



# THE BEACON

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE LITTLE LIGHT HOUSE



## RENOVATION EXCITEMENT

The Renovation project is starting soon. Check it out on page 6.

## CLASSROOM CORNER

Learn about the partnership between The University of Tulsa and Little Light House on page 12.

## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Meet one of our upcoming graduates, Emery Nunnally on page 4.

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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### April

- 5 Volunteer Orientation: 12 p.m.
- 7 Garden Party: 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
- 11 Community Luncheon: 11:45 a.m. - 1 p.m.
- 12 Church Conference - International Training Program: 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.

### May

- 10 Volunteer Orientation: 12 p.m.
- 16 Community Luncheon: 11:45 a.m. - 1 p.m.
- 17 Graduation: 6:30 p.m.
- 21 Summer Break Begins

### June

- 4 Links for Little Ones
- 7 Volunteer Orientation: 12 p.m.
- 12 Summer Session Begins
- 13 Community Luncheon: 11:45 a.m. - 1 p.m.
- 18 Volunteer Orientation: 12 p.m.

### July

- 4-6 4th of July Break
- 11 Community Luncheon: 11:45 a.m. - 1 p.m.
- 19 Volunteer Bash: 6 - 8 p.m.
- 25 Volunteer Orientation: 12 p.m.



THE BEACON  
2018 | Issue 2

### Executive Director

Jean Winfrey

### Founder

Marcia Mitchell

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### Get Social!



Little Light House



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# letter from the **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Dear Faithful Friends,

The time has come. We are just about ready. I truly cannot tell you how excited I am to announce that our renovation funds are in hand and construction should begin soon on our older facility! Thanks to many generous donors, and the \$500,000 Mabee Foundation challenge grant, we have met the \$2,500,000 goal. Moreover, with 240+ children on our current waiting list, this renovation cannot happen soon enough.

**“The renovation is bringing us back to our roots.”**

We are currently in the process of finalizing the architectural drawings with Mike Hughes Architect, MHA, for the renovation plans. Once contractors receive our plans and submit their bids, we will then be able to apply for our building permit. If all goes as planned, it is our hope and prayer to be able to start the project by late spring or early summer and have it completed by this fall. This renovation will allow us to open up more space to serve many more children and families.

In this issue of the Beacon, you will learn more about the direction we are heading and what the new programs will entail. Our staff and board has spent much time in prayer as we are seeking God’s



perfect plan for how the new programs will function. We believe we have come full circle from our original beginning to where we are today. The renovation is bringing us back to our roots and a place where we can serve the children at a younger age. Please continue to keep us in your prayers as we move forward with the future of the LLH. God has been so very faithful to lead us every step of the way these past 45 years.

In addition, I truly cannot say it often enough, **THANK YOU** for coming alongside us and making these dreams become a reality. You are the ones who are keeping our doors open, allowing us to expand our services and bring glory to God as we work to improve the quality of life for children with special needs, their families and communities. May the Lord continue to bless you and keep you in His care.

Jean Winfrey  
Executive Director



# STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: EMERY NUNNALLY

By: Sarah Nunnally, Emery's Mother

In February of 2012, Emery Grace Nunnally was born six weeks early. While I was pregnant she was diagnosed with two different heart defects, a large Atrial Septal Defect (ASD) and Ebstein's Anomaly. She was tiny and beautiful at 3 pounds and 13 ounces. We finally got to take her home from the NICU one month later on several medications to prevent heart failure and on home oxygen.

She had regular cardiac appointments, and by the time she was four months old she had started showing signs of heart failure and was not gaining weight. She had her first open heart surgery to fix her ASD in June 2012, and came home in a week looking like a different baby. She was growing and pink and eating like never before.

Two weeks later she started having trouble breathing so we were admitted into the PICU and her echo showed fluid surrounding her heart from her previous surgery. She



underwent a procedure to drain it, and had a rare complication which resulted in what was later determined to be a stroke. We were told by the surgeon that the grace of God was with her in the OR, which is why she was still with us. We were devastated for her and she spent the next few weeks recovering in the PICU.

Over the next few months, we noticed Emery not meeting her developmental milestones and showing weakness on her right side. While we didn't have a MRI confirmation of a stroke, our therapists treated her as a stroke patient based on her symptoms. We put her in private therapy and



**“They have truly not only helped Emery, but supported us as parents.”**

started working on sitting, crawling, and standing. She started sitting when she was 2 years and 10 months old, and crawling at 3 years old.

