



2012 Employee of the Year Greg Szabo, Sr. Production Worker, INL

Congratulations to our 2012 Employees of the Year!

Congratulations to Senior Production Worker Greg Szabo and Help Desk Technician / Front Office Support Larry Irvin who were named as The Lighthouse for the Blind, Inc.'s 2012 Employees of the Year!

These awards are given for leadership in the blindness field to visually impaired employees who display outstanding personal and professional qualities. They will both travel to National Harbor, MD for the National Industries for the Blind (NIB) National Conference and Expo in October. Larry Irvin will compete as an indirect labor representative for the *Milton J. Samuelson Award* and Greg Szabo will compete as a direct labor representative for the *Peter J. Salmon Award*.

Greg Szabo

"The Lighthouse for the Blind, Inc. is a great organization that has improved my life immensely," says Greg Szabo, Senior Production Worker at Inland Northwest Lighthouse (INL) in Spokane, WA. "People should take a tour of the Lighthouse just to see how functional a person with visual disabilities can be, and to enlighten them as to what we are capable of."

Growing up in a small community of Aurora, Illinois, Greg was born with Retinitis Pigmentosa (RP), and began experiencing severe problems with his eyesight at the age of 22. He graduated from Waubensee Community College in Sugar Grove, IL with an AA degree in Liberal Arts with a focus on Journalism. "The town I lived in had no public transportation, so finding work was difficult," Greg notes. "It wasn't until I moved to Portland in August of 2010 that I

found work at an indoor dog park; a good six years after graduating college."

While living in Portland, Greg became involved with goalball, a team sport designed for athletes who are blind. While

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– Greg Szabo, Sr. Production Worker –

participating in a goalball tournament in Portland, a friend of his visiting from Spokane watched him play, and enlisted him to help out a fledgling team in Spokane (called the Spokane Spin) get their team organized and off the ground. It was in this relationship that Greg met several employees of INL and learned about the organization and its mission.

He was swiftly hired into the organization and now plays and coaches the Spokane Spin team.

"My favorite thing about working at the Lighthouse is having people around you understand and realize that individuals who are blind are capable of anything," Greg adds. "I love being able to show other individuals who are blind the skills I've obtained throughout my life, both in independent living and work skills. I've gained experience on a lot of machinery I never thought I would work on. Being an internal auditor is something I never thought I'd be involved with."

When Greg isn't hard at work at INL, he coaches and plays center in goalball, is an active guitar player and songwriter, and also enjoys hiking with his guide dog Finn.

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JOBS. INDEPENDENCE. EMPOWERMENT.

Our Mission: To create and enhance opportunities for independence and self-sufficiency of people who are blind, Deaf-Blind, and blind with other disabilities.



2012 Employee of the Year Larry Irvin, Help Desk Technician / Front Desk Support

Larry Irvin

"The Lighthouse [for the Blind, Inc.] is a place of great opportunity," says Larry Irvin, Help Desk Technician and Front Office Support Specialist at Seattle Lighthouse. "There's many different positions that a person can work here despite a disability. If you can meet the capabilities of a job you can do it here."

Larry grew up in Saginaw, Michigan and began losing his sight in 1999 due to complications from retinopathy (detached retinas). He spent much of his time growing up playing trombone, and was invited to play jazz sessions at the Rueben Daniel Lifelong Learning Center. After high school he went to ITT Technical Institute in Grand Rapids, MI and received a certificate in electronic engineering. "I learned a lot about components, and my mom still as a transistor radio I built from scratch for a class project," he reminisces.

Although Larry didn't pursue trombone further, he continued his musical career through DJ'ing at a local roller rink and his uncle's night club. He took a trip to Washington to help his cousin move to

the Tacoma area, and it was there that he made some connections in the Northwest music scene at a record store in Tillicum, WA. He relocated to Tacoma and began working with a music production group from 1992 to 1999. As his eyesight began to wane he learned how to use screen magnifying software called ZoomText,

"I truly like the Lighthouse and what it stands for. I really like the different training programs under Employee and Community Services (ECS). It's incredible that accessibility is a mandate here and built into every aspect of the work environment." – Larry Irvin, Help Desk Technician/Front Office Support

and was able to continue working on producing music. During this time Larry was on Social Security Income, and in search of work he was referred to the Washington State Department of Services for the Blind (DSB), and enrolled in the Orientation and Training Center (OTC) program. He was granted a supervised internship at The Lighthouse for the Blind, Inc., where he began doing HelpDesk

work. "I didn't think I would ever work again," he notes. "I always had a job since I was 15 years old, and it was a relief to find work at the Lighthouse."

