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**NEWS RELEASE**

 **Contact:**

 Sheryl K. Brown

Executive Director

Tampa Lighthouse for the Blind, Inc.

 813-251-2407

sheryl.brown@tampalighthouse.org

**Tampa Lighthouse for the Blind Earns 2013 Employment Growth Award**

**From National Industries for the Blind**

*Award Honors Success in Sustaining and Increasing Employment*

*For People Who Are Blind*

**January 27, 2014, Tampa, Florida** – Tampa Lighthouse for the Blind was honored by National Industries for the Blind (NIB), the nation’s largest employment resource for people who are blind, with the 2013 Employment Growth Award. The award recognizes Tampa Lighthouse for the Blind’s efforts to increase employment retention, growth and upward mobility for people who are blind.

“We are proud to provide employment opportunities for people who are blind in Polk, Hardee and Hillsborough Counties” said Sheryl Brown, Executive Director. “Our employees are talented and dedicated professionals, and we are honored to serve as an example in the community of the capabilities of people who are blind.”

The 2013 Employment Growth Award recipients are awarded cash payments from a fund created to recognize and encourage NIB associated nonprofit agencies that grow or sustain employment for people who are blind. Emphasis is also placed on efforts to increase upward mobility in the workplace and job placements.

“It is an honor for me to recognize Tampa Lighthouse for the Blind with a 2013 Employment Growth Award,”said Kevin Lynch, president and CEO of NIB. “Tampa Lighthouse for the Blind continues to lead the way in creating employment and high-growth career opportunities for people who are blind.”

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**About Tampa Lighthouse for the Blind, Inc.**

Tampa Lighthouse for the Blind is a private non-profit corporation dedicated to maximizing independence and providing employment opportunities for persons who are blind or visually impaired. Originally developed in Tampa, Florida to provide a sheltered workshop for residents of Hillsborough County, the organizations programs, funded in part through the DOE/Division of Blind Services and the State of Florida**,** United Way Suncoast, The City of Tampa (funded by HUD), Hillsborough County BoCC, Polk County BoCC Community Development Block Grant, The City of Winter Haven Community Development Block Grant and the United Way of Central Florida, continues to evolve to meet the emerging needs of its’ service population as demonstrated by its growth in program components over the last 70+ years.

Since its inception as a sheltered workshop, the Lighthouse has grown into a comprehensive Rehabilitation Program serving blind and visually impaired residents of Hillsborough, Polk and Hardee counties and includes **Independent Living (adjustment training)** in adaptive skills to conduct daily living tasks including kitchen safety, medication management, shopping, household tasks, laundry, telephone usage, letter writing, bill paying and more; **Orientation and Mobility Instruction** to teach safe non-visual travel skills, street crossing, and using public transportation; **Computer Training** (personal and vocational) in the latest “talking” software and other access technology for **personal use** (email and the internet for shopping, banking, ordering prescriptions) and **employment purposes** (office applications, internet, email, spreadsheets); **Transition Programs** for high school youth to prepare them for independent living and continuing education or the workforce upon reaching adulthood; and **Vocational (employment) Programs** to help blind and visually impaired persons retain the job they had at the time of vision loss or enter a new line of work, become employed, or succeed in college or vocational school; and provides **Rehabilitation Engineering** for college students and for adults employed throughout the state of Florida. In addition to programs for teens and adults, Tampa Lighthouse also provides an **Early Intervention** programfor infants and young children aged 0-5 in order to prepare them for school readiness and increase the quality of life for child and family All of these activities are aligned with the Lighthouse agency mission “to maximize independence and provide employment opportunities for persons who are blind or visually impaired.”

For more information about Tampa Lighthouse for the Blind, visit [www.tampalighthouse.org](http://www.tampalighthouse.org).

**About National Industries for the Blind**

For more than 75 years, National Industries for the Blind (NIB) has focused on enhancing the opportunities for economic and personal independence of people who are blind, primarily through creating, sustaining and improving employment. NIB and its nationwide network of 93 associated nonprofit agencies serve as the largest employer for people who are blind by the sale of SKILCRAFT® and other products and services through the AbilityOne® Program, established by the Javits-Wagner-O’Day Act. For more information about NIB, visit [www.NIB.org](http://www.NIB.org).