

# HORIZONS

Summer 2019 • Volume 19, No. 2

## Welcome President and CEO Cindy Watson to the Lighthouse!

Cindy Watson is a driven and passionate executive and she's the new President and CEO of The Lighthouse for the Blind, Inc.

This Tennessee native, and our first female President and CEO at the Lighthouse, moved to Texas around the age of nine; during the same time that she was diagnosed with Juvenile Macular Degeneration. Cindy recalls her childhood, "I knew I had a vision problem, but I just kept going." Ms. Watson used large print books through school and in high school had a CCTV (closed circuit television). She says her greatest help during that time was leveraging these technologies and other supports like family and friends through school to succeed.



**The Lighthouse for the Blind, Inc.**



Cindy's eye condition began worsening in college. She received her bachelor's from the University of Houston in special education with a minor in art history.

Out of college, Cindy felt a strong need to give back to the blind community. She wanted to encourage others who are blind to pursue their goals and to believe that they could be and do whatever it was they wanted. Ms. Watson applied and received a job with the Texas Commission for the Blind, working for over eight years as a Rehabilitation Teacher, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, and finally an Employment Assistance Specialist. But she knew she wanted more. Cindy went back to the University of Houston and earned her MBA in Business Administration.

As she neared graduation, Cindy was keenly aware that her peers were being recruited for jobs and making plans; she was not.

*"My dream would be that one day there wouldn't be the need for the Lighthouse because every employer would be willing to break down barriers and provide opportunities to people who are blind and DeafBlind."*

*Cindy Watson, President and CEO*

Fortunately, Cindy learned of the Business Leaders Program through National Industries for the Blind (NIB). This program provides applicable and experiential opportunities to people who are blind and seeking leadership roles in

their employment journey. Broken into several tracks, Cindy was accepted into the Fellowship for Leadership Development. This two-year program introduced her to the AbilityOne Program, as well as being assigned to three NIB-affiliated agencies in a paid internship. She spent eight months with each: the South Texas Lighthouse in Corpus Christi, the NIB headquarters in Alexandria, Virginia, and The Blind Center of Nevada in Las Vegas.

At the end of the program, unlike when she completed her MBA, she was greeted with many choices for her career. Cindy decided to head back home to Houston where she accepted a position with Winston-Salem Industries for the Blind out of Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

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## Jobs. Independence. Empowerment.

Our Mission: We empower people who are blind, DeafBlind, and blind with other disabilities by creating diverse, sustainable, and meaningful employment opportunities.



PICTURED: MVP AWARD WINNERS WITH PRESIDENT AND CEO CINDY WATSON IN FRONT OF THE SEATTLE FACILITY

## Congratulations to our 2019 MVP Award Winners!

Each year the Lighthouse recognizes employees for their outstanding performance while personifying the organization's mission and values in action. Employees are nominated by their peers and selected by leadership, we are proud to announce the following 2019 MVP Winners.

### Seattle Facility:

- Lucy Akada**, *Production Planning Expeditor*
- Malisa Alvin**, *Production Worker Sr. Aerospace*
- Kayla Dishman**, *Payroll/HCM Implementation Specialist*
- Christine Downum**, *Benefits Coordinator*
- Sokha Lim**, *First-part Checker Aerospace*
- Chris Loomis**, *Set-up Specialist Aerospace*
- Dan Porter**, *CNC Machinist Aerospace*
- Roger Poulin**, *TTC Computer and AT Skill Instructor*
- Van Vo**, *Production Worker Sr. Defense*
- Meka White**, *Contact Center Representative*

### Spokane Facility:

- Mark Erikson**, *Inventory Control Clerk*
- Kevin Gormley**, *Production Supervisor*

### Summerville Facility:

- Roosevelt Stevenson**, *Set-up Specialist*

### AbilityOne Base Supply Centers:

- Diana Heller**, *Buyer*

Congratulations to all of our MVP winners!

{ CINDY WATSON, CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE }

During this time, Cindy was asked to serve on the Board of Trustees for the American Foundation for the Blind (AFB), leading her to serve as Director of the AFB Center on Vision Loss and Web Programs in Dallas. Then it was on to Vice President of Services at Dallas Lighthouse for the Blind.

After serving as Senior Vice President for one year, Cindy has been named the Lighthouse's first female President and CEO. She is excited for the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of others who are blind.

When asked, after contemplating her journey if she's arrived, in

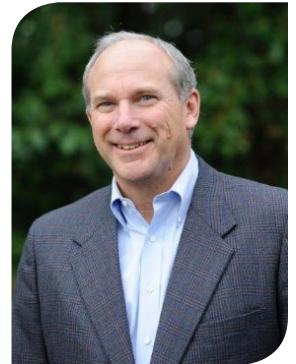
reference to her new position with the Lighthouse, Cindy said emphatically, "Absolutely!"

