

By Senator Margolis

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1 Senate Resolution

2 A resolution recognizing the outstanding  
3 accomplishments of Miami Lighthouse for the Blind and  
4 Visually Impaired, Inc., and its extraordinary efforts  
5 on behalf of individuals and families whose lives are  
6 touched by vision impairment.

7  
8 WHEREAS, in 1931, Dolly Gamble, inspired and encouraged by  
9 Helen Keller, established the Florida Association of Workers for  
10 the Blind, Inc., in a 900-square-foot bungalow in what is now  
11 East Little Havana in Miami, and

12 WHEREAS, through the 1940s, the organization, then known as  
13 Miami Lighthouse, served the blind community in Miami as a  
14 sheltered workshop, the accepted practice at that time, offering  
15 chair caning, basketry, and other crafts, and

16 WHEREAS, when the University of Miami envisioned creation  
17 of a state-of-the-art institute for diseases and disorders  
18 affecting vision, Miami Lighthouse donated \$500,000 as seed  
19 money for the Bascom Palmer Eye Institute and donated land to  
20 the University of Miami School of Medicine, and

21 WHEREAS, in the 1970s, Miami Lighthouse changed its model  
22 to one centered on rehabilitation services that enable blind and  
23 visually impaired individuals to achieve independence, and

24 WHEREAS, in 1978, Miami Lighthouse received accreditation  
25 from an organization created by Congress and now known as the  
26 National Accreditation Council for Blind and Low Vision  
27 Services, and has continuously met the council's rigorous  
28 accreditation standards ever since, and

29 WHEREAS, in 2001, a public capital campaign made possible a

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30 major expansion to the original facility, which added a second-  
31 floor wing that houses computer laboratories, space for  
32 vocational training, and a sensory and tactile garden area, and

33 WHEREAS, in 2003, the organization changed its corporate  
34 name to Miami Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired,  
35 Inc., to reflect the services it provides to individuals  
36 affected by uncorrectable low vision, and

37 WHEREAS, in 2005, Virginia A. Jacko, an experienced  
38 business executive who was losing her sight to retinitis  
39 pigmentosa, was selected president and CEO, and, under her  
40 leadership, many innovative programs have been launched, and

41 WHEREAS, in 2007, the Dr. Bruce Heiken Memorial Fund merged  
42 with the Miami Lighthouse to create the Heiken Children's Vision  
43 Program, and Miami Lighthouse began providing free eye  
44 examinations and prescription glasses to low-income children in  
45 Miami-Dade County, and

46 WHEREAS, in 2008, Miami Lighthouse for the Blind and  
47 Visually Impaired, Inc., was one of 50 institutions in the  
48 nation to receive the Healthy Vision Community Award from the  
49 National Eye Institute, and, in 2010 won the award a second  
50 time, and

51 WHEREAS, in 2010, the Florida Heiken Children's Vision  
52 Program, LLC, was incorporated as a division of Miami  
53 Lighthouse, expanding the provision of free eye examinations and  
54 prescription glasses to low-income schoolchildren in 42 Florida  
55 counties, with 7,950 children receiving exams and 5,963  
56 receiving prescription eyeglasses during the 2010-2011 school  
57 year, and

58 WHEREAS, that same year, Miami Lighthouse for the Blind and

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59 Visually Impaired, Inc., received the Diamond Award from the  
60 Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce for excellence and commitment  
61 to the community, and

62 WHEREAS, Miami Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually  
63 Impaired, Inc., is enriching the lives of countless Floridians,  
64 from babies to seniors, championing programs in Braille  
65 literacy, music, and the arts, and ensuring that schoolchildren  
66 statewide have access to high-quality vision services, NOW,  
67 THEREFORE,

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69 Be It Resolved by the Senate of the State of Florida:

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71 That the Florida Senate recognizes the outstanding  
72 achievements of Miami Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually  
73 Impaired, Inc., and its extraordinary efforts on behalf of  
74 individuals and families whose lives are touched by vision  
75 impairment.

76 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution, with  
77 the Seal of the Senate affixed, be presented to the Miami  
78 Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired, Inc., as a  
79 tangible token of the sentiments of the Florida Senate.