



The Visionary

INSIDE THIS ISSUE...

- MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK ¹
- A SUCCESSFUL YEAR FOR DBS CONSUMERS ²
- SAVE FOR A BETTER LIFE EXPERIENCE ³
- TRAVELING, EDUCATION & BEYOND ⁴
- RETURNING HOME AFTER A YEAR IN THE FORMER SOVIET REPUBLICS ⁵
- BUSINESS ENTERPRISE ENTREPRENEUR HONORED ⁶
- TECHNOLOGY TODAY ⁷
- IN THE HEADLINES ⁷
- STEM CELL THERAPY FOR EYE DISEASE ⁸
- IN MEMORY OF JUAN CARLOS DIAZ ⁹
- WHITE CANE AWARENESS DAY ¹⁰
- WHAT'S HAPPENING IN OCTOBER ¹¹

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

As always, October is going to be a busy and very important month for the Division of Blind Services (DBS). We are gearing up in preparation for Disability Awareness Month and White Cane Awareness Day. In order to add emphasis to the importance of these observances, we would like to introduce the newly renovated Visionary Newsletter.

Our communications team has partnered with some of our screen reader and accessibility experts on making sure the newsletter is as accessible and aesthetically pleasing as possible. But since this is for you, we want to know what YOU think! Send an email to the communications team ([communications@ dba.fldoe.org](mailto:communications@dba.fldoe.org)) letting them know your thoughts or suggestions.

With just over six months on the job, Governor Ron DeSantis and Commissioner Richard Corcoran have been advancing an ambitious agenda for education and workforce development. As part of Governor DeSantis' 2019-2020 "Bold Vision for a Brighter Future Budget" proposal, the Legislature passed HB 7071 which allocates over \$40 million towards workforce development and infrastructure

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improvements. HB 7071 also launches the SAIL (Strengthening Alignment between Industry and Learning) to 60 initiative. SAIL to 60 aims to increase the percentage of working age Floridians with degrees, certificates, education, and training beyond high school to 60% by the year 2030 with the goal of attracting businesses, creating jobs, and promoting economic growth throughout the state of Florida.

Here's a quick recap of some of the programs available in HB 7071:

- Career and Technical Education: High school students will be allowed to use credits in work-based learning programs and career and technical education to fulfill their high school graduation requirements.
- Apprenticeships: The Florida Pathways to Career Opportunities Grant provides competitive matching grant dollars for school districts and others that sponsor apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs in high-demand skills in the region. This will increase the number of available apprenticeships throughout the state of Florida. The best part is that these apprenticeships will be in fields where there is demand for new employees.
- Reverse Transfer: Floridians with at least 30 credit hours who transfer to a four-year institution before receiving an Associate of Art's (AA) degree will be able to receive an AA when they meet the degree requirements.
- Finishing College: The Last Mile College Completion Program is designed for students who had to leave college if they have 12 credit hours or less to finish their degree. The program allows the individual to come back and get it done!

DBS clients may be eligible to take part in any of these programs. Whether you are a student looking for work based learning opportunities, a person who is looking for an "earn and learn" apprenticeship, or someone who wants to complete the last mile of their college degree, talk to your local DBS counselor about your vocational goals so they can help you explore your options.

Sincerely,



Robert L. Doyle III

Fiscal Year 2018-2019 A Successful Year for DBS Consumers

Our goal as an organization is to continually make strides in helping our clients and the blind and visually impaired community as a whole. We are proud to announce that the last fiscal year (FY) was a great one for DBS clients and stakeholders! In addition to the more than 32,790 Braille and Talking Book Library patron's served, DBS also served 11,975 clients through our programs serving babies through seniors. We are pleased to announce that we were able to achieve an agency record of helping 888 blind or visually impaired Floridians obtain and/or retain employment. In addition, we outperformed the approved standard for projected average annual earnings for DBS employment clients by 142.95%.

Our successful Business Enterprise Program saw an increase in sales of \$1.2 million across the state with an average salary for our business enterprise entrepreneurs of \$73,618. In the next year, we're hoping to increase our success in our employment programs by including access for DBS clients to additional work-based learning, on-the-job training, and apprenticeship opportunities.

