Jewish Guild Healthcare and Lighthouse International to Merge

We recently announced our plan to merge with Lighthouse International, bringing together a combined 200 years of experience working with people with vision loss. Both our organizations were established through early 20th century philanthropic efforts to meet the problem of blindness in children. Together, we will offer the broadest array and most comprehensive scope of services currently available for people who are blind, vision impaired and multi-disabled. Our combined legacy of innovation and expertise will enhance service delivery to more people throughout the world with vision loss.

We will operate as one organization under the new name Lighthouse Guild International and will be governed by a 41-member Board of Directors led by James M. Dubin as Chairman, and Joseph A. Ripp as Vice Chairman. All current Board members will join the new Board.

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Lighthouse Guild International

The Guild’s President & CEO, Alan R. Morse, JD, PhD, will be President & CEO of Lighthouse Guild International. Dr. Morse said, “The Guild and the Lighthouse have different models of service delivery and we will benefit from each other. The ultimate beneficiaries will be those who seek our help. Our staff collaborate on many levels. But it’s been on a casual basis; now the linkage will be formal, and that is positive for all of us.”

Mark G. Ackermann, currently President & CEO of the Lighthouse, will become Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of Lighthouse Guild International. Mr. Ackermann said, “The combination of our organizations rounds out the services that the Lighthouse has and enables us to expand our treatment of the whole person.”

“With our decision to join hands as Lighthouse Guild International, the two Boards of Directors are creating an exceptional partnership that brings together the deepest management and vision care experience and expertise to benefit the people we serve,” said James M. Dubin, currently the Chairman of the Guild’s Board, who will lead the new Board.

“We believe this milestone event will, over time, open a world of possibilities for improved service delivery, access to care, and the sharing of knowledge. We hope it will also serve as a model for vision and health organizations around the world,” Mr. Dubin concluded.

An unwavering commitment

“We’re excited that the generous supporters of both organizations will now have the opportunity to maximize their positive impact on the lives of individuals with vision loss or impairment,” stated Joseph A. Ripp, the Chairman of the Lighthouse International Board.

Mr Ripp said, “We share an unwavering commitment to meet the new and emerging challenges in vision care and education head-on by enhancing our overall advocacy and continuing to champion the work of professionals dedicated to advancing new treatments for eye disease and rehabilitation.”
Lighthouse International awarded its annual Henry A. Grunwald Award for Public Service to former U.S. Secretary of State and Nobel Peace Prize recipient Henry Kissinger. The award was presented to Dr. Kissinger by Joseph A. Ripp, Chairman of the Board of the Lighthouse, at a luncheon held in New York in early October at the Metropolitan Club, where Liz Smith served as Master of Ceremonies.

“It is an honor to be recognized by Lighthouse International, an organization that has changed the lives of countless individuals struggling with vision problems,” said Dr. Kissinger. “The fact that this honor is named after my long-time friend, Henry Grunwald, makes it even more special. Henry gave his all to the Lighthouse and was a staunch advocate for millions of Americans dealing with vision loss. To be recognized in his name is something I will never forget.”

The Lighthouse established the Henry A. Grunwald Award for Public Service in 2001. The award recognizes individuals who are committed to advancing causes that benefit society, particularly the advancement of public awareness of vision impairment and vision rehabilitation. The late Henry A. Grunwald, after whom the award is named, was a member of the Lighthouse Board of Directors, and the first recipient of the honor.

Mr. Grunwald (1922-2005), a refugee from Nazi-dominated Austria, rose to become Time magazine’s Editor-in-Chief and, on his retirement from Time, Inc., returned to Vienna as the U.S. Ambassador to Austria. He was the author of Twilight: Losing Sight, Gaining Insight, a personal narrative of his experience with the onset of macular degeneration. His account gave a much-needed public voice to the struggle shared by millions of Americans who cope with the daily challenges of vision loss.
In October, the Guild celebrated the 2012 and 2013 Alfred W. Bressler Prizes in Vision Science with a symposium led by Jean Bennett, MD, PhD, and Simon W. M. John, PhD. The combined symposium was brought about by the cancellation, due to Hurricane Sandy, of the 2012 Bressler symposium.