When not at work, Cindy loves spending time with her family. Although they especially love water activities, the family spends much time with Cub Scouts, and playing baseball and basketball. And they're finally settled into schools, and their new community in the Pacific Northwest.

Throughout her adult life, Cindy has had quite a journey of educational accomplishments and employment experiences. It has been a path of many opportunities while growing and nurturing a family, and it has all led her here, to the Lighthouse.

## Thank You Brad Wiens!

We would like to thank Brad Wiens for serving as the Lighthouse's Interim President and CEO for the past year and a half. With over 30 years of experience in finance and management, he did an outstanding job leading the Lighthouse during our centennial year and helping develop our Strategic Plan. A Board of Trustee Member since 2013, Brad will continue to be involved with the Lighthouse, serving on the Strategic Planning, Finance, and Audit & Compliance Committees. From everyone at the Lighthouse, thank you Brad for your commitment to our mission.



Thank you,

**Cindy Watson**  
*President and CEO*

**Katy Beck**  
*Chair, Board of Trustees*

**Barbara Ross**  
*President, Foundation Board*

## 2019 Lighthouse Food Truck Rally

On Thursday June 6th, we kicked off the summer at the fourth annual Lighthouse Food Truck Rally at our Spokane facility. We raised over \$14,500 to support our Employee and Community Services Department to help provide critical training programs to increase independence for individuals who are blind and DeafBlind.

Over 200 people showed up for this fun community event – guests enjoyed delicious food from Meltz Extreme Grilled Cheese, Mixed Plate, Toby's BBQ, and Sweet Annie's Artisan Creamery, tasty beer from Black Label Brewing Company, wine, tours of the manufacturing facility, games, and an exciting raffle!

Our event would not have been the same without the amazing support of the community! We would like to thank the Greater Spokane Food Truck Association for partnering with us for the fourth year in a row and our generous sponsors at this year's Lighthouse Food Truck Rally!

### Sponsors:

ACCO Brands Corporation  
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Novation, Inc.  
Anderson's Door Company  
Baker Construction & Development Inc.  
The BoxMaker Inc.  
Mountain Dog Sign Company



# FUTURE of OPPORTUNITIES

AN EVENING WITH THE LIGHTHOUSE



The Lighthouse for the Blind, Inc.

Please join us on Saturday, September 21<sup>st</sup> at the Future of Flight for our Future of Opportunities extravaganza.

**Future of Opportunities**  
*An Evening with the Lighthouse*

Saturday, September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2019

6:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.

Boeing Future of Flight

8415 Paine Field Blvd, Mukilteo, WA

Event tickets: \$175 per person

To RSVP visit [LHBlind.org](http://LHBlind.org).

## Join our Board

We are recruiting passionate and philanthropic community members to join our **Board of Trustees** and **Foundation Board**. Ideal candidates are committed to our mission and looking for a way to help shape the future of the Lighthouse. Interested in becoming a board member or learning more? Please contact Kate Wiegel, Senior Director of Institutional Relations, at (206) 436-2116 or [kwiegel@LHBlind.org](mailto:kwiegel@LHBlind.org).

## Planned Giving

You can build the future of the Lighthouse and ensure the long-term sustainability of Lighthouse programs and services, no matter your age or income level, by making a planned gift. Those making a philanthropic investment via planned gifts will be recognized as members of the *Lighthouse Legacy Society*. Your generosity can ensure the Lighthouse's Foundation Endowment is able to fund programs and services on a sustainable, long-range basis. Planned gift opportunities are diverse and are customizable based on your portfolio, age, and intent. Please contact Shawn Dobbs, Donor and Government Relations Director, at (206) 436-2224 or [sdobbs@LHBlind.org](mailto:sdobbs@LHBlind.org).



## 2019 Lighthouse Events

- Sept. 21<sup>st</sup>: Future of Opportunities Event – Seattle, WA
- Sept. 26<sup>th</sup>: “Get to Know” the Lighthouse – Spokane, WA
- Oct. 10<sup>th</sup>: “Get to Know” the Lighthouse – Seattle, WA
- Nov. 9<sup>th</sup>: Annual Dim Sum Lunch – Seattle, WA
- Nov. 22<sup>nd</sup>: “Get to Know” the Lighthouse – Seattle, WA
- Dec. 3<sup>rd</sup>: “Get to Know” the Lighthouse – Spokane, WA
- Dec. 17<sup>th</sup>: Appreciation Breakfast – Seattle, WA

For more information and a complete list of upcoming events, please visit [LHBlind.org/events](http://LHBlind.org/events) or contact Molly McLachlan, Events and Community Engagement Manager, at (206) 436-2253 or email [mmclachlan@LHBlind.org](mailto:mmclachlan@LHBlind.org).

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