For our Independent Living clients, 81.98% of their cases were closed as successful – meaning those clients are able to live independently! We love seeing our clients able to live their own lives and see that they can make a positive contribution to society. Our Blind Babies and Children's Programs were able to serve over 2,027 children across the state.

Our Rehabilitation Center in Daytona Beach reported that 95% of clients attending a program successfully completed it at the Center and 95.66% of those clients reported positive experiences. The Braille and Talking Book Library provided 1.2 million library loans (in Braille and audio formats) to Floridians who are blind and visually impaired.

While we are celebrating our successes for FY 2018-2019, we are striving to become an even better Division in FY 2019-2020!

We're continually seeking to ensure those we serve are receiving the highest quality services possible. If you know someone who can benefit from DBS programs, please let them know that we are here to serve! To apply for services, you can go to the online application on the DBS website or call 1-800-342-1828!

Save for a Better Life Experience with an Able United Account

You can now take advantage of a new program which allows you to save for disability expenses tax-free! The Able United Account program was established with the passage of the Stephen Beck, Jr. Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act. Florida is one of the first states in the nation to launch a qualified ABLE Program. Specifically, an ABLE account is a tax-free savings and investment account established to support qualified disability expenses for an individual with a disability, including living expenses. Money in an ABLE account is generally disregarded when determining eligibility for federal benefit programs, such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Medicaid.

There are three eligibility criteria of opening an ABLE United Account:

- Disability Severity Criteria – the individual must be blind or have a disability that meets the requirements for SSI or SSDI.
- Disability Onset – The onset of blindness or disability must have occurred before the individual's 26th birthday. Current age is not considered when opening an account however the account must be opened by an adult 18 years of age or older.
- Florida Residency – The applicant must be a Florida Resident

Similar to a Roth IRA or a 529 college savings plan, an Able United account is a tax-free savings account that can help individuals with disabilities save for their financial future. An Able United Account will:

- Allow individuals with disabilities to save money and build assets without negatively impacting federal benefits such as SSI and Medicaid.
- Provides a tax free savings and investment account that can be used for a wide variety of qualified disability expenses to include: health, housing, education, employment training and support, assistive technology and support services, and transportation, Funeral expenses, legal fees, financial management fees, and other approved expenses.

For additional information on whether or not you are eligible or to open an account, please visit ableunited.com for a more comprehensive list of commonly asked questions and answers. If you still can't find what you're looking for, please call at 1-888-524-ABLE (2253).

Traveling, Education & Beyond



Telmo Falope was 16 years old when he lost his vision due to [leber hereditary optic neuropathy](#), an inherited form of vision loss. In the beginning, it was difficult for him to accept the loss of his sight and the limitations he felt were placed on his future because of it. However, with the strong support of his parents, encouragement from his sister, an uplifting counselor at DBS, and the desire to reach for the stars, he has been able to achieve far more than he dreamed.

After Telmo learned how to live independently with his visual impairment, he began to see the many opportunities ahead of him. While in high school, Telmo wanted to learn Spanish and French, but the classes were full. He wasn't going to let that hold him back so he began studying Russian instead. While not his first choice, Telmo became fully engrossed with the Russian language and culture with the help of his Russian teacher, who made the class very interesting. Telmo loved the sound of the language, and he was even able to read his favorite book *Crime and Punishment*, in Russian.

After finishing high school at the [Florida School for the Deaf and Blind](#), he received his AA degree at a community college before venturing of to the University of Florida (UF). At UF he became even more serious about his education and pursued his passion for Russian language and culture. Telmo pursued the opportunity to study abroad and he was accepted into a year-long program in Russia and Kazakhstan.

While studying abroad, Telmo learned he was the first visually impaired student that many of the teachers in his program overseas ever had. Although this created quite a few challenges, he was able to gain and learn a few things. He learned how to be more understanding to those that were unfamiliar with his needs and how to be a better advocate for himself as a person with a disability. Most importantly, he learned Russian in Russian countries, which is exactly what he set out to do!