**Jean Bennett, MD, PhD**

Jean Bennett, MD, PhD, is one of the foremost specialists in the study of the molecular genetics of retinal degenerations as well as in the development and applications of gene therapy for those same ocular diseases. Dr. Bennett is the F. M. Kirby Professor of Ophthalmology and Cell and Developmental Biology as well as a Senior Investigator in the F. M. Kirby Center for Molecular Ophthalmology at the Perelman School of Medicine, University of Pennsylvania.

In her studies, Dr. Bennett uses an understanding of retinal degeneration to develop rational approaches for treatment of ocular diseases including retinitis pigmentosa, age-related macular degeneration, Leber Congenital Amaurosis, Stargardt’s Disease, Choroideremia and Usher’s Syndrome.

**Simon W. M. John, PhD**

Simon W. M. John, PhD, has dedicated his career to the understanding and treatment of glaucoma. Dr. John is a scientist at the Jackson Laboratory in Bar Harbor, ME. He has been a Howard Hughes Medical Institute Investigator since 1998. He also holds the position of Research Assistant Professor, Ophthalmology, at Tufts University School of Medicine.

Dr. John’s lab studies the molecular features of complex diseases such as glaucoma, through the use of mouse models and patient samples, combining genetics with genomics, cell/molecular biology and physiology to understand how the damage occurs.

**Understanding glaucoma/Gene therapy for retinal diseases**

The prizes were presented at a luncheon preceded by a symposium focused on two areas: understanding glaucoma through experimental genetics and genomics, and gene therapy for retinal diseases. The speakers were:

**Jean Bennett, MD, PhD**, winner of the 2012 Bressler Prize in Vision Science, F. M. Kirby Professor of Ophthalmology, Professor of Cell and Developmental Biology, Perelman School of Medicine, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA: *Gene therapy for Leber congenital amaurosis as a stepping stone for treating other blinding diseases*

**Simon W. M. John, PhD**, winner of the 2013 Bressler Prize in Vision Science, Professor, The Jackson Laboratory, Investigator Howard Hughes Medical Institute, The Jackson Laboratory, Bar Harbor, ME: *Understanding glaucoma through experimental genetics & genomics*
Michael Anderson, PhD, Associate Professor, Departments of Physiology & Biophysics and Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences, University of Iowa Carver College of Medicine, Iowa City, IA: From one mutant to another: working with Dr. Simon John to discover mechanisms of glaucoma

Gwyneth Jane Farrar, PhD, Professor of Genetics, Smurfit Institute of Genetics, School of Genetics and Microbiology, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland: Development of gene-based therapies for dominantly and mitochondrial inherited ocular disorders

John Flannery, PhD, Professor of Vision Science and Neurobiology, Department of Molecular & Cell Biology, The Helen Wills Neuroscience Institute, University of California, Berkeley: Engineering AAV vectors to target specific functional subclasses of retinal neurons and glia

David M. Gamm, MD, PhD, Associate Professor of Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences, Emmett A. Humble Distinguished Director of the McPherson Eye Research Institute, Waismann Center Stem Cell Research Program, University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health, Madison, WI: Using iPS cells to study human retinal development and disease

Oliver Smithies, PhD, Weatherspoon Eminent Distinguished Professor of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine, Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill: Keeping an eye on Simon

Donald Zack, MD, PhD, Guerrieri Professor of Genetic Engineering & Molecular Ophthalmology, Glaucoma Division, The Wilmer Eye Institute, Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, Baltimore, MD: Neuroprotection as a treatment approach for glaucoma

For more information on The Alfred W. Bressler Prize in Vision Science, call Gordon Rovins, Guild Director of Special Programs, on 212-769-7801 or e-mail bressler@guildhealth.org.
The Guild – 100 Years of Service

Our first hundred years began in 1914 on Manhattan’s Upper West Side, when a group of local philanthropists decided to provide care and education for needy blind Jewish children and also to improve the physical, mental and economic conditions for blind adults. Our first programs were located in Yonkers.

Gradually, programs moved to Manhattan. In 1935, we opened our Braille library, which by 1961, contained 10,871 volumes for students in 8 languages. In 1951, we opened our school, which today serves students aged 5 to 21 years who are blind or visually impaired and who have other disabilities.

