

2019 | ISSUE 1



THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF LITTLE LIGHT HOUSE

# THE BEACON



## **ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT**

See the 2017-2018 Little Light House Annual Impact Report on page 7

## **STUDENT SPOTLIGHT**

Read about one of our students stories on page 3 and 4

## **EARLY INTERVENTION**

Our Pilot program is up and underway Read about it on page 8



**THE MISSION OF THE LITTLE LIGHT HOUSE IS TO GLORIFY GOD BY IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS, THEIR FAMILIES AND THEIR COMMUNITIES.**

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**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

**JANUARY**

- 3 Volunteer Training at 12pm
- 8 First Day back from Break
- 17 Volunteer Training at 12pm
- 21 Martin Luther King Day **LLH CLOSED**
- 22 Volunteer Training at 12pm
- 23 Community Luncheon at 11:45am

**FEBRUARY**

- 14 Volunteer Training at 12pm  
**OPEN HOUSE at 10am to 1pm**
- 18 Presidents Day **LLH CLOSED**
- 27 Community Luncheon at 11:45am
- 28 Shining Light Conference *Day 1*

**MARCH**

- 1 Shining Light Conference *Day 2*
- 4-22 Spring Break
- 20 Volunteer Training at 12pm

**APRIL**

- 6 Garden Party
- 8 **LLH CLOSED**
- 11 Volunteer Training at 12pm
- 19-22 Easter Break **LLH CLOSED**



THE BEACON  
2019 | Issue 1

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Jean Winfrey

**Founder**

Marcia Mitchell

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**A LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

**SO MANY NEW THINGS TO COME IN THIS NEW YEAR**

It is hard to believe 2019 has arrived! With this New Year, we have a lot of “new” that is happening around the Little Light House. First, I am delighted to share with you that we have just completed the renovation of our original building. **I would like to invite you to a come-and-go open house of our new Family Learning Center on February 14 at 10am to 1pm.** With an additional 20,000 sq. ft. we will be able to serve more families than ever before! As we have been moving furniture and equipment in this month, I have been overwhelmed with how blessed we are to have such a beautiful space to serve our children and their families.



Second, many of you are aware we embarked in a pilot program this past semester for a new Early Intervention program we will start in the Family Learning Center. We received wonderful feedback from the parents who participated with their precious little ones. This program will provide a way for us to serve those who are on our very long waiting list, which is now over 275 children. With the expansion of our building and the dream of a program, we know we need to increase our budget to support these new services. We will slowly grow into our new Family Learning Center as our operating budget increases to meet the need. God has always shown himself faithful, and he has always met our needs as we have continued to expand our services over the years.

In addition, a new Executive Director will be taking the lead come July 1. Anne McCoy was introduced to you in our last Beacon and has already been immersed in many training opportunities. Starting this month, I will have Anne by my side full-time so that I can transfer all that I know and do into her hands. I hope sometime in the next six months you will come by to meet her as I pass the baton. As I prepare to leave, I’m blessed and excited because I know that I have completed the purpose God had for me to fulfill here.

Lastly, a huge thank you to all of our constituents for staying the course with us. As I was recently reflecting over our list of donors, I saw many familiar names that have been supporters for three and four decades, and others not quite so long. In addition, I was also in awe of the many new “first time” donors that are coming along side what we are doing. 2018 was a very good year, and we are so grateful for your support. We know we could not have done it without you! However, we are also very excited about all the “new” that will be happening in the coming year and hope you will continue with us!

**Jean Winfrey**  
*Executive Director*

**Isaiah 42: 9 says “See, the former things have taken place, and new things I declare; before they spring into being I announce them to you.”**



# STUDENT SPOTLIGHT GRETCHEN NOVAK

BY SEAN AND ANGIE NOVAK



Joy is defined as the feeling of great happiness. We call Gretchen our joy ambassador. She is a happy, carefree child of God, who loves to smile and interact with others. She is a beautiful little girl with so much heart for those around her.

Gretchen was due April 19th, but on April 17th we learned she was breech and although we attempted to turn her, she was over 9 pounds and was not budging. She was born via c-section on April 24, 2013 at St. Francis Hospital in Tulsa, OK and was visually healthy-looking. Those moments hearing her first cry and seeing her sweet face were perfect. She is a true gift from God.