Having graduated summa cum laude from UF with a BA in Russian, Telmo continues to be optimistic and proactive about his future. He gives credit for how far he's come to those that have encouraged and supported him since the very beginning. When asked where he sees himself in the next five to ten years, he says he hopes to have received his Juris Doctorate from Harvard Law School and to live in a major city where he can practice international and immigration law and have a beautiful family of his own.

Telmo will tell you that he's been able to overcome some of life's many challenges by "not giving excuses, but always trying to give results." We can all learn so much from his determination, positive attitude, and persistent hard work.

Check out Telmo's essay on studying abroad on the next page!

Returning Home After a Year in the Former Soviet Republics

Telmo Falope



After graduating from the University of Florida with a BA in Russian, I set on a voyage to study in two of the former Soviet Republics, Russia and Kazakhstan. When most Americans think of studying in Europe, they consider London, Paris, Frankfurt, or Madrid as the ideal place for spending their year abroad, not Moscow, let alone Central Asia. However, my intellectual curiosity got the best of me. I was less interested in fine wines, aged cheese, castles in mystical forests or ideas of liberal democracy than what people were like in America's former most terrorizing rival nation as well as the stomping-grounds of Genghis Khan and his minions.

Having been to this region once before, I was able to bypass some of the culture shock and make fresh observations. Many of these people were global citizens, they had a good sense of geography, spoke 2 or 3 languages and had a good grasp of world history. Despite the collapse of the Soviet Union, people had a strong sense of dignity, they were always well dressed, stood tall and spoke confidently. Many people were fans of American pop-culture and enjoyed much of our entertainment. In general, people leaned towards cultural and social conservatism but were open to Western liberal ideas.

In Kazakhstan, where I spent 9 months, people were thrilled that Americans were studying in their country. More outgoing than their Russian neighbors, Kazakhstan is asked many questions about America like: What do Americans do for fun? What's the average American salary? What do they think of foreigners? What do they think of President Trump? Many people were hopeful for a strong American alliance. I was surprised to encounter Kazakhstanis in remote villages who spoke English and welcomed me in their homes like one of their own. I was delighted to learn that hospitality was a major part of Eastern European and Central Asian culture.

Studying abroad isn't for everyone. It can be especially hard for people with disabilities. I chose to study in a developing region, so I had low expectations in terms of accommodations.

Needless to say, it was frustrating at times, but with a bit of determination and initiative I was able to manage the worst of it. Studying abroad as a visually impaired person requires stamina because people won't always understand your needs or remember them and so you must fend for yourself while communicating in a foreign language and being culturally sensitive.

Participating in a study abroad program for the sole purpose of "finding yourself" could be too hefty of a price for some to pay—both monetarily and mentally. My good grades paid off because they were what helped me get scholarships and financial assistance from DBS which covered the majority of my expenses. Besides the monetary expense of these programs, there's also the cost of being away from home and loved ones. Therefore, it's important to maintain a strong support system.

However, if you are open minded and have the means to study abroad, you will be grateful for making such an investment. I studied abroad because I thought it was the logical next step for a Russian major who wanted to further understand his field of study. I believe I achieved that and more. I got a new perspective on the compatibility, or the lack thereof, of Western liberal democracy with historically autocratic nations, the effects of capitalism on the cultures of previously anti-capitalist societies and the fluidity of morality across societies while also gaining a higher fluency in Russian. I believe my experience was invaluable and that I wouldn't have gained this cultural insight had I not studied abroad.

My experience has given me translatable qualities for the field of law. Studying abroad has made me more self-aware, emotionally resilient and culturally competent. I'll see how my experience further applies as I continue to pursue a future in law. For now, I'm content with my experience abroad and the skills I gained from it.

Business Enterprise Entrepreneur Honored as Hero by the Lighthouse of Broward



Orlando Ramirez was honored as a hero by the Lighthouse of Broward's American Heritage School. Orlando was one of three people selected for the honor because of his contribution to the blind community and his success in the DBS Business Enterprise program.