During the 1960s, the Guild offered training in the activities of daily living to blind individuals, and operated sheltered workshops. Our psychiatric clinic, which opened in 1961, is still the only such clinic in the country, designed for persons with vision loss.

Meeting today’s needs

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the Guild developed into the major healthcare organization it is today. Our programs are comprehensive, collaborative and multidisciplinary, meeting needs in an individual and personal way. We help people with vision loss address their challenges so they can succeed. We offer long-term care health plans, medical, behavioral health, vision rehabilitation and educational services. We help people with chronic medical conditions and disabilities as well as vision impairment and also train healthcare professionals to improve the quality of care for people with vision loss.

Our mission in 2014 remains the same as in 1914 - to help people with vision loss live with independence and dignity.

Watch our website, www.guildhealth.org, for details on our centennial celebrations.
GuildNet Has New President and COO

Wanda Figueroa-Kilroy, RN, MSN, GuildNet’s Executive Vice President since 2004, has been appointed GuildNet’s President. Eileen M. Hanley, RN, MBA, GuildNet’s Senior Vice President since 2008, has been appointed Chief Operating Officer. GuildNet has become a leader in New York State in offering Managed Long Term Care. It currently serves 14,500 members with multiple plans to care for people with chronic diseases.

Guild President & CEO and GuildNet CEO, Alan R. Morse, JD, PhD, said of Ms. Figueroa-Kilroy, “Wanda has played an integral role in GuildNet’s growth from its early days. Her new leadership role places her in a position to further grow and develop GuildNet’s exemplary model of care for its rapidly increasing membership.”

Ms. Figueroa-Kilroy joined GuildNet in 2000, as Director of Clinical Operations/Patient Services. She subsequently became Vice President of Clinical Operations/Patient Services, and then Senior Vice President. Before she came to the Guild, Ms. Figueroa-Kilroy was Assistant Director of Nursing at Beth Abraham Health Services. Eileen M. Hanley joined GuildNet in 2004, as Assistant Vice President of Clinical Services. Previously, she was Manager of the Supportive Care Program and Palliative Care Services at St. Vincent’s Hospital/Saint Vincent Catholic Medical Centers.

Regaining Independence with an Intra-ocular Telescope

Pat Gajewski began losing her eyesight over 10 years ago to Age-related Macular Degeneration (AMD). With end-stage AMD, she could no longer see details of a face, words on a page, or food on the plate in front of her. She recently became one of the first patients in the tri-state area to receive an intra-ocular telescope, which is a tiny telescope implanted in one eye. She receives her vision rehabilitation here at the Guild, working with Laura Sperazza, OD, and Inna Babaeva, OT.

Ms. Babaeva began by teaching her patient to use one eye at a time. The non-implanted eye is used for mobility, while the implanted eye is used to recognize detail. Eventually, Ms. Gajewski began to use both eyes at the same time, learning to suppress one eye while using the other; the goal being to do it without thinking. After the implanted eye healed, Dr. Sperazza prescribed eyeglasses for reading now that Ms. Gajewski has regained central vision in one eye.

Reacquiring activities of daily living

Ms. Gajewski said recently, “I can tell time, watch TV from a distance, go to the supermarket and read labels, choose my own greeting cards, and do my own banking. I could not do much before.” She added, “I can also see the traffic lights when I cross a street now. Before, it was hit or miss.”

Linda Tedesco, Ms. Gajewski’s daughter, said, “My mother has regained a great deal of her independence. She can see our faces, she can read a book and she can do her own daily chores again. Of course she can’t drive, and she’d love to be able to do that again, but her daily life has greatly improved.”
Our NAPVI International Family Conference, held in Newton, MA, in July, was a great opportunity for families to share information and learn from each others’ experiences on a variety of aspects of parenting a child with a visual impairment.

**Assistant U.S. Secretary of Labor**

Kathleen Martinez, Assistant U.S. Secretary of Labor in the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), was the introductory conference speaker. Blind since birth, she is an internationally recognized disability rights activist, advising the Secretary of Labor and working with all Department of Labor agencies to lead a comprehensive and coordinated national policy regarding the employment of people with disabilities.

