



# THE SPOTLIGHT

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF  
WEST TEXAS LIGHTHOUSE FOR THE BLIND

[WWW.LIGHTHOUSEFORTHEBLIND.ORG](http://WWW.LIGHTHOUSEFORTHEBLIND.ORG)

Winter 2011



## Community Supports Blind Awareness

October is National Blind Awareness Month and accordingly, the West Texas Lighthouse for the Blind hosted its Third Annual Walk for Blind Awareness on October 29th.

Although the temperature was a bit chilly, we had close to 100 walkers and volunteers come out for the walk to promote Blind Awareness in our community. We had several vendors set up booths to help us promote blind awareness.

The Sam's Club Vision Center provided vision screening and information, La Esperanza Health & Dental Centers performed blood pressure checks, Division for Blind Services provided

information on their services for the Concho Valley, and Sonic handed out water to all the volunteers and walkers.



A special thanks goes out to the San Angelo Downtown Lion's Club for sponsoring t-shirts for the walk.

We also want to thank HEB, Wal-Mart and Sam's Club for

their generosity and support in helping us provide fruit, coffee, hot chocolate, and donuts.

Without all our vendors, sponsors and volunteers this event would not have been possible.



Mark your calendars for October 2012; we have some exciting events planned for next year's walk. Come out and raise Blind Awareness in our community!

## Longtime Employee Retires



Margene Hale, who has worked at the Lighthouse for the past 37 years, decided to hang up her boots and retire.

Margene started out working in the Fundraising Department and eventually transitioned into Accounting. After many years, she took the title of Office Manager. In this role, she was in charge of many of the daily operations of the business.

She rarely missed work and was always the first person to arrive. Her work ethic was a large part of our success. The staff and board of directors will miss her presence at the Lighthouse.

For that, we would like to say "THANK YOU" to Margene Hale and we wish her a very long and enjoyable retirement.

## Carol Turner

In September, The Turner Collection in San Angelo celebrated their 25th Anniversary.

In honor of the celebration they held a style show, raffle and silent auction.

The proceeds from the raffle and silent auction were donated to the Lighthouse.

We would like to thank Carol Turner for her donation and support. People like her in our community make our mission possible.

## Summer Picnic

On September 14th, the Lighthouse employees loaded up and headed out to the Goodfellow Recreation Camp for our annual Company Picnic. The day was filled with music, games and food.

Music was provided by several talented Lighthouse employees with selections ranging from Jazz to Tejano.

And of course, no event at the Lighthouse is complete without food. The menu consisted of beef

and chicken fajitas, beans, rice and many, many desserts.



The biggest treat this year was the pontoon boat rides provided by the Rec Camp.

Everyone had a good time cruising the lake.

The fun continued with basketball, tennis and horseshoe games, and ended with bingo games and prizes. The picnic was a great way to close out the summer and reward the Lighthouse team for all their hard work. We certainly look forward to next year.

## Felix Reyes

### Texas Employee of the Year



In early October, the Texas Industries for the Blind and Handicap held their 4th annual awards banquet, where the

Artie Lee Hinds Award is given to the employee of the year for the State of Texas.

The West Texas Lighthouse nominee for 2011 was Felix Reyes.

Felix has been a part of the Lighthouse for six years. He performs several duties, which include blister packing, hand assembly, and packaging of various products. Recently, he has trained as a sewing machine operator.

He is known to complete tasks on time and ensures products are of good quality. He is a quick, versatile learner, and his willingness to try new tasks allows him to move to different production areas when needed.

Felix's positive attitude also allows him to work well with his coworkers. He goes above and beyond, and is always willing to train and help others. Felix is a true



Manuel Zavala & Felix Reyes, Jr.  
at the TIBH Awards Dinner



## Lions Lunch

The San Angelo Downtown Lions Club treated the Lighthouse employees to a couple of home-cooked meals in the months of August and October.

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.

# Employee Spotlight – Jorge Castillo



There's more to blindness than meets the eye, so in each issue of *The Spotlight*, we like to introduce a Lighthouse employee and share their story.