Prior to his diagnosis of Best disease, a congenital degenerative genetic disease, Orlando was a district operations manager for a construction company. He was in his early thirties when he left the position because he felt he could no longer do the work due to his diminishing sight. As a way to cope with his changing circumstances, Orlando started experimenting with creating his own version of the New York bagel. Orlando applied for the Business Enterprise program in early 2018 and began training in March of that year.

On September 13, 2018, Orlando was licensed with the Business Enterprise program. Only 30 days later, he signed a temporary contract for his first facility, a snack bar in the Broward County Government Center. As the location needed an operator immediately, Orlando took over the facility with only a couple of days' notice. He agreed to manage the facility until a permanent operator could be selected.

Not long after, he signed a second contract for a cafeteria in the Broward County Sheriff's Office. In addition to managing the two facilities, he took on the additional responsibility of providing on-the-job training and work experience to a Business Enterprise Program new candidate. Just six months after he finished his own training, Orlando opted to go to bakery school to improve his business and elevate the catering options available. Upon completion of school, he received the title of Master Baker.

The name for his business, Blind Monkey Kitchen, is based on his childhood nickname and on his love for monkeys. His daughter and niece created a smiling monkey wearing a chef's hat as his logo to reflect the name.

Orlando is constantly working hard while looking for ways to expand and promote his business. Facility manager, master baker, bagel maker, trainer, husband, and father of three beautiful children - these are only some of the roles that make Orlando Ramirez a hero in the Business Enterprise program and in life.



You can find information on how to visit and support Orlando's facility and catering at www.blindmonkeykitchen.com.

Technology Today

Thanks to the massive technological advancements this world has seen in the last decade or so, adaptive technology users have a wide array of options when it comes to device types and platforms to meet their needs. Magnifiers, mobile phones, tablets, screen readers, and descriptive videos are just some of the options available to help make blind and visually impaired people's lives easier and more manageable.

However, blind and visually impaired people often encounter everyday situations where some visual assistance is necessary. An Android, iPhone, or a tablet can be an easy answer to most of these problems. We've identified two fantastic apps that can be used on either of those devices, whose primary functions are to provide assistance from a sighted helper who participates in a live video call with a blind or visually impaired user. These helpers assist with everyday tasks that range from things like checking the expiration dates on your food and medication, reading your email to you, and even helping you pick out specific colors of clothing.

Have You Tried these Apps that Assist?



Be My Eyes

The Be My Eyes app runs on Apple and Android devices with hundreds of volunteers around the world equipped and ready to offer assistance. Do you sometimes need middle-of-the-night assistance? No problem! The app offers 24/7 services — pulling in volunteers in another time zone if necessary. Find out more by visiting www.bemyeyes.com.



AIRA offers a similar service to the Be My Eyes app, where trained professionals engage in video calls to assist users with remotely any task they have trouble performing due to their visual impairments. This service now offers free, short (up to 5 minute) video calls as well as paid plans for users needing additional and regular support. Visit www.aira.io for more information.

AIRA does advertise security and privacy on their website, but please remain careful about what information you share with either of these companies. It is never a good idea to share banking and/or private information with individuals whom you don't know and trust. Both of these can be downloaded to your smart phone and you can start using them immediately after setup!

Have You Looked into Technical Assistance?

As with all modern technology, sometimes things don't always work as well as they should and technical assistance is required. Fortunately, several large main-stream companies offer excellent free technical support specifically geared to blind and low vision users.

Below is a useful list of contact information and websites for free technical assistance offered by their company staff familiar with adaptive technology and trained in providing quality support to their blind and visually impaired customers.

Amazon Accessibility 888-283-1678 www.amazon.com/accessibility

Apple Accessibility 877-204-3930 www.apple.com/accessibility

Comcast Accessibility 855-270-0379 www.comcast.com/accessibility

Microsoft Accessibility 800-936-5900 www.microsoft.com/enable

Is there another company out there that offers free, quality technical assistance for visually impaired customers? Let us know at communications@dbs.fdoe.org!

In the Headlines

Here are some articles that caught our attention this month and we thought we'd share them in case you missed them!

A “Smart Cane” in the World of Smart Devices?

