



THE SPOTLIGHT

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF
WEST TEXAS LIGHTHOUSE FOR THE BLIND

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SUMMER 2011



Jorge Castillo (left) and San Angelo Mayor Alvin New

Jorge Castillo—Employee of the Year

The West Texas Lighthouse for the Blind named Jorge Castillo as the 2010 Employee of the Year and nominated him for the Peter J. Salmon Award.

This award has been given to blind employees affiliated with the National Industries for the Blind since 1968. Along with this recognition, Jorge will be the West Texas nominee at the national conference in New Orleans.

Even though Jorge's blindness has been a part of his life since he was seven years old, he faced all obstacles with a positive attitude declaring, "Blindness will never stand in my way." Jorge moved to Texas from Mexico when he was eleven years old. After working hard to learn English, Jorge went

on to graduate from high school and with the support of his family, he enrolled at Angelo State University. With a lot of drive and determination, he received his Bachelor's degree in Business Administration and Management.

Jorge joined the Lighthouse family in 2007, working in quality control. His current position is packaging of various products such as correction tape, ID reels, pens, pencils and other office products.

Jorge comes to work every day with a positive attitude and a great concern for the quality of his work. When asked about the Lighthouse, Jorge said, "It's a good working environment, I love it, and I love what I do."

Mission Support



The Odessa Westside Lions Club recently donated \$5,000 to the Lighthouse. This amazing gift was completely unexpected and has made a huge impact at the Lighthouse. Because of their donation, the Lighthouse was able to purchase a forklift, which was one of the items on our Wish List.

The forklift helps us safely move large amounts of supplies in our warehouse in a short amount of time. This has further increased the safety of our workplace and it has made our operations more efficient which may eventually allow us to hire even more blind people.

For that, we would like to say "THANK YOU" to the Odessa Westside Lions Club for supporting our mission of Creating Jobs & Changing Lives.

Holiday Lunch



On December 14, the San Angelo Garden Club repeated their annual gift to the Lighthouse by once again providing food for our Holiday Luncheon.

For the past 27 years, these ladies have shared their kindness and the joy of the holiday season with the Lighthouse. A heartfelt “THANK YOU” goes out to the Garden Club for their generosity.

Christmas Party

On December 16, the Lighthouse employees and their guests met up at Henry’s Diner in San Angelo for the annual Christmas party.

The night began with good food and continued with great conversation while we all waited eagerly for the main event—the white elephant gift exchange.

Some of the gifts that were brought included chocolates, clothing, perfume, music and lottery tickets. Each person who participated in the gift exchange



could either select a gift or they could choose to steal someone else’s gift, but each gift could only be stolen up to three times.

What started as a simple gift exchange quickly became an exciting game of strategy as we all competed to get the gifts we wanted.

Overall, the Christmas party was full of fun, laughter and good ‘ol fashioned fellowship.

It was a great way to wrap up a year of hard work and success at the Lighthouse.

Bowling and Burgers

In February, our Executive Director, Dave Wells, treated all of the Lighthouse employees to bowling and burgers at Stadium Lanes bowling alley in San Angelo.

This is the third time in three years that we have enjoyed this outing. Normally, a trip to the bowling alley may not seem all that exciting, but when you have a mix of blind people and sighted people competing against each other, the experience is nothing short of eventful.

The employees were divided into eight teams and the competition began. After playing several rounds, we were astonished at the results. Out of the eight top



bowlers, six of them were blind or visually impaired. On average, our visually-impaired employees bowled better than our sighted employees.

After having such a fun time, we can’t wait to

bowl again, and the sighted employees can’t wait for a rematch.



Lions Lunch

The San Angelo Downtown Lions Club treated the Lighthouse employees to a couple of home-cooked meals. On May 13, the Lions made chili for frito pie. On June 8, the menu consisted of BBQ sandwiches, potato salad, beans and various desserts.

The Dynamic Downtown Lions Club has graciously volunteered to cook lunch for all our employees every other month. The meals were delicious and we look forward to their next visit. A sincere “Thank You” goes out to the Downtown Lions Club for their continued service to the community.

More Than Meets The Eye by Manuel Zavala



My name is Manuel Zavala, and like most of my co-workers at the West Texas Lighthouse, I am legally blind. But there's more to my blindness than meets the eye. I have a story, a life before blindness.

After graduating high school in 1992 in Compton, California, I started my first job as a security guard at a hospital in Los Angeles. Within a few years, I was honored as the Employee of the Year for the hospital and was promoted to Security Supervisor, but there was something missing from the job. After eight years at the hospital, I wanted more physically challenging work, so I took a construction job closer to home.

