November is national Diabetes Awareness Month. Diabetic-related retinopathy, or disease of the retina, is a leading cause of vision loss, affecting 1 out of every 4 American adults living with diabetes. Due to these conditions being so closely related, it is vital to take care of both as a part of overall eye health.



As you may already be aware, there are 2 types of diabetes. Type I is usually diagnosed earlier in life and there are still competing theories on why it occurs. Some theories include genetics, and auto-immune types of disorders. Type II diabetes is most frequently caused by a sedentary lifestyle and diet as well as hereditary factors. Diabetes is a common diagnosis in low vision clinics throughout the US and our own Lighthouse clinic sees many patients with this diagnosis.

The CDC has a list of tips to avoid vision loss from diabetes (either Type I or Type II) on their website. The following was taken from their information:

**Tip 1:** Schedule yearly eye exams with dilation. Seeing your doctor annually can help prevent the onset of major vision problems.

**Tip 2:** Visit your eye doctor quickly if any of the following occur: seeing small black dots and lines suddenly, seeing red spots, seeing a red fog, have a sudden change in clarity of vision, taking longer to adjust to darkness. Because the eyes are delicate instruments, changes may occur suddenly, so don't delay seeking appropriate treatment!

Both optometrists and ophthalmologists can dilate and check your eyes for changes that may be diabetes related. The types of changes in the eye which can occur may include diabetic retinopathy (changes in the blood vessels in the retina, leaky blood vessels), cataract (a clouding of the lens in the eye) and glaucoma (an increase in pressure in the eye).

Management of Type II Diabetes can best be remembered as knowing your ABCs - That is, managing your A1C (blood glucose level), your Blood Pressure, and your Cholesterol. If we don't lose sight of these indicators, we stand less at risk of losing our sight as we age.

Kia B. Eldred McGee, OD, FAAO, is a Lighthouse of Houston Optometrist, experienced in rehabilitative optometry. Dr. Eldred completed her residency training in low vision rehabilitation at the University of Houston, College of Optometry (1988) and served on the faculty for 20 years. She has achieved the status of Low Vision Diplomate, which is the highest professional status in the area of Low Vision Rehabilitation granted through the American Academy of Optometry. She played a major role in the inception of eye services at TIRR and works regularly with the VA Medical Center.

# The Lighthouse Promotes Behavioral Health

The Center for Behavioral Health Services provides quality mental health services for individuals living with or adjusting to visual impairment or blindness along with family member support.

Visual impairment, as a primary disability, often affects an individual's behavioral health and places them at a higher risk of developing behavioral health disorders than the general population.

Our Behavioral Health Services are specifically designed to target this population's unique behavioral health issues. Clients can receive services that include biopsychosocial screening, individual counseling, and personalized treatment plans to address adjustment disorder, depression, anxiety, PTSD as well as other common behavioral health effects of vision loss. Counseling services are available for parents, family, and other caregivers. For more information, please contact Melinda Benjumea, LPC at [mbenjumea@houstonlighthouse.org](mailto:mbenjumea@houstonlighthouse.org) or call (713) 284-8440



## HELP US RAISE SOME DOUGH! PURCHASE A KRISPY KREME DIGITAL DOZEN

From now through November 30, purchase a dozen original glazed doughnuts from us for \$11 and receive a Digital Dozen redeemable at any Krispy Kreme store nationwide! 50% of the proceeds go to fund The Lighthouse of Houston's programs & services!

To place your order, please send an email to [socialmedia@houstonlighthouse.org](mailto:socialmedia@houstonlighthouse.org) before the deadline of November 30!



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