In her speech, Ms. Martinez said, “I wish my parents had had an association like NAPVI… Employment is the final frontier for people with disabilities. We believe strongly that young people like your kids must have the opportunity to work, and we develop our policy around access to employment.”

**YOUNG PEOPLE LEND A HELPING HAND**

This past summer Guild clients and staff enjoyed the presence of young, enthusiastic helpers as the Guild participated again in New York City’s Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP), with nine participants working in various departments.

The city program allows young people between the ages of 14 and 24 to have summer employment for seven weeks in order to gain work experience. Interns assisted in the Adult Day Health Care program as well as lending a hand in academic rehabilitation classes and helping out in the Guild School with the extra field trips that occur in the summer months.

The SYEP is funded by the NYC Department of Youth & Community Development, which uses a combination of city, state and federal funds to promote community-based organizations.
Students Prepare for College

As it has done every summer for the past 27 years, the Guild recently offered its 2013 college preparatory course designed for blind and visually impaired students. All were referred to the Guild by the New York State Commission for the Blind and Visually Handicapped (CBVH). This program is partially funded by the Alfred Z. Solomon Charitable Trust and the Graham Family Foundation.

Seated: Students Emilio Ortega, Ezekiel Rodriguez, John D’Onofrio and Ness Vachnine. Standing: Summer Intern Christina Lau, Rehabilitation Instructors Audrey Schading and Myra Schiff, students Trista Joseph, Yasir Hammad and Amadou Niane.

GUILD SCHOOL STUDENTS VISIT INTREPID

Miranda Appelbaum, Manager of Access Programs for the Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum visited the Guild School before the students’ trip to the museum. Here, Arnaldo Hinds Gomez examines a model of the aircraft carrier.

2014 Save the Date

Luncheon & Runway Fashion Show

Wednesday, March 19, 2014 • The Mar-a-Lago Club • Palm Beach

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Roberta Golub
Patsy Spero

CHAIRWOMEN

Lexye Aversa Erin Heit
Anita Blatt Gail Worth
Caroline Harless Olimpia Zuccarelli

FOR MORE INFORMATION • 212-769-6240 • development@guildhealth.org
Guild President and CEO Alan R. Morse, JD, PhD, and Daniel M. Albert, MD, MS, co-authored an editorial “Effectively Implementing Evidence-Based Medicine” *Ophthalmology* November 2013, 120(11), 2163-2165. *Ophthalmology* is the official journal of the American Academy of Ophthalmology.

GuildNet President, Wanda Figueroa-Kilroy, RN, MSN, has been elected to the Managed Long Term Care Cabinet of LeadingAge New York, an association representing over 600 not-for-profit, mission-driven and public continuing care providers.

Guild Chief Compliance Officer Bruce Mastalinski has been elected to serve on the Board of Directors of The Foundation for Long Term Care, the education and research division of LeadingAge New York.

Staff who presented at the NAPVI Conference held in Boston: Judy Farrell, MPA, Vice President, Government Affairs, “The Impact of ‘Obamacare’ on children with disabilities and visual impairments”; Gordon Rovins, Director of Special Programs, “Creating the Optimal Environment: The importance of lighting and environmental modifications within programs for children with visual impairments”.

Alexandra Henzel, RN, BSN, MS, joins GuildCare as Albany Program Director. Before coming to the Guild she worked for Wellpoint, Inc. in Loudonville, NY. She received her MSN from the University of Phoenix, her BSN and her nursing training from Russell Sage College.

Verdele W. Felix, RN, BSN, MSN, joins GuildNet as Intake Supervisor. Before joining the Guild she worked for the Isabella Geriatric Center. She received her MSN from Long Island University, and her BSN from Roberts Wesleyan College.

Regina Mogilevskaya, RN, BSN, MSN, joins GuildNet as Enrollment Unit Manager. Before coming to the Guild she worked for the Visiting Nurse Service of New York – CHOICE. She received her MSN from New York University, her BSN from Hunter-Bellevue School of Nursing and her nursing training at the Odessa School of Nursing, Ukraine.