When Gretchen was 7 months old, she went to a vision follow-up. The doctor we saw was not seeing Gretchen respond visually in a typical way. He told us she was legally blind, and encouraged us to reach out to our resources. Our Sooner Start coordinator, Sarah Tronnier, adamantly made clear to us she would bring us to LLH for a tour and that Gretchen needed to be enrolled on the waiting list. Through Little Light House we were reacquainted with our friends' journey, their son had albinism, and we felt a relief that Gretchen might have the opportunity to develop in a nurturing place where every child has a different starting point and story to tell. We were encouraged that even though we could not predict the future for Gretchen, or what she would be capable of, that Little Light House would support her to become her best self. It seemed clear that whatever resources might help a child grow and thrive are sought out in this place. Gretchen was put on the waiting list on November 2013 at number 149. As we waited patiently and eagerly for Gretchen to get into Little Light House, we also were waiting for more answers about Gretchen's diagnosis. Our initial struggles were with blindness, low muscle

tone, mobility, as well as eating and drinking difficulties. All the hopes and dreams we had while pregnant had already been altered or put on hold. We at this point had evolved as parents to adjust to what Gretchen needed us to be, in addition to what her older brothers needed. We had become accustomed to doctors and medical professionals being baffled by Gretchen. She was known as a "mystery" baby in the NICU. Every test came back negative with no answers. The hospital geneticist told us he didn't know how to dictate her case." That was a big moment, when we realized not every child leaves the hospital with answers. We became used to not knowing what we were dealing with, and at some point the the human detail of a diagnosis fell to the wayside and we poured our whole hearts into just caring for her the best we knew how. As we reflect, we realize now how crucial it is not to get hung up emotionally on the impact a diagnosis can bring. Repeatedly, we were told what we might be dealing with and all those conclusions were wrong. Had we not continued to trust God with His design and plan, we probably would have succumbed to the false diagnoses we were often given and lost hope; but God has a mighty plan for children like Gretchen.

The year 2016 was a year of answered questions and the end to a lot of waiting. On March 22, 2016 Gretchen got the call that she would be eligible to start at LLH in August of that year. Just shortly after this phone call, our geneticist recommended another test, a whole sequencing, and more waiting delivered an elusive answer for Gretchen's diagnosis. We sent off our blood tests on May 5, 2016 and on September 27, 2016, we received a call informing us that Gretchen has a rare genetic disorder called PURA Syndrome.

It was God's timing on the phone call because Gretchen was at therapy and her primary therapist was able to help Angie process the information with genetics on the phone. There was an immediate circle of other parents, relationships we had formed in the hours spent in waiting rooms. Going online immediately opened a whole new support group of other parents of children with PURA syndrome. Sometimes the wait, which is so hard to deal with, is so important in reaching the answers we hope for. The first night of our diagnosis was full of relief, reading the list of symptoms was confirming, and feeling the impact of a "welcome" globally was encouraging that all this time we were not alone in the journey with Gretchen.

The very next day, when Angie took Gretchen to Little Light House, we saw so clearly that God was preparing this whole time to support us. Out of only 60+ documented cases worldwide, another student in her class had the same diagnosis. The world is tiny folks! Out of the whole world, Gretchen had been in the same country, state, county, city, school, and classroom with another PURA kiddo and that connection has grown into a family friendship God knew we needed for this journey.

Gretchen will have attended Little Light House for three years when she graduates summer of 2019. Amongst her time here we have seen so many milestones and miracles. When she started at age 3, she was not even crawling yet! Gretchen can now crawl and walk, which has transitioned over the years from highly confined to a walker then to a gait trainer to walking sometimes holding someone's hand or all by herself. She can see, keep eye contact for longer periods, hear, clap, laugh, and smile as a response to interaction with people and her environment. She can feed herself with her hands and often with utensils. She can drink from a cup and from a straw. She plays with others, explores her surroundings, and goes potty on the toilet. Her receptive vocabulary is great. She understands what a talker is and is acquiring communication skills on her adaptive device. She can understand how to be around kids, people, and animals like dogs and rabbits. Her whole world has been transformed like a fog slowly lifting.



We want anyone who donates to the Little Light House to understand their impact has no end. We will always be thanking Little Light House for the level of care, instruction and therapy Gretchen has received. As parents we planned for Gretchen, but we never could have expected her to be the mystery and special unicorn she is. For that we are financially so grateful for you all and the opportunity she has had to grow and learn at Little Light House. We have had the ability to focus on her medical needs financially, knowing she has her academic and group therapy needs met at school. Many families like ours have multiple children and having access to Little Light House, regardless of income, provides for the whole family to be cared for. We are thankful for the close attention Gretchen has received and we know first-hand that she will be more successful for her next school experience because the impact donors have made in creating an amazing school.