We had been told about the LLH by our therapists, and put her on the waiting list when she was 2.5 years old. We were so excited to get the call that Emery was accepted into the LLH and would start August 2016. Within two months, she was starting to pull up to stand on her own! She tolerated being around other kids, she became very social and was babbling. She made huge progress that first year.

The LLH’s Vision Specialist, Sherry Gurney, advised us to be seen by a neuro-ophthalmologist, as she thought that Emery had Cortical Vision Impairment (CVI). We had never heard of CVI, but after doing some research, knew without a doubt that Emery had CVI. The LLH staff immediately started using CVI protocols with her, and she started reacting to her environment more appropriately. It was a blessing to have this diagnosis, because we were able to manipulate Emery’s environment to help her more! After speaking to Emery’s LLH therapists during her second year, we consulted a neurologist who finally gave us the diagnosis we expected, Right Sided Hemiplegia Cerebral Palsy. With a diagnosis in hand, we have been able to get equipment covered and find resources to help Emery live her best life! We have met amazing parents who stop at nothing to fight for their child, and it is encouraging to have friends that share the same struggles and victories

that we have. We are sad to be graduating this year, but are so thankful for the two years that Emery spent at such an amazing school. We have been shown love, encouragement and been given tools to help Emery live her best life!

We are forever grateful for the LLH and their staff; they have truly not only helped Emery, but supported us as parents.



Muddy Pigs Day at the LLH

# Renovating For Their Future



**A word from Little Light House  
Board Chair, Kim Burnett**

It is hard to believe that we are well into our second year of service in the new facility, which all of you helped make possible. What a blessing it has been for our staff, children, and all who walk through the doors of the Little Light House. The new space has allowed us to serve our families and their children at a higher level, as well as increase our ability to serve more children. In addition, our visibility has created the opportunity to share what we do here on a global scale. The only downside, most likely due to the increased presence at the corner

