

ANNUAL REPORT

123 State Street, New Orleans, Louisiana 70118 • www.lhb.org

Blind Support

An excerpt from “Brothers Together: Lessons Learned that have Anchored our Souls”

I am a 62 year old black male married to a 62 year old black female. Together, we have a son who is 33. I do not feel that our family is so different than other families we have encountered, but I do feel we are very unique in the way we live our daily lives. To begin telling you this experience, I must begin thirty-nine years earlier.

I met my wife in 1969 when I sang a song at the wedding of two dear friends. Unknowingly, I met the girl I would madly fall in love with. With help from friends, I was introduced to Lydia. Meeting her was no different than any other girls I had met. She was a very attractive woman to me and I wanted to pursue her interest. From the day we met in June 1969, things began to move so fast; I proposed to marry her on my birthday, January 31, 1970, graduated from college June 1970, and married Lydia December 12, 1970. Phew! At that rate of change, I'm lucky I survived 1970.

I soon realized that this whirlwind year was only preparation for the real learning experience that lay ahead. So the new life together begins, the real eye opener, the real

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Don Miller with wife Lydia, chronicles their life of vision loss and raising a family.

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**Bill Price,
Lighthouse
President**

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

One of my un-anticipated tasks at this stage of life is watching children's television programs with my two year old grandson. We watch "Wonder Pets" and they have a slogan: "We're not too big and we're not too strong, but when we all work together, we get the job done!" Clearly, our staff and employees understand this with one exception, the Lighthouse has increased its' sales revenues and service levels every year since 2002. The one exception was 2005 with Hurricane Katrina. We are truly blessed as this year is on another record breaking track.

While it is easy to talk about the past, the future is what is important. This year will see great progress in the improvement of our New Orleans facility. The addition of the new 20,000 square foot warehouse and other internal improvements will greatly enhance the function and appearance of our property. It is hoped that funding will also allow the start of our long anticipated Administration building. The addition of this building will free up much needed space to accommodate the continued growth in the services we provide to people with vision loss. The possible start of a manufacturing project and services in the Baton Rouge area is exciting and, while still in the developmental stage, it looks very

promising. We are also developing new biodegradable cups that meet "Green" initiatives set by our largest customer, the US Government.

Another 2009 initiative is to work harder to make sure that all individuals who have vision loss are aware of the great array of services offered by our organization. It is important to know that most of the individuals who come to the Lighthouse are not "totally" blind. The legal threshold of blindness can actually leave a person with useful vision. A new emphasis will be the message that the Lighthouse is not just for the "blind" but for anyone who has vision loss.

"Many Thanks" to all of you who have supported our mission throughout the years. Both individual and community support are critical and we pledge to continue to use your support responsibly and effectively to meet the needs of people who have vision loss.

MISSION STATEMENT: The Lighthouse for the Blind serves people in the region who are blind or visually impaired by providing job training, competitive employment and services. Our goal is to promote individual independence and self-reliance. We are committed to the proactive development of quality products and services. The Lighthouse works in cooperation and partnership with private, public and nonprofit entities.

The Lighthouse for the Blind is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer

Benefit helps Lighthouse continue mission

Over the past 3 years, the Casbarian family has graciously hosted the Lighthouse's Spring Benefit at Arnaud's Restaurant, located at 813 Rue Bienville in the French Quarter. These benefits are used not only to raise necessary dollars to help the Lighthouse's publicity and marketing efforts, but also to help raise awareness and support for the blind and visually impaired community.

Sponsors of this year's benefit include Arnaud's Restaurant, Friend & Company Fine Jewelers, The Goldring Family Foundation, Perfect Presentations, Huhtamaki, and Victory Packaging. Along with the sponsors, the following provided generous gifts for the silent auction and raf-

file: Earthsavers, Eclectic Home, Harouni Gallery, Lum Vintage Lighting and Accessories, Mignon Faget, Nadine Blake LLC, the New Orleans Saints, Palm Patch, Patty Constantine Caterers, the Ritz Carlton, St. Charles Vision, St. Charles Vision Outlet and Two Sprouts.

Through the sponsors, silent auction items, raffle items and the tickets purchased by individuals, the Lighthouse was able to raise over \$40,000 this year to help promote its mission of providing jobs and services to the blind and visually impaired in southeast Louisiana. We would like to express our sincere gratitude to those that helped to make this year's benefit such a wonderful success.



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If you would like more information on the Doro HandleEasy Cell Phone, please call Magnifiers & More at (504)891-7008 or visit our website www.lhb.org.



