

Success Stories

The Lighthouse for the Blind, Inc.

GAYLEN FLOY

Photo of Gaylen, a light skinned woman with brown and grey hair smiling in a photo studio

Gaylen Floy is the assistive technology instructor in the Computer Training Program (CTP), and is one of many instructors at the Lighthouse that work hard every day to make the world more accessible for people with visual impairments. She is inspired by her students and coworkers every day and defines her own success as her student's success.

Gaylen left her career in the newspaper industry when her vision loss became disruptive. She found a new home in the world of technology. Gaylen says that learning to rely on key commands to use a computer screen reader has been the greatest challenge of her life, but these challenges are balanced with the joy of watching her students take knowledge from class and further their learning to become more independent.

Gaylen experiences a combination of drastic vision loss with a nearly constant flashing light show. She uses the assistive technology she teaches to her students, making her the perfect liaison.

ANDY BACON

Photo of Andy, a light skinned man with brown and grey hair, smiling and standing in front of merchandise at his AbilityOne BSC store.

Andy Bacon is the District Manager at the AbilityOne Base Supply Center (BSC) on Joint Base Lewis-McChord in Washington. Due to high blood pressure, Andy began to lose his vision during college, becoming unable to differentiate colors, and had to change

careers as he was studying to be an electrical technician.

Immediately, Andy knew he needed a new career path. After seeking further education and training to adapt to life with blindness, Andy found the Lighthouse. Beginning as an Assistant Manager, Andy was introduced to friends and mentors that provided him the necessary tools and training to progress into the role of District Manager.

Years of training and retraining gave Andy the ambition to succeed in his role, and the Lighthouse was the perfect opportunity. Being confident in his ability to transition and learn new things, Andy has become a leader at the Base Supply Centers and in the community.

MEKA WHITE

Photo of Meka, a dark skinned woman with black hair, smiling in a photo studio

Meka White, Customer Service, Admin, and Marketing Support Specialist is happy to finally work someplace that puts accessibility first, and ensures that she has everything she needs to succeed at her job. As someone who is blind, she has had a long career in call centers, but prior to finding the Lighthouse, she was never given the accommodations she needed to be truly successful.

This was not for lack of skill or ambition, Meka is equipped with a radiant personality and a unique talent for customer service, but rather a frustration in being seen as slower or less than her colleagues, simply because the tools and technology she needed were not being optimized on her computer and headset.

At the Lighthouse, Meka uses a screen reader, to relay information on her computer screen, a braille output, to assist with typing and careful reading, and a headset to communicate with clients. With these tools all working together, Meka excels.

ALEX CARTER

Photo of Alex, a light skinned young man with brown hair, smiling in the Machine Shop in Seattle

For Alex Carter, working at the Lighthouse means self-confidence and self-sufficiency.

Alex applied to work at the Lighthouse out of curiosity and has found a place where he can grow personally and professionally. While Alex never envisioned himself machining parts for airplanes, or working on government contracts, he loves his work. Alex uses screen magnification to access all technology, including the machines he uses in manufacturing at the Lighthouse.

The Lighthouse remains a place of possibility for Alex, as he strives to accomplish everything, he never thought possible. He has learned American Sign Language (ASL), to communicate with DeafBlind colleagues, as the Lighthouse is one of the only places where people who are blind and low vision are taught ASL. Alex continues to expand his knowledge of machining every day, as he boldly embarks on new projects and puzzles.

TAMARA AIRHART

Photo of Tamara, a light skinned woman with brown hair, smiling and sitting at her computer workstation in San Diego

After unexpectedly losing her vision as an adult with a professional career, Tamara Airhart found her way to the Lighthouse.

Tamara has been with the Contract Management Support (CMS) team in San Diego, CA since the sites inception in 2010. Tamara's outlook on life is undeniably positive and she chose to use this opportunity as a stepping-stone to advocate and educate the government, industry, and the public. She provides Blindness Awareness Education to the San Diego Metro Transit employees,

speaks to clients at the San Diego Center for the Blind, The Braille Institute, and Access for Independence to act as an example and encourage people who are blind on job and life skills.

Tamara's dedication is not limited to her position as Contract Close Out Specialist Team Lead for The Lighthouse for the Blind, Inc., but expands to advocacy and education for people from all walks of life.

ROOSEVELT STEVENSON

Photo of Roosevelt, a dark skinned man with black and grey hair, sitting on a bench and holding a white cane outside

Roosevelt Stevenson lost his sight in 1989 at the age of 22, following an attack that left him without his sight, hearing, or the ability to talk. Slowly, his hearing returned a bit, and he was able to regain his speech. Roosevelt embarked on the journey to relearn basic skills, and regain his independence and sense of self in a world he was now experiencing very differently. Roosevelt began at the Lighthouse manufacturing, setting up drills and table saws, and running large machines.

He takes pride in the knowledge that he is doing these tasks just as quickly and effectively as someone with sight and is making high quality products.

Roosevelt has immersed himself in the Lighthouse community and the disability community. Interaction with people who experience the world differently is what makes working at the Lighthouse so meaningful. Roosevelt lives this truth every day by being a leader in his community.

OUR LOCATIONS

Pullquote: "On a Boeing plane over 7,000 parts are made by employees who are blind and DeafBlind."

The Lighthouse for the Blind, Inc. is a private, not-for-profit social enterprise providing employment, support, and training opportunities for people who are blind, DeafBlind, and blind with other disabilities. Since 1918, the Lighthouse has provided employment and support to people who are blind in our community.

We have three primary manufacturing facilities and administrative offices located in:

- **Seattle, WA**
- **Spokane, WA**
- **Summerville, SC**

Our AbilityOne Base Supply Centers and their Supporting Offices and Warehouses are located in:

- **Joint-Base Lewis McChord, WA (3)**
- **Seattle, WA**
- **Lakewood, WA**
- **Fallon, NV**
- **Ft. Irwin, CA**
- **China Lake, CA**
- **San Diego, CA**

Our Contract Management Services are based in:

- **San Diego, CA**
- **Redstone, AL**

**The Lighthouse for the Blind, Inc. logo
2501 S Plum Street, Seattle, WA 98144
(206) 322-4200 • LHBlind.org**