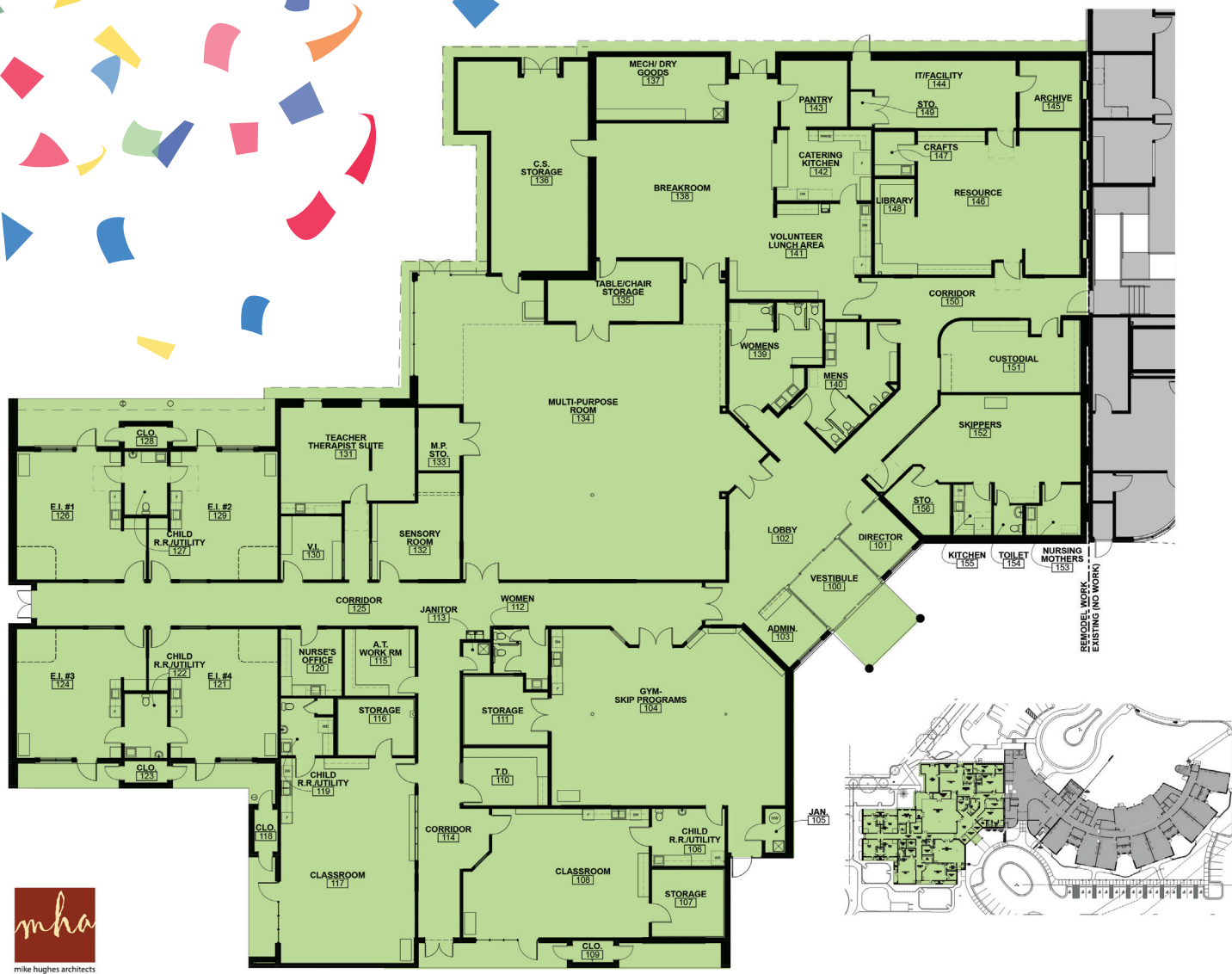
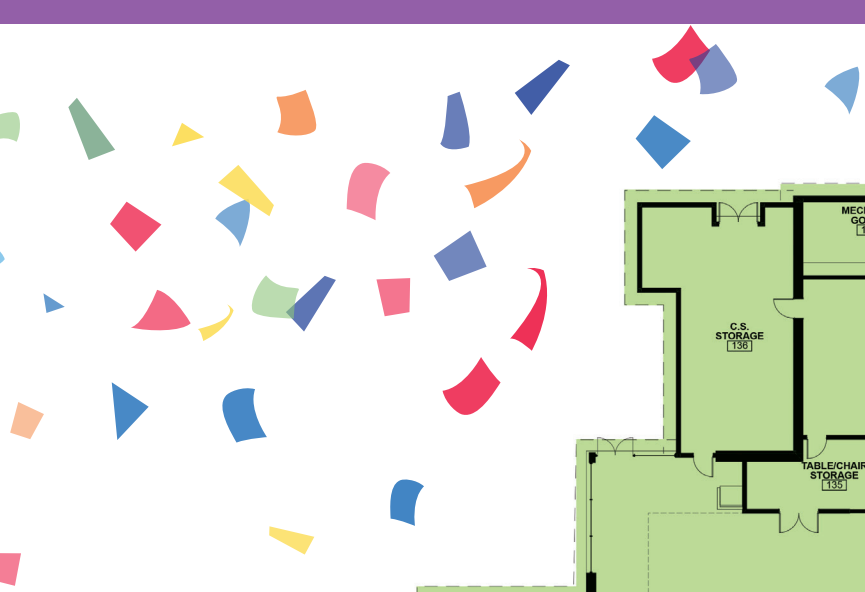
of 36th and Yale, is the skyrocketing waiting list. While ideally, we would desire all children have a place in our classrooms and receive services at an earlier age, we realize the reality of the wait list is it will be ongoing.

This resulted in us taking a step back and re-evaluating the expectations of our old building and the purpose it will serve moving forward. Just as we prepared for the expansion of our new facility, the Little Light House assembled a Dream Team to determine the best way to meet the needs of our waiting families. This team of therapists, teachers, and administrators are truly led, and inspired, by the Spirit of God. Their tireless and enthusiastic desire to see children served earlier has resulted in a new Early Intervention Program. You will find details about the program in these next few pages. It is important to note that we technically are a school to serve birth through six years of age, but due to the wait list, families typically wait two to two and a half years before entering. With the new Early Intervention Program, and as operating funds increase, we will eventually be able to serve another 148 children



age's birth through 3 years. The two additional developmental classrooms, which will function identically as our current classrooms, will allow us to serve another 20 children, bringing us to a total of 116 children attending the daily developmental programs. The Early Intervention Program will be additional services for the families while awaiting placement in the developmental center; children on the waiting list for the developmental center will still be served on a first come, first serve basis.

We currently have a 5 year rollout plan for our Early Intervention Program, with the Pilot Program launching later this year. Once we are at full capacity, we should be able to provide services to approximately 264 children and families; this includes



current services and the newly proposed program. This total does not include our Family Learning Intervention Program (FLIP), which is geared towards all waiting list families.

While the Dream Team has been busy with designing the space necessary to accommodate the new programs, we have also been working to secure the necessary funding to remodel our old space. The Lord has been faithful to supply all our needs through the years and this project has been no different. He has quickly brought together all funding necessary to move forward with the remodel. We are now in the process of pulling together all players

in the construction phase and hope to begin demolition in late spring of this year. Once again, you will see activity, and maybe a few inconveniences, as we carry out this project. However, the resulting space and program implementation will be well worth any growing pains experienced.