Larry continues, "I truly like the Lighthouse and what it stands for. I really like the different training programs under Employee and Community Services (ECS). It's incredible that accessibility is a mandate here and built into every aspect of the work environment." When asked about winning the Employee of the Year award, he is certainly grateful. "I really like helping people; whether it's at home or at work. To me the award is a sign of appreciation, and I'm just happy that I'm appreciated for the work that I do."

When Larry isn't busy troubleshooting computer issues or working the front desk area, he spends his time recording music, DJ'ing, doing pre-production, making beats, and spending time with his wife Charthy, his son Donnelle (10) and Charecca (20), and his newly born grandson Jerell.



Message from President & CEO Kirk Adams

Working for The Lighthouse for the Blind, Inc. gives me the opportunity to celebrate two "New Years." Our fiscal year ends on September 30th, so we have a chance in the fall to celebrate a successful year-end and to start our work on new contracts and endeavors. And then of course, we get to enjoy the beginning of a new calendar year over the holidays with traditional celebrations, employee events, and family gatherings.

Whether it's a new fiscal year or calendar year, it's always a wonderful time to think of the community that makes our mission possible. It is a great chance over the fall and early winter to look back at our recent accomplishments in 2012, while looking forward to the work ahead of us in 2013.

As with all of our work, it all starts and ends with our employees. The Lighthouse exists to provide opportunities to employees who are blind, Deaf-Blind, and blind with other disabilities. And it is those very employees who are responsible for our accomplishments as an organization. You'll see mention in this issue of *Horizons* of the two Employees of the Year for 2013. I am so pleased to highlight the achievements and hard work of Larry Irvin and Greg Szabo. These employees will represent the Lighthouse well – and will have the chance to attend the National Industries for the Blind (NIB) Annual Conference in National Harbor, MD in October 2013.

The NIB conference is another "end of year" gathering I always look forward to, as it brings together so many caring individuals who make the work of our organization possible and that of so many others. At the most recent NIB Conference in October in Baltimore, our 2012 Employees of the Year had this same opportunity to hear about the innovative work of agencies across the country.

Readers of our *Horizons* newsletter are comprised of new and longtime donors, volunteers and employees, and other committed community members and stakeholders. Many of you are members of our Society for Redefining Vision, which is how we designate those donors who make significant annual gifts.

Others of you are members of our Legacy Society who have named the Lighthouse in your will or in another way, such as a charitable gift annuity. We could not create as many opportunities as we do without all of your support. Thank you for helping the Lighthouse succeed. Our success in turn empowers so many individuals in our community.

Your support has provided the tools necessary for the Lighthouse to reach numerous milestones throughout the organization.

In manufacturing, the Lighthouse has developed new products such as the Compression Stuff Sack for the Marine Corps. We are also continuing to see growth in the production of aerospace parts.

In our service businesses, we're starting up a new round of Contract Management Service work in San Diego. And we are also continuing several contracts in our Contact Center, including a partnership with other organizations across the U.S.

Construction plans are underway for a new Base Supply Center at Fort Irwin, California. And in the coming year, we will be nearly doubling our space at Inland Northwest Lighthouse in Spokane.

Such achievements rely on strong business planning, but their success is also dependent on charitable support through our Seattle Lighthouse for the Blind Foundation. Charitable support makes the jobs possible by supporting critical accessibility measures, such as providing technology training and screen-reading software, educating employees on how to travel safely to and from work, and for interpreting in visual and tactile American Sign Language.

It takes a whole network of companies, organizations, and individuals to provide these supports which in turn allow the Lighthouse to employ approximately 240 individuals who are blind, Deaf-Blind, or blind with other disabilities. You are part of that network. We are grateful for your involvement and your generosity.

Save the Date for the 2013 *Redefining Vision* Luncheon

Wednesday, March 27th, 2013
Noon to 1:30 p.m.
The Westin Seattle Hotel - 1900 5th Avenue, Seattle, WA 98101

Join Seattle Lighthouse for the Blind Foundation to support and celebrate our mission of creating and enhancing opportunities for independence and self-sufficiency of people who are blind, Deaf-Blind, and blind with other disabilities.