**Whether you give time or finances or services or supplies, YOU are making life-changing differences in every student AND their families for life!**



# KYLIE

## ALUMNI ADVENTURES

BY LISA KILLINGSWORTH, KYLIE'S MOM

When we told our son he was possibly having a little sister, he said "Oh I know, it's a girl and her name is Kylie Jordan!" He was 3 years old and could not wait to be a big brother.

After having a normal pregnancy and birth, we brought our baby girl home. Within the first few days, which turned into weeks, of constant crying we spoke to our pediatrician. She said it was probably just colic and every baby is different... to give it time. However, we weren't rookie parents. We knew something wasn't right. Kylie would not look at you while feeding and she cried almost 24 hours a day. We were unaware of any medical issues until she began having seizures at the age of 5 months. We were then thrust onto the roller coaster we call life.

The pediatrician immediately referred us to a local neurologist and the investigation began. After 6 months of going down several different paths the decision was made to refer Kylie to Columbia Presbyterian in NYC for a fresh muscle biopsy and a lumbar puncture. Kylie was diagnosed with a rare mitochondrial metabolic disorder causing infantile spasms, cortical visual impairment, and cerebral palsy. It felt like a death. Sad, scared and hopeless were some of our initial emotions; however, somehow the Lord always steps in just when you don't think you can take anymore. We put our faith in the Lord and our lives have never been the same. She started the Ketogenic diet and her seizures slowed, then eventually stopped.

At the suggestion of our case manager from Sooner Start, we called the Little Light House. We took a tour as soon as possible, put Kylie on the waiting list, and began praying it would not take the two years they had estimated. Ironically, Kylie enrolled one month shy of two years...she started in the yellow class as a 3-year old, and this was the

beginning of the things she would "start" while there!! She started sitting up, putting her feet on the ground to stand, signing "Hi" when greeting people, and dancing to music during praise and worship. So many "milestones and miracles" there isn't time to write about them all; but the biggest thing we began to have was hope for the future. Someday Kylie will be able to select her own life verse; but until then, we have selected *1 Corinthians 13:7 Love always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.*

Graduation day came all too quickly! Kylie started Kindergarten in 2009 at our neighborhood school. We soon learned how spoiled we were by the Little Light House. We were finding it difficult to find a school program that matched their caliber. We made the decision to move to the Jenks school district when Kylie was ready for middle school. She has settled there nicely and continues to work hard on her goals. She walks with the assistance of a walker but would rather hold hands with a friend and take a stroll. She uses a few signs to communicate and is working with her teacher and therapist to use an iPad. She has friends, one of which was in her class at the Little Light House. Like a typical 9th grader, her favorite classes are physical education and music. However, one of her favorite activities every year still involves the Little Light House. She loves to participate in Laps for Little Ones. It is always a glorious day when she is able to reunite with old friends, teachers, therapists and staff; all while raising funds for the school that has had such a profound impact on her life. We are all so grateful, thankful, and blessed to have been a part of the Little Light House and have full faith Kylie will continue to be the light of Christ and one of their many ambassadors for life!



# THANK YOU

What an amazing community we have! Our students are able to continue reaching developmental milestones because of the giving hearts of you, our community. These two events were a HUGE success because of the sponsors, donors, participants, and supporters in Tulsa and the surrounding areas. Thank you to all that came alongside us to help us continue God's work!

Lindsay Nozak, Director of Events and Marketing



## LAPS FOR LITTLE ONES SPONSORS

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### Event Sponsors

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# 2017-2018 ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT



## STUDENT GROWTH

Every year we see so many “milestones and miracles” with our students. Here are just a few:



10 students who moved from non-ambulatory to ambulatory.



24 students who moved from “silent receptive” to “Early Productive” language stages.



21 students who began using an alternative communication system.



32 students who moved from unoccupied play to parallel play.



23 students who moved from elopement behavior to staying in the assigned area.



22 students graduate!



## COMMUNITY IMPACT

Every year we have the blessing to work with so many wonderful volunteers, donors, parents, and supporters. Here are just some of the ways everyone has made an impact:



48 LLH Pathlighters (individuals who have named LLH in their estate plan.)



106 High School students participated in our Summer Apprenticeship Program.



6,226 Number of hours volunteers have helped at LLH.