While we have raised funding for the remodel, we still have needs for future increases in operations and the creation of the sensory garden for the children. The expansion of services in the newly remodeled building will happen gradually as we have the funding necessary to hire teachers and therapists. We continue to trust

God's provision and rely on those of you He moves to partner in the work the Little Light House has been faithfully carrying out for 45 years. We also ask all of you to continue spreading the word of who we are and what we do, and most importantly, why we do it. We also covet your prayers for leadership to make decisions that will be in alignment with God's will for the ministry. Thank you for your faithful support in prayer, time, talent, and funding of the Lord's work at the Little Light House.

In His Grip,  
Kim Burnett  
Chairman, LLH Board of Directors

# WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS



## Family Learning Intervention Program

For many years the Little Light House has offered monthly meetings through our Family Learning Intervention Program (FLIP). The purpose of these meetings is to provide resources and training for parents, develop social support and a time of fellowship. However, because the need has increased greatly, this program will be expanded to offer more time slots for training opportunities, topic-specific training opportunities, and more interactive training opportunities. FLIP is designed to fill the gap while the family waits for placement in our Early Intervention (EI) Program or Developmental Center. Families are given tools and resources to aid their child in development and have the opportunity to ask our highly credentialed staff questions they may have in regards to their child's education and therapy.

Families enrolled in the EI Program will be highly encouraged to still attend FLIP.

## Early Intervention Program

Did you know that by the age of three years old roughly 85 percent of the brain's core structure will be formed? This means that for children with special needs early intervention is crucial. The Little Light House's trend data shows that approximately 83 percent of the children placed on our waiting list are under three years at the time of placement, but sadly have to wait approximately 2 - 3 years before being offered enrollment.

As our renovation is complete, in order to meet this time-sensitive demand, the Little Light House will be expanding our programs to offer an Early Intervention Program to reach more children at a much younger age. This will permit services during that crucial developmental window. Our EI Program will function as group classes with both the parent and child being led by a certified special education teacher and therapist. The parent is a key component of this program. We want to empower and provide them with resources and techniques to help their child reach appropriate developmental milestones based on the child's ability. We will coach the parents as to how to best care for their child so that techniques used daily at the LLH to help our students achieve goals can be carried out in each child's home.

Once operating funds are secured to hire the additional staff, there will be four classrooms with eight children accompanied by their parent as part of a 2 hour program twice a week per class. There will be morning and afternoon sessions each day Monday through Thursday.



# Why is Early Intervention Soooo Important?

By: Anne McCoy,  
Pediatric Occupational  
Therapist



At the Little Light House, we are delighted to soon begin providing additional services for our waiting list families designed to address a crucial need. Let me explain why we are pursuing early intervention and the great potential it holds for children with special needs.

Decades of rigorous research show that a child's earliest experiences play a pivotal role in brain development.<sup>1</sup> Even though positive changes can be made throughout our lives, the most vital period of brain development is in the earliest months. Because of these findings, there is nearly universal agreement among medical, educational, social and psychological experts regarding the importance of intervening as early as possible for children with special needs.

A newborn's neurons have tentative connections which, through the child's earliest experiences, will become hardwired connections responsible for the child's major motor, cognitive, visual, language and emotional

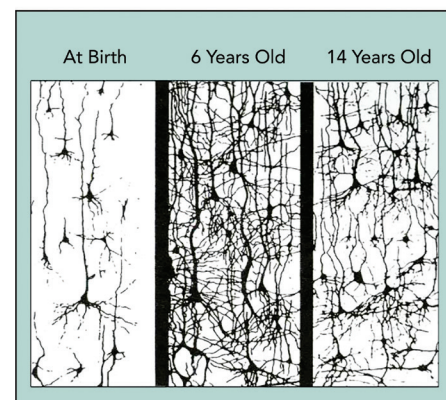
functioning. During this early time, the synapses between neurons are created at an astonishing rate. A child's brain has twice as many synapses as an adult's brain, attesting to the rapid learning and hardwiring taking place during the early years. By age three, roughly 85% of the brain's core structure is formed!<sup>2</sup>

The Center on The Developing Child at Harvard University summarizes early intervention-research as follows:

- Neural circuits, which create the foundation for learning, behavior and health, are most flexible or "plastic" during the first three years of life.
- Stable relationships with caring and responsive adults, safe and supportive environments, and appropriate nutrition are key elements of healthy brain development.
- Early social/emotional development and physical health provide the foundation upon which cognitive and language skills develop.