One day in 2005, my brother told me about San Angelo, Texas and how it was a great place to live. I loved my construction job but as a family man, I felt that moving to San Angelo was the right decision for my wife and kids.

Once in San Angelo, I struggled to find work. Although I felt hopeful, the struggles became much worse. One morning, I woke up to find a dark spot blocking the center of my vision. Soon after, my doctor diagnosed me with macular degeneration and diabetic retinopathy. At that moment, I could hear the doors closing on my dreams and opportunities.



My vision caused me to become a different person. I was no longer happy because I was constantly reminded of how much I lost. I could no longer tell my kids apart. I could never do physical work again. I never felt so low.

Although I abandoned all confidence in myself and any hope in finding work, my family was still struggling and I needed a job. I searched relentlessly for jobs, but it seemed that no one had a place for a blind person. Then one day I met Dave Wells, the Lighthouse Director. He invited me to the Lighthouse to see how they manufacture pens. The word "manufacture" reminded me of the physical work I used to enjoy, so I took him up on his offer and

began working at the Lighthouse.

From my first day at the Lighthouse, I knew I had found a home. Since most of my co-workers were also visually-impaired, I no longer felt alone. And things just kept getting better and better. In my first year of working at the Lighthouse, I earned a familiar title: Employee of the Year. I was also promoted to Material Handler which has allowed me to do the physical work I have always wanted to do.

Overall, the Lighthouse has brought me back to normal. My

confidence and positive attitude have been completely restored. I even had the confidence to further my education with a Business Writing course at Hadley School for the Blind. The Lighthouse makes me feel like I am able to do anything.



At first glance, the Lighthouse is just a building, but a closer look reveals the people that work here, their incredible stories, and how this place has changed their lives. Like me, the Lighthouse is more than meets the eye.

Ask the Lighthouse ?

Q: How do the blind people get to work without being able to drive?

A: Being blind means that you cannot legally drive a vehicle. So most of us ride the bus to work through Concho Valley Transit, and some of us simply get rides from family, friends and co-workers at the Lighthouse.

The Lighthouse knows that mobility can be a challenge for blind people, so we have a support system here that makes sure everyone can get to work.

If you have a question for the Lighthouse, please send it in. Your question may be answered in our next newsletter.



Larry Guyger
November



Rudy Munoz
January



Allen Adamson
February

Employees of the Month



Francisco Padilla
March



Leslie Bell
April



Johnny Wilridge
May

Each month the Lighthouse recognizes an employee for their hard work and for going the extra mile. The employees shown above have exhibited a great attitude, good attendance and extraordinary work ethic day in and day out. We are very fortunate to have them working at the Lighthouse.

New Products

We are always looking to diversify our product lines in order to increase our sales. This directly relates to our primary mission of creating jobs for blind people because the more success we have in our sales, the more blind people we can hire. Shown below are some of our new products.

Scotch Tape



Key Chain Light



Jorge Castillo
packages WD-40



Smart Card Holder



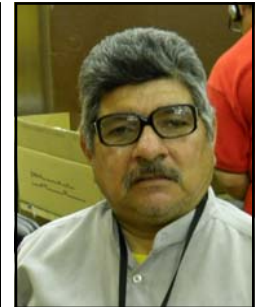
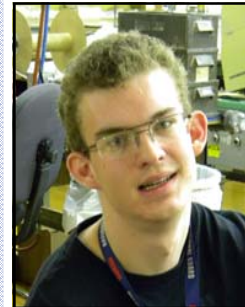
Sticky Notes

New Employees

The Lighthouse has again succeeded in its fight to lower the number of unemployed blind people in West Texas and is proud to announce the newest additions to our team:

Michael Fox

William Rios



Visit the Lighthouse



We are delighted to show off our Lighthouse, our employees, and our products. If you would like to schedule a tour of our facility, please call us at 325-653-4231.

Recent visitors include:

- Amarillo Girls Track Team
- Leadership San Angelo
- Christoval Elementary 4th Grade
- Toby Galindo and Family
- Sandy Finley - National Industries for the Blind

Visit us Online



Scan the QR code above using any mobile phone with a QR reader app.

Our Wish List

Thanks to the Odessa Westside Lions Club the forklift has been checked off of our Wish List.

However, we are still in need of additional equipment and donations. If you are looking for a way to help, please consider the following needs:

Employee Lockers

Est. Cost: \$2,000

Production Tables

Est. Cost: \$1,200 ea

Warehouse Shelves

Est. Cost: \$20,000