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VOLUNTEERS

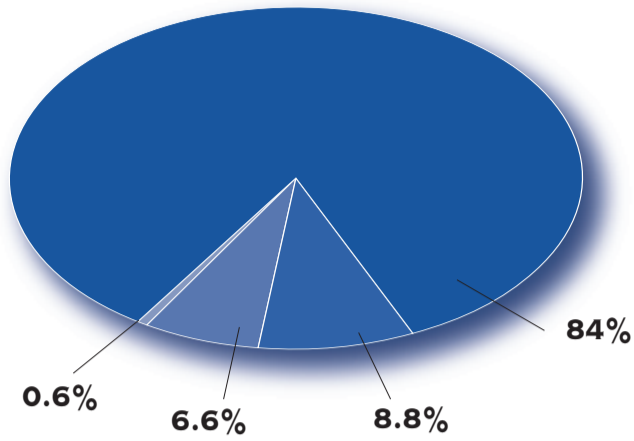
Nicholas Chedid
Brooke Duson
Steven Furr
Savanthia Gros
Samantha Hetchler
John Jordan

Beverly Kaplan
Jessica Magonet
Sr. Maria Gonzales
Melanie McGuire
Danielle Roberts
Andretta Robinson

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Barbara Thompson
Rebecca Treson
Roberta Tucker *
Derelyn Williams

2008 FINANCIAL REPORT

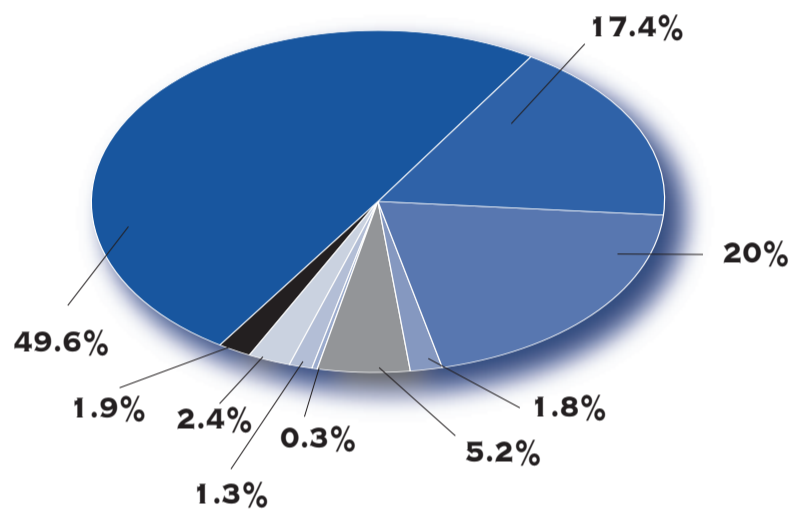
EXPENSES BY ACTIVITY



■ Manufacturing	\$15,709,933
■ Services	\$1,643,241
■ Administration	\$1,225,142
■ Development	\$119,374
Total	\$18,697,690



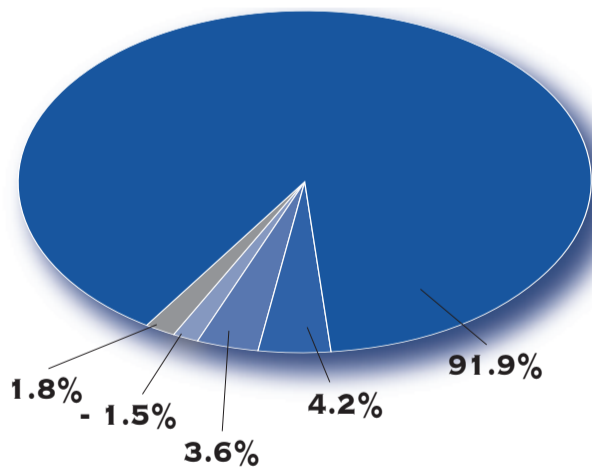
SALES BY CATEGORY



■ Paper Plate	\$9,341,192
■ Paper Towel	\$2,232,065
■ Paper Cup	\$4,107,006
■ Assembly	\$197,221
■ Service Contracts	\$833,846
■ Textiles	\$421,541
■ Mops	\$243,071
■ Fee for Service	\$363,658
■ Resale	\$313,310
Total	\$18,052,910



REVENUE BY SOURCE



■ Manufacturing	\$17,375,942
■ Grants	\$799,272
■ Fee for Service	\$676,969
■ Investments	-\$283,680
■ Gifts (non-capital)	\$339,331
■ Bequests	\$1,986
Total	\$18,909,820



Blind Support

continued from page 1

life for the rest of my life, not by myself, but with a partner. I knew Lydia had visual problems and soon began to learn the extent of her disability. Like others who had met Lydia, she appeared to be normal and showed very few signs of her disability. I had to learn how to live with her disability.