At the Little Light House, we want to apply this important research in partnership with the amazing families of our students. Our goal is to provide the very best training, education and support possible. In this way, we hope to establish a solid foundation for the children to thrive now and in the future! That is why our renovation is so important too!

## Synaptic Density



Drawing by H.T. Chugani

1. The National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (NECTAC)  
2. State Early Childhood Policy Technical Assistance Network (SECPTA)

# ALUMNI ADVENTURES with Sean Lewis

by Kyle Miller, Sean's Mother



Sean Lewis was born 35 years ago with Cerebral Palsy. At the age of two he attended Little Light House and for four years felt the love and joy of the founder, his teachers and the many volunteers who he crossed paths with during that time. His mother, raising Sean on her own, fell in love with LLH immediately. She said you could feel God and His love for these children from the moment you entered. Sean's short four years took place before the new school was built. He actually graduated at age six in the year 1986 - just before the new school was built in 1990.

He was delighted, however, that a large picture of a happy, smiling Sean at four-five years old hung in the entrance area of the new school alongside some other students when the new school opened. He went back to visit from time to time. The years following LLH were spent in Tulsa Public Schools where he graduated and then went on to Tulsa Community College where he received an Associates Degree in Human Sciences.

Sean was always very active, made friends easily and as he grew older

knew that God had called him to something important. By age 15, Sean was already encouraging and lifting people up. Sean believed that no matter what our challenges are in life - that everyone has a purpose, a dream, and a destiny. He was soon traveling and sharing his message with many people. His words brought hope and encouragement to everyone, but especially ones who could relate to the challenges



they knew Sean had. He encourages people to live their best life possible and to remember that our attitudes are important. We choose to be happy - it's a choice. Life is 10% what happens to you and 90% how you react to it. When Sean isn't sharing his message, he is busy advocating for the rights of others. He is in his 3rd term of Presidency of a self-advocacy organization for individuals with disabilities. He is also a member and ambassador for The Center for Individuals with Physical Challenges, where he plays Boccia and other adaptive sports. It is his dream to one day make a team and represent the U.S. at the Paralympics playing Boccia.



He currently is raising funds to go to Nationals in Illinois in June. Sean is active with TARC here in Tulsa and is an ambassador for this organization that has many services for those families and individuals who have a disability. Sean loves helping others and making a difference. He is very active in his church and shares his life verse with everyone. It is Philippians 4:13. - "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." He believes this and stands on it.



# JUNIOR BOARD

## 2017 - 2018 Junior Board Members

Heidi Avery - Owasso

Dajah Brooks -  
Cascia Hall

Brooke Clay - Victory

Elise Duffy -  
Bishop Kelley

Shelby Flahive -  
Bishop Kelley

Carter Harris -  
Booker T Washington

Hailey Nelson - Jenks

Madeline Payne -  
Bishop Kelley

Laura Schwier - TCC

Emma Scott -  
Oklahoma Connections  
Academy

Anne Marie Stagg -  
Cascia Hall

Emma Suter -  
Lincoln Christian

Emma Tims - OSU

Sarah Walter - TCC

Hannah Wendelbo - OSU

In the past two years, the Little Light House has celebrated their 45th year as a ministry, expanded into a bigger facility, and developed the Little Light House Junior Board. The Little Light House established a Junior Board in an effort to engage, educate and inspire youth in philanthropy and begin a path to nonprofit leadership. Through participation in this program, young people are given the opportunity to learn leadership skills, gain understanding of how a nonprofit organization works and how to develop, promote and implement their ideas to further God's kingdom. As young leaders, they are dedicated to being a part of this ministry and furthering its growth, by hosting their first inaugural event "Pups, Yups and Food Trucks" on Saturday, May 5, 2018. Their goal is to raise \$15,000 to benefit the children of the Little Light House.

**"God is calling me to show compassion for others  
through VOLUNTEERING."**

**Sarah Walter, LLH Junior Board Member**

*Little Light House Junior Board Presents*  
**PUPS, YUPS,  
AND  
FOOD TRUCKS**

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May 5, 2018 | 10:00am-2:00pm  
Little Light House  
5120 E 36th Street Tulsa, OK 74135



Come enjoy a dog show, food trucks, carnival games, prizes, and more!

**Dog Show!**  
Award categories: Best Dressed, Kid's Choice, Best Tail Wagger, Least Obedient, and Biggest & Furriest  
Register at  
[www.littlelighthouse.org](http://www.littlelighthouse.org)



# CLASSROOM CORNER: ROBOTICS RESEARCH

*By: The University of Tulsa, College of Engineering and Natural Sciences, Mechanical Engineering Department and Anne McCoy, LLH Occupational Therapist*

We, at the Little Light House (LLH), are so pleased to announce our participation as research collaborators in a National Science Foundation Grant with The University of Tulsa (TU)!

