

West Texas Lighthouse for the Blind

THE SPOTLIGHT



WINTER 2009

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Associated Agencies

National Industries for the Blind (NIB)

Texas Industries for the Blind and Handicapped (TIBH)

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A Visit From Congressman Conaway

On August 4, 2009, the West Texas Lighthouse was honored to have Congressman Michael Conaway visit our facility. Congressman Conaway is a supporter of the blind and visually impaired and took time out of his extremely busy schedule to tour our operation. This was the first time in many years we have had a member of Congress come to the Lighthouse.

Tracie Bell, Director of Development, lead the tour for the Congressman and his staff. She introduced him to all of the blind employees, which was a thrill for them to meet a Congressman. He found out that our employees are enthused about their work, take pride in the products they produce and feel like the Lighthouse is a family.



Congressman Conaway and Ethel Jenkins

He and his staff were impressed with the diversity of our product lines and the way our Blind employees are able to make products for both the Federal and State Governments.

One product that is of particular interest is the bio-degradable Navy Submarine Wet Bag. This bag is used to dispose of food and other bio-degradable waste when the submarines are submerged. This bag is not only manufactured in West Texas, it is made from 100% cotton. He was given a sample bag to take to the next local Farmer's Bureau meeting.



Congressman Conaway and Paul Valdez

We appreciate the support of our board members, who attended this visit; Steve Cecil, chairman, Pierce Miller and Maurice Westmoreland.

Congressman Conaway left with a better understanding of the mission of the Lighthouse and how it directly impacts the blind and visually impaired of San Angelo and the surrounding area.

JOHN STOKES

The State of Texas is our largest customer, buying over 45% of the products we sell. In support of the Texas state use program, John Stokes toured the Lighthouse. Mr. Stokes is District Director for State Senator Robert Duncan's San Angelo office.

This was his first visit to the Lighthouse and he was astonished at the pen assembly and all the products produced at our Lighthouse for sale to the various state agencies.

He is definitely an advocate of our program and we are glad to have him on our team.



Left: John Stokes, Vickie Sanders, Kevin Brown



John McCarthy at bat

Lighthouse Picnic

Every month that the Lighthouse sales exceeds the monthly goal, lunch is provided for all employees. This year our business has grown and we have met or exceeded the sales goals every month. The luncheon is a reward for hard work and it helps to boost morale.



In September the Lighthouse Employee Council asked if they could have a picnic instead of the monthly luncheon. On October 8, 2009, we closed the Lighthouse and headed to the Goodfellow AFB Recreation Camp, located on Lake Nasworthy.

It was a typical West Texas Day-WINDY!! The day started with a wild game of horseshoes, Doyle Bell our self proclaimed horseshoe champ was beaten by some novice throwers. Doyle says "wait till next year" Other activities included rides on a horse drawn buggy, compliments of Tina Lira's brother, bingo and beep softball.



Kevin Brown and Tina Lira

Bingo was a big hit, probably due to the prizes given to the winners. Beep ball is a softball that gives off a beep so that a blind person has a chance to hit and catch the ball. The game was very entertaining but we need some practice.

The day ended all too soon. Plans are already in the works for next years' picnic and to make this an annual event. This was a day of food, fun and games for all the West Texas Lighthouse employees.



Manuel Zavala and Doyle Bell

How Low Can

From scary to funny – we had it all at our Halloween Costume Contest. After a potluck lunch, prizes were given for the best, scariest, funniest and most unique costumes. A special award was given for the judge's choice award.



Elida Hernandez, Justin Unger, Helen Glenn, Manuel Zavala, Rita Damian

"WALK FOR BLIND AWARENESS"



Left: Mary McKamie and Mary Perez

On October 17, the West Texas Lighthouse for the Blind hosted its first Two-Mile Walk for Blind Awareness. The event was held near the KOA camp ground in San Angelo near Lake Nasworthy. The Angelo State University girls cross country and track teams volunteered spotters to provide safety for the blind and visually impaired walkers.

October is Blind Awareness month and is used to promote awareness and education as to the issues of the blind. Awareness fosters understanding, acceptance and helps the sighted learn methods of assisting and interacting with the blind and visually impaired. This knowledge helps integrate the blind into the community and dispels misconceptions as to what the blind are able to do.

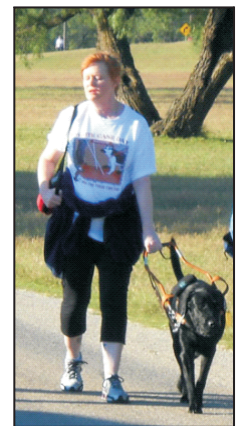
We could not have asked for better weather and the event was a great success. All walkers and runners received a reusable shopping bag made by the Lighthouse.

An information booth was set up for the community, with information from the Department of Blind Services and the West Texas Lighthouse for the Blind. The lighthouse staff also set up a display of the products produced at the Lighthouse by the blind and visually impaired.

A course was set up so that sighted walkers could put on blindfolds and use canes to see what it is like to be blind and use a cane for mobility.



John and Mary McCarthy



Tracie Bell and Fred

BLIND EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

Below are some of the programs available to the blind and visually impaired.

National Industries for the Blind offers the following Business Leadership Programs:

- Business Basics
- Leaders at all Levels
- Business Management Training
- Fellowship for Leadership Development

One of the of our Lighthouse employees, Tracie Bell took advantage of the Business Basics course and completed it with flying colors. Mrs. Bell was invited to attend the annual NIB conference in Kansas City, Missouri to accept a plaque and a certificate for her accomplishment.

VISIT OUR LIGHTHOUSE

If you would like to schedule a tour or a visit please give us a call at: 325-653-4231. We are always happy to show our lighthouse and the products we manufacture.



Past visitors include:

- Congressman Conaway
- Leadership San Angelo Class
- Representatives from Goodfellow AFB
- John Stokes, Representative of Senator Robert Duncan's office
- Representatives of San Angelo Schools
- Representatives of Grape Creek Schools
- Pat Attebery, KLST News
- Rick Smith, San Angelo Standard Times

PETER J. SALMON AND ARTIE LEE HINDS AWARDS

Kevin Brown, the West Texas Lighthouse for the Blind Employee of the Year, attended the National Industries for the Blind conference in Kansas City, Missouri, as a nominee for the Peter J. Salmon Award. This is an award given to employees that have excelled in their positions throughout the NIB associated agencies.

The following week Mr. Brown was also a nominee for the Artie Lee Hinds Award from Texas Industries for the Blind and Handicapped in Austin. This award is for the blind and handicapped worker of the year for the state of Texas. An accomplished saxophone player Kevin also provided music at the awards dinner.

NEW EMPLOYEES

We are proud to announce the following blind and visually impaired employees that joined our team in 2009:

- Listene McCarthy
- Devin Harrell
- Hank Schreiner
- Phyllis Knox
- Maria Mann
- Louis Mann