Over the years, there have been adaptations to the white cane, but it looks like a new smart cane might revolutionize the use of the white cane for those who are blind and visually impaired. Kursat Ceylan, an engineer who is visually impaired himself, developed an electronic white cane that uses technology to help blind and visually impaired travelers navigate. The WeWalk cane, uses Google Maps, Bluetooth, and electronic sensors to make navigating around easier and safer for those with visual impairments.

The cane uses vibrations and speakers to warn individuals of low-hanging objects, obstacles, nearby stores, and other infrastructural details. However, the developers aren't going to stop there! For more information, check out McKinley Corbley's [“Blind Man Develops Smart Cane That Uses Google Maps and Sensors to Identify One's Surroundings”](#).

The Future of Glaucoma

Glaucoma is one of the leading causes of irreversible blindness. Although the disease has claimed millions of individuals' eyesight, researchers believe they will be able to offer therapy treatment that can protect the eye and potentially even restore lost vision in the near future.

An easy and proven way to take proper care of our health is by educating ourselves on things prevalent to it. Chris Woolston goes into depth about the research in treatment, early detection and stages of glaucoma in his article [Putting the Squeeze on Glaucoma](#) in the Knowable Magazine.

Electronics Schematics for Individuals who are Visually Impaired

If you think you need pristine vision and eyesight to design and build electronics, you are wrong! Thanks to a few students, teachers, and volunteers in the New York University Interactive Telecommunications Program (ITP), a new way of viewing schematics for electronic design has been developed.

Tom Igoe, a physical computing instructor at NYU, noticed that a major obstacle for the visually impaired in the program was reading the electronic circuit diagrams – a vital component in building and designing any type of electronic. In the article, [You Don't Need Sight to Read These Electronic Schematics](#), we learn how Igoe and Lauren Race, a graduate student at NYU, tackle the task of making reading schematics more accessible for those that are blind and visually impaired.

If you see an article that caught your attention and you think individuals who are blind or visually impaired or those who work with them might be interested in seeing, send it to us at communications@dbs.fdoe.org!

(While space is limited and we can't promise to mention it in The Visionary, we also may be able to share it on DBS' [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) accounts. Make sure you're following us on social media if you aren't already!

Stem Cell Therapy for Eye Disease

This article originally appeared in the [American Academy of Ophthalmology](#).

What You Need to Know

Avoid Unlicensed Clinics Offering Unapproved Stem Cell Therapy

Stem cell therapies are getting headlines for their potential to cure diseases, including those that affect vision. But an important message is missing: [the therapies are not yet proven to be safe and effective for your eyes](#). Stem cell treatments appear to offer hope to people with few options to recover vision. This includes people with forms of [age-related macular degeneration \(AMD\)](#), [retinitis pigmentosa \(RP\)](#), and [Stargardt disease](#). Some clinics across the United States offer “stem-cell therapy” to people outside of clinical trials. But the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has not approved the treatments they offer. These treatments often use unproven products that may be ineffective or dangerous. These products may carry serious risks, including tumor growth.

Ask These Questions If You're Considering Stem Cell Therapy for Eye Disease

It is important that you know that there are no stem cell products approved by the FDA for eye disease right now. If you want stem cell therapy, look for a clinical trial and discuss the matter with your ophthalmologist. A clinic should not expect you to pay thousands of dollars for an unproven, unapproved therapy. Your health insurance will not cover the cost of an unapproved treatment. Before agreeing to a stem cell treatment, ask yourself:

- Is the stem cell treatment approved by the FDA?
- Is the stem cell treatment part of an FDA-approved clinical trial?
- Is the stem cell treatment covered by your health insurance?

It is frustrating and frightening to face the loss of vision while waiting for potential treatments. However, choosing to pursue an unproven treatment in an unlicensed clinic is an unacceptable risk to your vision and your overall health.

The American Academy of Ophthalmology wants to reduce or eliminate unlicensed stem cell clinics in the United States. In June 2016, the Academy asked the FDA to tighten regulations and increase investigations into stem cell treatments given outside of clinical trials.