17,331 Collective followers on all LLH social media platforms.



5 International Interns who came to LLH for their internship.



24 Local colleges and universities that regularly participate in LLH training programs.



1,239,749 Money raised at annual LLH fundraising events.



60,182 Amount of money raised due to Parent volunteer hours.



# EARLY INTERVENTION

By Jessica Mardis  
Director of Operations

“A treatment method or an educational method that will work for one child may not work for another child. The one common denominator for all of the young children is that early intervention does work, and it seems to improve the prognosis.” Temple Grandin

The Little Light House, from its foundation, has believed that early intervention is the critical key for improving the quality of life for children with special needs. Early Intervention (EI) is a term to describe services and supports that are available to babies and young children. EI is critical for children with developmental delays and their families, because it can have a significant impact on a child's ability to learn new skills and overcome challenges. It can increase success in school and life according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2018).

With a newly expanded space, LLH has the opportunity to instate new programs to meet the time-sensitive demand for early intervention. We know the early years of life (0-3 yrs) are a foundation for later learning, as this is the time when 85% of the brain's core structure is formed. We also know that love, hope, strong community, and support for the entire family are foundational when raising kids.

LLH is committed to reach more children at the earliest age possible while empowering and providing families with support and resources to help their child and maintain a healthy family unit.

The Little Light House Family Learning Center has created an innovative curriculum to meet the needs of children birth-36 months and their families while on the waiting list. Small classes where both child and parent attend focus on one-on-one teaching with the parent as the teacher. The Little Light House early childhood specialists guide parents into meaningful interactions with their child that build developmental skills. Activities to enhance social and play skills, communication and independence were highlighted in the first session consisting of ten classes.

EI Parent Jennifer Amstutz commented, “Our family is so thankful to have the opportunity to be a part of the pilot program of Early Intervention at Little Light House. It has been so helpful to learn new approaches and tools to use in communication and making everyday play and activities into an environment to foster growth and development for our child.”



## FISCAL YEAR JUNE 30, 2017

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES 2018		CONSOLIDATED STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION 2018	
Revenues		Cash & Certificates of Deposit	\$ 3,494,597
Contributions	\$ 836,368	Pledges Receivable	66,000
Fund-raising Events, net	1,359,320	Prepaid Expenses & Other Assets	16,855
Donated Materials and Services	15,595	Net Property, Plant & Equipment	15,811,958
Other Income	75,658	Total Assets	\$ 19,389,410
Net Assets released from restrictions	351,220		
Total Revenue	2,638,161		
Expenses		<b>LIABILITIES</b>	
Program	2,450,660	Current Liabilities	42,630
Management and general	274,127	Total Liabilities	42,630
Fund-raising	178,992		
Total expenses	2,903,779		
Increase in unrestricted net assets	(265,618)	<b>NET ASSETS</b>	
		Unrestricted	16,781,700
<b>TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED NET ASSETS</b>		Temporarily Restricted	2,449,220
Contributions (A)	1,219,001	Permanently Restricted	115,860
Net assets released from restrictions	(351,220)	Total Net Assets	19,346,780
Decrease in temp restricted net assets		Total Liabilities and net assets	\$ 19,389,410
Decrease in total net assets	867,781		
(A) Primarily includes Capital Campaign Contributions	\$ 602,163		





# Journey

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# GARDEN PARTY

04/06/2019 • 8:30AM TO 12:30PM • COX BUSINESS CENTER

For more information about the Garden Party please contact our events department at 918.664.6746 or [events@littleshighthouse.org](mailto:events@littleshighthouse.org).

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Council Valley Baptist Church

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## Memoriams

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Will Rogers Methodist Crusaders Sunday School Class

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Steve Bunn

**Cheyenne Collins**  
Kenneth and Debbie Collins

**Jack Connor**  
Lynda Connor

**Jere Cottle**  
Doris Cottle

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Holly Miller

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[www.littlelighthouse.org](http://www.littlelighthouse.org)

## A CHRISTIAN DEVELOPMENTAL CENTER FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS



**“THEREFORE IF ANYONE IS IN CHRIST, HE IS A NEW CREATURE; THE OLD THINGS PASSED AWAY, BEHOLD, NEW THINGS HAVE COME.”**

**2 CORINTHIANS 5:17**

### 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.