Featuring Brett Lewis, Judo Gold Medalist, 1987 World Championships for the Blind and Judo Silver Medalist, 1992 Paralympic Games.

A donation of \$150 per person will be suggested.

For more information on hosting a table or attending go to www.redefiningvision.org or contact Kirk Laughlin at 206-436-2253 or klaughlin@seattlelh.org.

Sincerely,

Kirk Adams
President & CEO

The Orientation and Mobility Department Provides Valuable Services to Lighthouse Employees and our Community

Throughout 2012, The Lighthouse for the Blind, Inc.'s Orientation and Mobility (O&M) Department has been busy assisting individuals who are blind in learning skills to travel safely and independently. In addition to providing Lighthouse employees with individualized training to meet their mobility needs, O&M instructors provide valuable consultation and services beyond the Lighthouse, increasing awareness and travel safety throughout our community.

Consultation with Redmond Architects

In October 2012, Seattle Lighthouse hosted a group of architects from Redmond's KPG, an interdisciplinary firm specializing in architecture, engineering, landscape architecture, and urban design throughout the Puget Sound region. Currently, KPG is working with the City of Redmond on the Cleveland Streetscape Project located in the heart of downtown Redmond. Construction of the project is slated to begin in summer of 2013.

To ensure their design meets the safety needs of both vehicles and all pedestrians, KPG contacted the Lighthouse after hearing of our great work with the City of Seattle. The O&M Department hosted the group, providing the team with practical knowledge and design insight for individuals who are blind, Deaf-Blind or blind with other disabilities. After a presentation of various visual impairments and white cane use, the group was invited to use vision simulation goggles and white canes along a walking course from Seattle Lighthouse to the Mount Baker light rail station.

Brief stops were made along the walk to discuss the street design in relation

to visual impairment, along with various methods to enhance safety and accessibility of road crossings and transit centers. After a ride on the light rail from Mount Baker into downtown Seattle, the group further studied the Seattle Bus Tunnel and its use of textured stonework as key indicators for white cane users.



O&M Instructor Alan Kirk (left) demonstrates a Trekker Breeze for INL Production worker Troy Leeberg.

current knowledge of technology, and route specific needs. During training and assessment provided in the last quarter of 2012, O&M instructors worked diligently distributing and providing training on travel safety equipment including Trekker Breeze GPSs, Miniguides, sun filters, monoculars, and iPhones.

The Trekker Breeze is a handheld, talking, Global Positioning System (GPS) designed for people who are blind or have low vision. The device verbally announces the names of streets, intersections, and landmarks as the user walks through their environment. With this device a commuter knows where they are when they are on foot or riding in a vehicle. *Miniguides* are electronic travel aids that use ultrasonic echolocation to detect objects like parked cars or low-hanging branches so they can all be noted and avoided. Distance to objects is communicated through vibrations or through sound through an earpiece. The closer

a person is to an object, the faster the vibration. The Miniguide is an effective tool when used in conjunction with either a white cane or a dog guide. Six grant participants, including one person who is Deaf-Blind, are working with the Miniguide. The *iPhone* is another promising navigation tool for individuals who prefer the iPhone's GPS system to that of the Trekker Breeze. Information about using the iPhone for safe travel has been made available through group meetings, support groups, and individual trainings.

The Lighthouse is excited to be able to translate this funding into real tools, training, and skills to enhance the safety and independence of our employees and community members on their daily commutes and explorations.

HUD Safe Travel Grant

Over the past two years, the Lighthouse has provided services and equipment under a four-year Housing and Urban Development Neighborhood Initiative Safe Travel Grant. The grant allows the Lighthouse to provide a range of services, equipment, and supports to Lighthouse employees and community members who are blind or Deaf-Blind in several Washington counties. Services and equipment provided under the grant are intended to make travel in the community for people who are blind and Deaf-Blind safer.

Equipment and services under the Safe Travel Grant are provided on an individualized basis. Much depends on the individual's existing travel skills, residual vision, personal preferences,

Be Our Guest

To schedule a tour of our Seattle or Spokane facilities, please contact our Contact Center at contactcenter@seattlelh.org, or by phone at 206-436-2127 with at least three weeks advance notice.

Upcoming Seattle Lighthouse Tour Dates

February

Tuesday	2/5	1:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.
Wednesday	2/6	10:00 a.m. to 11:30 p.m.
Thursday	2/7	10:00 a.m. to 11:30 p.m.
Tuesday	2/19	1:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.
Wednesday	2/20	10:00 a.m. to 11:30 p.m.
Thursday	2/21	10:00 a.m. to 11:30 p.m.