The biological robotics research group in TU's Department of Mechanical Engineering has received a grant from the National Science Foundation to investigate interventions that may improve the quality of life for children with hypotonia through rehabilitation robotics. The condition causes low strength and tone in neck muscles and can prevent or delay development of functional upright and independent control of the head.

According to principal investigator, Professor Joshua Schultz, current therapeutic practice is to support the child's head from a lightweight, dynamic suspension frame using a cable and head strap. The suspension however, does little to help children learn how to control their heads using their own muscle power. Professor Schultz added, "We want to help children support their own heads by using a robotic device to give them support when they need it and relinquish it when they don't."



motor skills and engagement in the classroom!" says Anne McCoy, LLH Occupational Therapist.

"Rehabilitation robotics is coming out of its infancy and finding better ways to help people with disabilities live fuller, more active lives in broader participation with the rest of society," Schultz said. After the final phase of development, the device will be evaluated in a clinical setting to determine its effectiveness in strengthening the musculature of the neck to allow more independent head control over time.

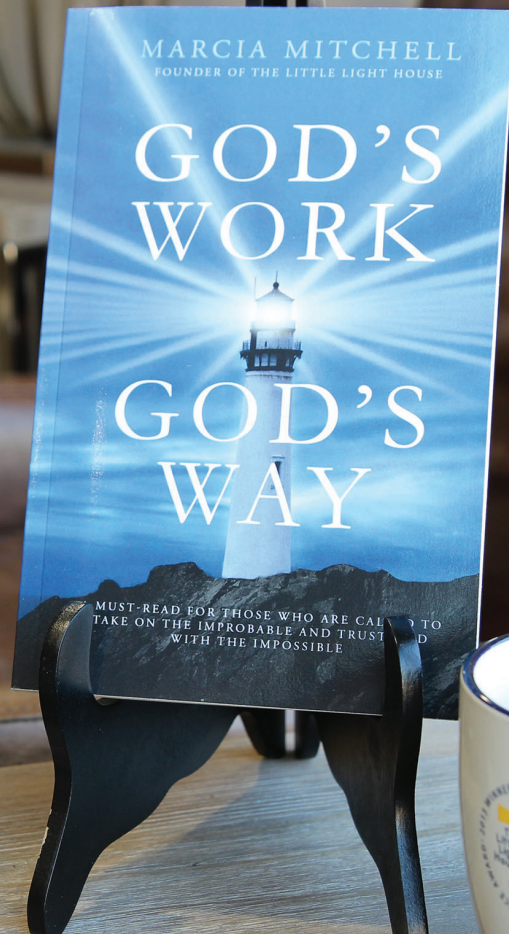
"Developing upright and stable head control is critical to motor and cognitive development in children, and this project provides innovative opportunities to create a new environment to assist children to do so," says Julie Wilson, LLH Physical Therapist.

The TU research team will collaborate directly with our LLH physical and occupational therapists to study muscles of the human neck and incorporate computer modeling. "We are so excited about the potential of this new robotic system for encouraging development of independent head control, which will in turn affect a child's visual



# Get your copy today!

Little Light House founder, Marcia Mitchell's newest book, *God's Work — God's Way* has just been made available for purchase this month! This book is perfect for the business owner looking to operate according to God's principles without compromise. Stop by the LLH Gift Shop or visit Amazon.com to get your copy today!