When do I help her, or more important, when do I stay away and let well enough alone? I come from a nurturing family with strong and caring parents and sibling relationships. The one thing I learned from these ties is to be there for each other in need and to have patience and understanding though my thoughts may not agree with theirs.

Lydia was always an independent individual and I realized early in our relationship that I should not treat her as a handicapped person. This was very hard for me. I would see her struggling to do a simple task such as pouring water in a cup or picking up the remote for the television. With sighted people, we can see when the cup is full or look for the remote when it's not in the same place. Multiply the extra time it takes for someone who's blind to perform such simple tasks on a daily basis. Thank God, how fortunate we are to be sighted.

Yes, at first, it hurt to watch and not do anything, but Lydia had to learn to do these daily tasks in a way that was functional to her. She had to make mistakes, become frustrated and cry. So what if you spilled the milk! So what if

you burned the dinner!! Life did not stop, Lydia did not quit trying and I surely learned to wait for Lydia to ask me for help.

In all marriages, one major factor is trust. Yes, we do trust each other. Yet, because blindness enters into the equation, trust escalates to a new level. Being from a well adjusted strong family background, I never underestimated my responsibilities as head and main provider of my family. The kind of trust I'm speaking of is when my wife and I have had a very heated argument and we cannot stand to be in the same room and the very next minute I have to bring her to work, church or the store. She trusts that I will continue to take her hand and escort her to the car, find what she needs at the store and show the respect I show when we are on good terms. The kind of trust I'm speaking of is how to know that even though you cannot see the bills I pay, you trust I spend your hard earned money with the same care I spend mine.

The challenge of Lydia's blindness was certainly a test but we also chose to parent. As all parents know, it is hard enough with two healthy parents raising a child. It did not take long for Kendrick to realize that his mother's sight was impaired. We made all efforts to teach him of her disability. We taught him not to leave toys and other things in the middle of the floor where she walked. We encouraged him to feel good about himself and his parents though his friends and peers saw flaws. We loved him and took care of him and noth-

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Help the Lighthouse reduce waste

In an effort to reduce the expense of producing and mailing the Lighthouse newsletter, the Lighthouse would like to ask your help. If you have an e-mail address and would prefer to receive the Lighthouse newsletter via e-mail rather than hard copy, please contact the Development office. The newsletter is in

Acrobat Adobe PDF format and for those that are visually impaired or blind, Acrobat now offers a voice reader within the program itself. You may call us at (504)899-4501 ext. 209 or e-mail: cwhite@lhb.org. Please help the Lighthouse save cost and trees. Sign up for e-newsletters today!

Blind Support

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ing else mattered.

Kendrick was always a handful, but he could not pull anything over on his mother. Lydia could not see what he was doing, but she knew when he was not doing the right things. If she did not know, she fooled him into believing that she did. Lydia and I found ourselves at each others throat while trying to raise Kendrick. Finally, we realized he was playing both ends against the middle. From that day on, we would do a better job of joining our parenting forces with him. Our communication level began to reach an all time high. Yes, we then began to win the struggle. Today we can stand as proud parents for the care and common sense we used years ago.

I do not have all the answers to why our marriage works and why others fail. Having a handicap is not the determining factor in any marriage. Hopefully love, respect and admiration are key elements to start any good relationship. Since being married, I have met many of Lydia's friends who are handicapped, some physically and some visually. Every one of them are very mobile, they enjoy life to the fullest extent. When they are down, they bounce back stronger then they were before.

Sometimes, I am so amazed at the things they have accomplished; I know I should never complain about anything ever again.

Throughout my marriage to Lydia, the only handicap that seems to have existed is me, the time I have taken to learn about how to live with her condition, keep a positive attitude and above all show the love, respect and patience to my wife in view of her condition.

Who knows how our life could have been? The knowledge I have obtained in the first 39 years makes me ready for another 39.

~ Don Louis Miller,

New Orleans, Louisiana

Excerpt from "Brothers Together: Lessons Learned that have Anchored our Souls"

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Don Miller, Mailroom Supervisor, is a Lighthouse employee who works at the IRS mailroom, a Lighthouse service contract job with the government. Lydia Miller, Don's wife, also works at the Lighthouse in the Scrubber department as a packer. Lydia was diagnosed with Congenital Glaucoma at twelve months old. She had her first surgery for the defect at 21-months and was able to retain part of her vision until 2000 when she completely lost her sight.

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