March

Tuesday	3/5	1:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.
Wednesday	3/6	10:00 a.m. to 11:30 p.m.
Thursday	3/7	10:00 a.m. to 11:30 p.m.
Tuesday	3/19	1:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.
Wednesday	3/20	10:00 a.m. to 11:30 p.m.
Thursday	3/21	10:00 a.m. to 11:30 p.m.

Letter from the Foundation Board President

As a new year begins, Seattle Lighthouse for the Blind Foundation invites you to plan for your future and for your legacy.

Some of you had the opportunity to be honored at our December Holiday Breakfast where we highlighted the contributions of the members of our Society for Redefining Vision and our Lighthouse Legacy Society. As President of Seattle Lighthouse for the Blind Foundation Board, I am always pleased to be part of events like this where I can gather with our donors to talk about the work their support makes possible. Charitable giving is a critical component of the Lighthouse's ability to create jobs, independence, and empowerment for individuals who are blind, Deaf-Blind, or blind with other disabilities.

Some of you might be making that work possible through generous annual donations. Members of our Legacy Society are also making a commitment to ensure that the Lighthouse can serve its mission in the future. The Legacy Society is made up of individuals who have named the Lighthouse as a beneficiary in their estate plans, most often by including the organization in their will.

A contribution in a will, called a **Bequest**, is one of the simplest ways to make a gift for the future. Simply establishing a will in the first place is a responsible step. According to a May 2012 poll by the American Association of Retired People (AARP), 41 percent of people in the U.S. born between 1946 and 1964 do not have wills — and for people 34 and under, the percentage of people who don't have wills jumps to 71 percent. Having a will provides clear directions on the allocation of your assets to your family and heirs. Furthermore, naming an organization like the Lighthouse in your will can also provide tax advantages while making sure a portion of your assets benefit a charitable mission you believe in.

Another type of planned gift is a **Charitable Gift Annuity**. A gift annuity is a contract under which a nonprofit organization, in return for a transfer of cash or other property, agrees to pay a stream of income to the annuitant at an interest rate that is determined by the annuitant's age. Not all organizations are set up to administer annuities and the rate of return to the annuitant can be very attractive in today's financial markets. The Lighthouse manages annuities in partnership with The Greater Tacoma Community Foundation.

There are other tools that can be used, such as various **Charitable Trusts (Remainder Trusts and Lead Trusts)** which can also be beneficial, depending on your financial situation.

The newest members of our Legacy Society are Dave and Andria Garten. Dave is Seattle Lighthouse for the Blind Foundation Vice President and is Chair of our Major Gifts and Planned Giving Committee. Dave is also a Certified Financial Planner (CFP®) and Senior Vice President and Senior Trust Officer with Northern Trust. The planned giving tools described above are part what he encounters regularly in his professional work. He will be offering a free overview of planned giving in February



Foundation Board President Howie Dickerman

with a special emphasis on Charitable Gift Annuities, which you are invited to attend. Details are below on **Planning Your Financial Future in Uncertain Times**. If you are a current donor to the Lighthouse — or even if you have already named the Lighthouse in your will — I encourage you to attend in order to learn about the Charitable Gift Annuity option.

In the AARP poll I referenced, the top reasons people mentioned for not having a will were “procrastination” and the feeling that a will is “unnecessary.” If you've been putting off establishing a planned giving option, hopefully reading this letter is the first step to prompt you to action. I hope this has also led you to see why such tools are necessary. Having an estate plan in place now makes a lot of sense for everyone, and by including a charitable gift in your plan, you can make a meaningful impact with your personal legacy.

Planning Your Financial Future in Uncertain Times

By David Garten CFP®, Sr. Vice President & Sr. Trust Officer, Northern Trust and Seattle Lighthouse for the Blind Foundation Vice President

Wednesday, February 20th, 2013

10:30 a.m. to Noon (optional tour of Seattle Lighthouse)
Noon to 1:30 p.m. (Lunch and Presentation)

To RSVP, visit www.redefiningvision.org, or contact Kirk Laughlin from our Development team at 206-436-2253 or e-mail to klaughlin@seattlelh.org.

I hope you can join us in February. Thank you for your support of the Lighthouse and our mission.

Howie Dickerman

Board President

Seattle Lighthouse for the Blind Foundation



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