Stem Cells in the News

1. [Unregulated Stem Cell Treatments Can Be Dangerous](#)
2. [Stem Cell Treatment for Dry AMD Moves Closer to Human Trials](#)
3. [Stem Cells May Return Some Vision Lost to Wet AMD](#)
4. [Could Stem Cells Cure Blindness Caused By Macular Degeneration?](#)
5. [Will Stem Cell or Gene Therapies Bring Cures for Retinal Diseases?](#)

In Memory of Juan Carlos Diaz



On June 24, 2019, the Miami District Administrator, Juan Carlos Diaz, passed away while working in his home. It was a shock to many at DBS, but in the days after his death, many people reached out to let us know how much they cared for and admired him. He left a lasting memory and legacy not just within DBS, but with all who worked with him.

Those who knew him well would say that he was an amazing human. He was a loving husband, father, uncle, friend, social worker, leader, mentor, and agent of change.

Juan Carlos joined the Division of Blind Services in 2014 and spent the last years of his life as an integral part of the DBS family. He worked a brief period as supervisor for the Sunrise office before being promoted to lead the Miami office as District Administrator. His hard work and leadership ability eventually led him to receiving an "Excellency in Leadership" award from DBS.

Calling himself a "Civil Servant of the State" since he professionally grew up in the state system, Juan Carlos worked with a vast array of populations in the various roles he held. He started his first job with the State of Florida as a Clerk Typist for the Refugee Assistance Program.

He later worked for several different agencies, including the Juvenile Detention Center; the Landmark Learning Center, serving people with developmental disabilities; Children's Medical Services as a dedicated social work

manager; the Department of Health working with populations with infectious diseases; and Florida International University as a field instructor. He also served on the advisory board that implemented the social work program at Florida Memorial University.

However, the majority of his career was spent at the Department of Children and Families (DCF); first as a Child Protective Investigator and then a Program Administrator. He was with the agency for over 25 years and prided himself on being a family preservationist who worked to keep families together. His care of people and families did not stop with his work but extended to all those he came across – Juan Carlos was intentional about impacting everyone in a positive manner through kind acts or just giving advice. If asked about it, he would always just say “I’m planting a seed”.

As a manager, he wasn’t just a boss, but a leader. He cared about his employees not only as workers, but as human beings. He wanted those working with him to achieve excellence not just in the work place, but in terms of personal growth. He would frequently say, “We’re like eagles that need to spread our wings and fly!”

“Juan Carlos was a fabulous human being who cared for and connected with everyone around him. We are grateful for the way he has touched our lives.”

- Director Robert Doyle

This eulogy was written by Pamela Ortiz and Pamela Vinson who worked in the Miami District office with Juan Carlos.

White Cane Awareness Day is October 15th!



History

In 1930, a man by the name of George Bonham saw a blind person crossing the street with a black cane. Bonham noticed that motorists had difficulty seeing the cane due to its color, so he suggested painting the cane white to be more visible, thus, safer for the blind man. The color was adopted and universally used by those who choose to use a cane for traveling assistance.

In 1964, Congress passed a joint resolution to allow the President to issue a proclamation declaring October 15th as White Cane Safety Day. President Lyndon Johnson immediately issued the proclamation. Every president since Johnson has recognized October 15th as a day for blind Americans.

In 2011, President Obama proclaimed October 15th to be “Blind Americans Equality Day” and stressed the importance of the white cane not only as a tool of safety, but also as one of independence and equality.

Whether one calls it White Cane Awareness Day or Blind Americans Equality Day, the goal is to ensure equality and full societal integration for individuals who are blind and visually impaired. White Cane Awareness Day is a sign to help educate sighted individuals on the laws and regulations protecting the visually impaired and the contribution that those with visual impairments bring to our society.

The Symbol of the Cane

Historically, the white cane was used to distinguish between travelers that were blind and those who were sighted. More recently however, the white cane is seen as a symbol of independence and equality for those that are blind and visually impaired.

Celebrating White Cane Awareness Day

On October 15th we believe it’s important to take the time to recognize the importance of the day and bring awareness to its purpose. You can do this by attending special events or participating in community walks in honor of white cane safety and awareness and the independence, empowerment and equality it represents.