## 31ST ANNUAL LINKS FOR LITTLE ONES



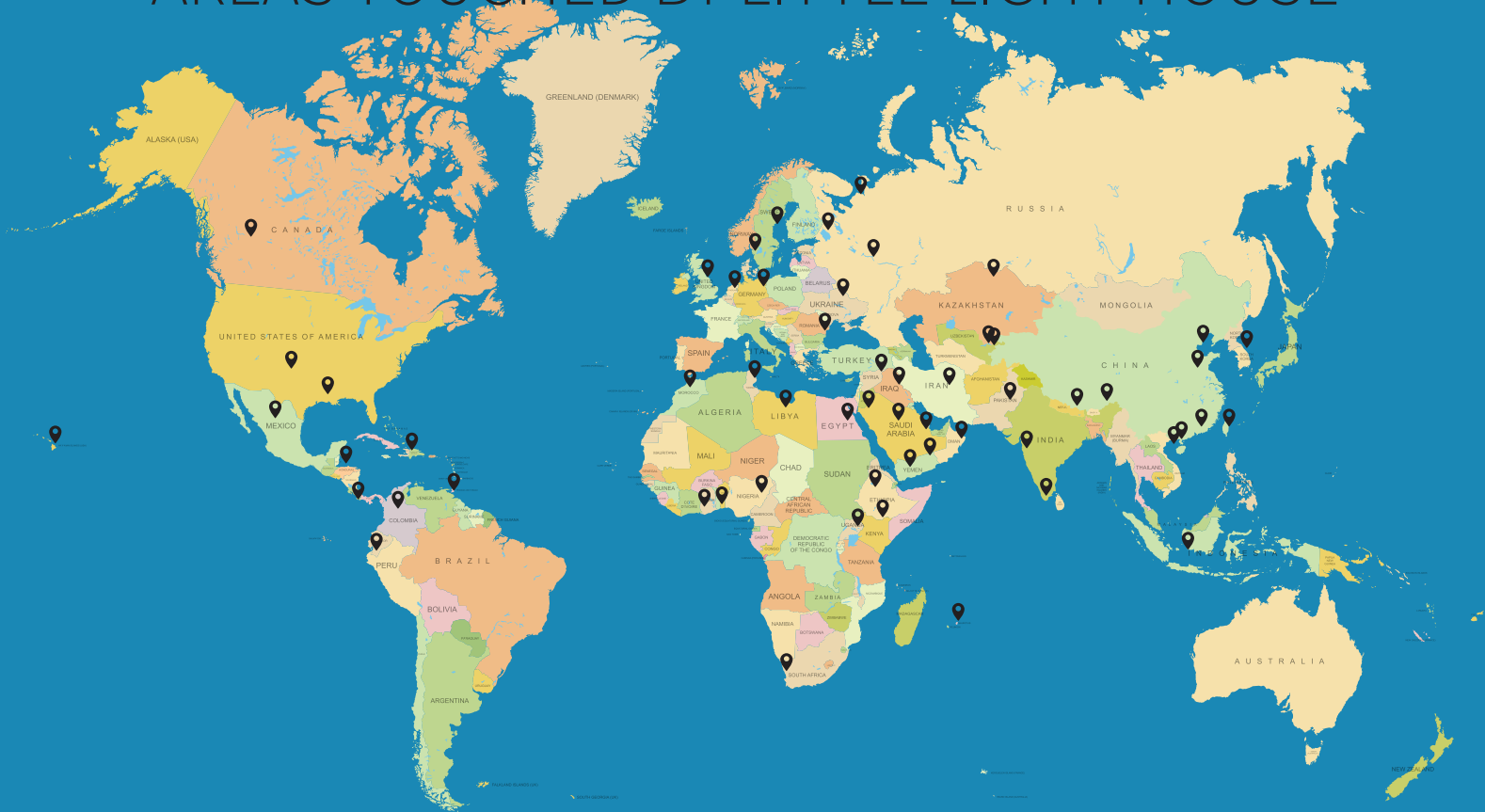
MONDAY, JUNE 4TH | SHOTGUN STARTS 8 A.M. & 1:30 P.M.  
GOLF CLUB OF OKLAHOMA

20400 E. 141<sup>st</sup> ST. SOUTH | BROKEN ARROW, OK

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO REGISTER VISIT [WWW.LITTLELIGHTHOUSE.ORG](http://WWW.LITTLELIGHTHOUSE.ORG) OR CALL 918.664.6746

# GLOBAL IMPACT

## AREAS TOUCHED BY LITTLE LIGHT HOUSE



**Number of international interns LLH has trained**

# 41

**Number of countries the international interns have come from**

# 12

Each dark dot on the map represents at least one, most of the time many more, contact with the Little Light House. These contacts come in the form of:

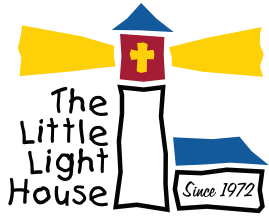
- **International Delegations visiting the LLH in Tulsa**
- **The LLH staff traveling to the area to train nationals through hands-on demonstrations and seminars**
- **Individuals coming from these regions to the LLH for the International Intern Program**

This represents 57 countries as of 2017, we have added face-to-face, live training utilizing the internet with individuals outside of the U.S.

The LLH has served 41 International Interns from 12 countries since 1999. There have been at least 60 international delegations representing at least 46 nations that have toured the Little Light House since records of International tours began in the late 1990's. This represents about 200 individuals.

The LLH has had a significant impact in the training of staff and development of eight schools, centers and/or ministries for children with special needs, in seven of the 57 countries.