Meet Jorge Castillo. Jorge has proven to be an indispensable member of the Lighthouse's production team.

From humble beginnings in Mexico, Jorge and his family moved to Miles, Texas when he was 11 years old. Finding himself thrown into secondary education in a foreign country, Jorge had a lot of catching up to do. Upon arriving here, Jorge could not speak one

word of English. Encouraged by a supportive teacher and buoyed by his own relentless optimism, Jorge painstakingly learned a new and very difficult language.

Despite being discounted by many prejudiced classmates and teachers, Jorge doggedly persevered. This perseverance would eventually pay off, as Jorge is now a competent English-speaker and fully bilingual, a valuable skill in today's competitive job market. Jorge furthered his education, locally, at Howard College and Angelo State University, where he obtained a

degree in Business Administration and Management.

His accomplishments are impressive in and of themselves, but even more so considering he knew nothing of the local language when he arrived here, and could



Jorge Castillo & Mayor Alvin New

not lean on his sense of sight for non-verbal communication. Jorge explains his philosophy as a simple day-by-day approach, taking nothing for granted and working continuously towards improvement.

Jorge and others like him are the cornerstone of the Lighthouse's success.

## ISO 9001-2008

The International Organization of Standards (ISO) has been a standard that US Companies have been implementing since 1987.

The Management staff at the Lighthouse realizes that obtaining ISO Certification is a necessity in order to continue to grow the business and produce quality products in a timely manner.

Our Quality Control Manager, Jimmy Berry, and Operations Manager, Stephen Horton, have taken the lead in making sure our quality systems and procedures will satisfy ISO requirements. Mr. Berry started ISO training with the Lighthouse employees and has received unwavering support in his efforts.

The need to employ the blind and visually impaired continues to be a challenge all across the US. More than 70% of blind people in the US are unemployed. For almost 50 years, it has been our mission to drastically reduce this percentage in the Concho Valley.

Recently, representatives from the Division for Blind Services in Abilene have informed us there are currently no jobs available in the Big Country region for blind and visually impaired people.

This serves as an excellent opportunity for the Lighthouse to extend its mission to communities in need. We have proposed to expand our operations by opening an annex in Abilene.

## Abilene Annex

Our proposal would be to start out small, extending some of the products we currently manufacture and assemble to the Abilene location. There is great potential for this facility to grow as we continue to develop more products.

We are currently looking for a building around 2,000 square feet and would employ approximately five employees, one supervisor and four workers.

We look forward to the challenges and potential rewards of expanding our organization and creating jobs for blind people beyond the Concho Valley.

If you would like to help or have any questions, please call the Lighthouse for details.



Johnny Wilridge  
May



Margarita Cantu  
June



Paul Valdez  
July

## Employees of the Month



Margarita Cantu  
August



John McCarthy  
September



Kevin Brown  
October

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.



Mini Flashlight



Scissors



Maria Mann packaging  
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:

Denise Baker - Accounting  
Michelle Charles - Hand Assembly  
Rosalia Galindo - Sewing  
Bob Hagemier - Material Handler  
Judy Rivers - Sewing  
Carol Thompson - Hand Assembly  
Aaron Vogt - Inventory

## Visit the Lighthouse



We are delighted to show off our Lighthouse, our employees, and our products. To schedule a tour, call 325-653-4231.

Recent visitors include:

- Mike Quinley - Harley/Racon Company
- Charles Carpenter - Barbco Inc.
- Bill Ray - Sam's Low Vision Center
- Carol Turner - Turner Collection
- David Jebson - DARS in Dallas
- Cari Rodgers - ASU Student
- San Angelo Downtown Lion's Club
- Texas Parks and Wildlife

### Visit us Online



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

## Our Wish List

Though the Lighthouse has been striving to increase sales and remain competitive, we are still in need of additional equipment and donations.

If you would like to help, please consider the following needs:

*Employee Lockers*

*Est. Cost: \$2,000*

*Production Tables*

*Est. Cost: \$1,200 ea*

*Cafeteria Chairs*

*Est. Cost: \$2,500*