At the Guild

Portia McCormack, LMSW, has been promoted to Assistant Vice President, Clinical Support Services, Case Management. She joined the Guild in 2006 as Team Development Specialist.

Yelena Kruglyak, RN, has been promoted to Case Management Supervisor. She joined the Guild in 2006 as a Nurse Case Manager.

Jeanne Power, LCSW, has been promoted to Supervisor, Social Work. She joined the Guild in 2007 as a Social Worker.

Aleksandr Bidner, RN, AAS, has been promoted to Intake Case Manager. He joined the Guild in 2008 as a Member Services Representative.

Karina Lopez has been promoted to Medicare Services Operations Specialist. She joined the Guild in 2002 as secretary and then Assistant to GuildNet’s Executive Vice President.
Nancy Serbellon, RN, MSN, CDE, joins the Diagnostic and Treatment Center as Nurse Practitioner and Certified Diabetes Educator. Prior to coming to the Guild she worked for New York Presbyterian Hospital. She received her MSN from the University of Cincinnati and her BSN and nursing training from Pace University.

Marguerite Pagan, RN, BSN, joins GuildCare Manhattan as a Program Nurse. Prior to coming to the Guild she worked for the South Brooklyn Health Center, Inc. She received her BSN from Long Island University and her nursing training at the New York Technical College, City University of New York.

Marthing Jacquet, RN, BS, joins GuildCare Manhattan as a Program Nurse. Before joining the Guild she worked for New Carlton Nursing and Rehab Center in Brooklyn. She received her BS from St. Francis College and her nursing training at the Helene Fuld College of Nursing.

Nnabugwu Echezona, RN; Kimicho Anderson, RN; Andreene Earle, RN; Brenda Parry-McCallmon, RN; Emmaunella Saget, RN; Natalie Shafran, RN; Ellen Glass, RN; Dian Skeete, RN; Janet Rogerson, RN; Rafaelina Almonte, RN, and Deborah Inman, RN, join GuildNet as Nurse Case Managers.

Chang Hong Wang, RN; Jennifer Miller, RN, and Tatyana Tsvik, RN, join GuildNet as Reassessment Nurses. Simone Scott, RN, MA, joins GuildNet as an Intake Case Manager/RN.

Chidozie Obasi, LPN; Donna Stone-DiBenedetto, LPN, and Althea Spellman, LPN, join GuildNet as Licensed Practical Nurses.

Lisa Sullivan, LMSW, joins GuildNet as a Social Worker. Prior to joining the Guild she worked for Central Nassau Guidance and Counseling Services, Inc. She received her MSW from Fordham University and her BA from Syracuse University.

Kathleen Osborne, MSW, joins GuildNet as a Social Worker. Before coming to the Guild she worked for Mount Sinai Medical Center. She received her MSW from Fordham University and her BA from Hartwick College.

Lori Robinson, MA, CCC-SLP, joins the Guild School as a Speech/Language Pathologist. Prior to joining the Guild she worked for The Child School/Legacy High School. She received her MA from Queens College, City University of New York, and her BA from Hofstra University.
SATURDAY COMPUTER PROGRAM A HIT WITH STUDENTS

With the autumn comes the return of our Adaptive Technology Center’s popular intensive eight-week Saturday course for legally blind students from 8 to 17 years old. In this particular class, students come from Brooklyn, the Bronx, Westchester, Dutchess and Sullivan Counties; their vision impairment diagnoses are: Retinopathy of Prematurity, Leber Congenital Amaurosis, Nystagmus, Optic Atrophy, Micro-ophthalmia, Glaucoma and Uveitis.

The course is made possible by the New York State Commission for the Blind and Visually Handicapped with additional support provided by the Alfred Z. Solomon Charitable Trust, the Graham Family Foundation and the Irma T. Hirschl Trust.

Classes emphasize skills including learning how to use assistive software, mainstream software and hardware. Students practice keyboarding skills and are introduced to screen magnification and/or screen reading programs depending on need. They learn word processing, how to send and receive e-mails and they use the Internet to conduct research for the field trip they make on their last day of class.

At the completion of the course each student will receive a desktop computer from the Guild along with the adaptive software on which they were trained.