UPCOMING EVENTS

What's Happening In October

Gainesville

October 12th - A White Cane Walk will be held in partnership with the Division of Blind Services, Alachua Lions Club, Council of the Blind, Boy Scouts and City of Alachua from 8 AM to 11 AM at the Alachua County Fire Rescue Station 21 (911 SE 5th Street, Gainesville, FL 32601).

Palm Beach

October 16th - Join the West Palm Beach Police Department, Florida Outreach Center for the Blind, and the Division of Blind Services as they declare October 16th White Cane Safety Day! The event will be held at the Florida Outreach Center for the Blind (2315 South Congress Avenue Palm Springs, FL 33406). RSVP with Carolyn Lapp at (561) 642-0005.

Seminole

October 12th - Join the members of the Pinellas Council of the Blind at their Low Vision Expo and White Cane Safety Walk from 10:00 AM to 2 PM at Evans Hall (12601 Park Blvd). The walk will begin and end at Evans Hall. Afterwards, a wide range of adaptive technology will be on display. For more information, go to www.lhpf.org/low-vision-expo.

Jacksonville

October 15th - Join the Division of Blind Services and the Jacksonville council of the Blind for their White Cane Safety Day Walk. Participants are asked to meet at the ILRC parking lot at 9:30 AM. The walk will be held along Art Museum Drive and participants will pass out flyers in order to educate the public on Florida's White Cane Safety Law and the importance of road safety for pedestrians with disabilities.

October 17th - The Florida State College at Jacksonville's Vision Education and Rehabilitation Center is hosting their annual Vision Awareness Day. Interactive stations at the event will include, a Cane Maze, an Aroma Station, an Ask Me About My Blindness Station, and more! For more information, contact Patricia Marsha at (904) 633-8297.

Miami

October 15th - Join Miami Lighthouse for a National White Cane Day celebration starting at 8:30 AM. A White Cane Safety Walk will begin at the Miami Lighthouse for the Blind (601 Southwest 8th Avenue), and will end around 1:00 PM. To register or obtain more information, contact Cameron Sisser at csisser@miamilighthouse.org or (786) 362-7515.

New Port Richey

October 24th - The New Port Richey Lighthouse is hosting a grand opening event! The event will be held at the Lighthouse (9130 Ridge Road). Join them as they offer tours and a chance to socialize with others in the community from 3 to 5:30 pm and 6 to 7 pm. A Ribbon Cutting Ceremony is scheduled for 5:30 pm.

Tallahassee



October 11th – The 2019 Disability Employment Awareness Celebration will be held at the Tallahassee City Hall, Commission Chambers (300 South Adams Street) at 8:30 AM. The ceremony will begin at 9:30 am. This event is hosted by Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD), the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), and the Division of Blind Services (DBS). If you would like to attend, please be sure to RSVP by calling APD at (850) 488-4257.

October 12th - Join DBS and local community partners in a walk for Disability and White Cane Awareness. Participants are asked to meet in front of the Leroy Collins Library (200 W. Park Avenue) at 9 AM, The walk is slated to last until 11 AM so don't forget to bring water to stay hydrated!

October 14th – Join the Tallahassee Council of the Blind (TCB) for a White Cane Awareness Day Dinner! The dinner itself will be held at Tijuana Flats (1400 Village Square Boulevard), which allows consumer groups to host public awareness events and fundraisers at their restaurants. If mention TCB when ordering, the TCB will even receive a portion of the proceeds! After dinner, organizers plan to cross the Village Square/Thomasville Road intersection with audible pedestrian signals to help bring awareness.

Tampa

October 11th - Join the Tampa Lighthouse and DBS for a White Cane Day Celebration. Lunch will be provided and there will be fun activities as well! The celebration will be held from 11 AM to 2 PM. Please RSVP by calling (813) 251-2407.

 ***Vision is the Art of
Seeing What is
Invisible to Others*** 
- ***Johnathan Swift***

Tell us what you think! Email us at communications@db.fldoe.org and visit [our website](#) for more information on DBS and its programs.