The Little Light House

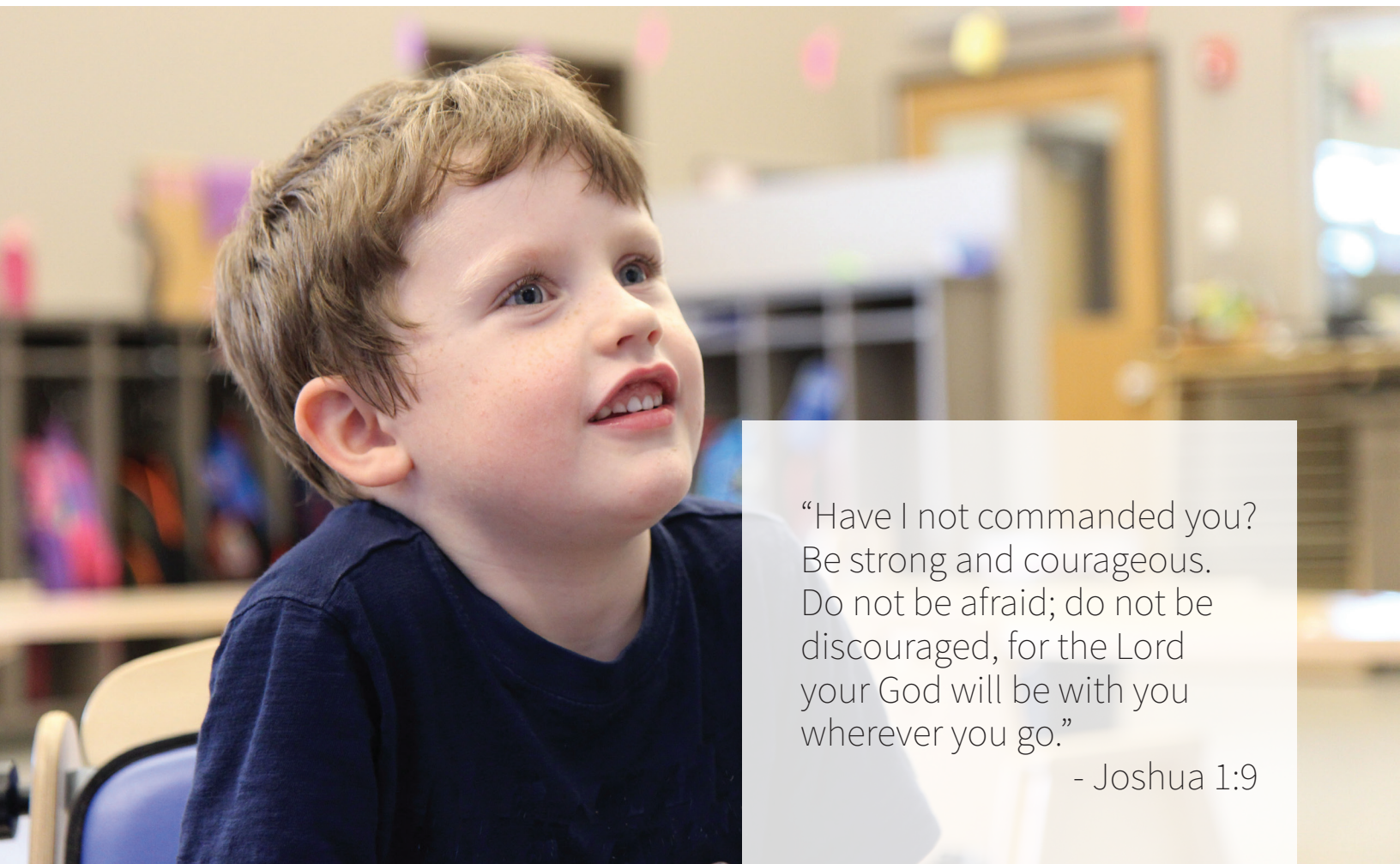
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A CHRISTIAN DEVELOPMENTAL CENTER FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS



“Have I not commanded you?  
Be strong and courageous.  
Do not be afraid; do not be  
discouraged, for the Lord  
your God will be with you  
wherever you go.”

- Joshua 1:9

**Non-discriminatory Policy**

The Little Light House, Inc is a non-profit Christian Developmental Center for children with disabilities, age birth to six years of age. The Little Light House does not discriminate on the basis of religion, sex, color, race, national or ethnic origin, or medical diagnosis (unless the diagnosis affects the child's ability to attend school on a regular basis) in the administration of its educational policies, admission policies, and other school administered programs. Some behavioral conditions may be evaluated on individual basis. The Little Light House assures that all children's records will be maintained as confidential.