Emily Y. Chew, MD, Designer of Clinical Trials, Awarded 2014 Bressler Prize

Emily Y. Chew, MD, recipient of the 2014 Bressler Prize in Vision Science, is a medical retina specialist who has extensive experience in designing and implementing clinical trials and is recognized by her peers as the driving force behind critical advances made in the understanding of retinal diseases. She leads the Clinical Trials Branch of the National Eye Institute’s (NEI) Division of Epidemiology and Clinical Applications at the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Her strong clinical and research interests lie in diabetic eye disease and age-related macular degeneration.

A leader in medical trials

Dr. Chew has worked extensively in large multi-centered trials, including the Early Treatment Diabetic Retinopathy Study (ETDRS), the benchmark study guiding management of patients with diabetic eye disease. She led the Age-Related Eye Disease Study (AREDS), which tested supplements containing plant and fish-derived nutrients for preventing advanced age-related macular degeneration. Dr. Chew recently chaired the follow up to AREDS, AREDS2, which resulted in a slightly different supplement formulation.

Dr. Chew works in collaboration with other institutes within the NIH such as the Actions to Control Cardiovascular Risk in Diabetes (ACCORD) Trial and she chairs the ACCORD Eye Study, which examines the effects of the tight control of blood sugar, lipid and blood pressure control on diabetic retinopathy. She is also closely involved in many other study groups, including the landmark Diabetic Retinopathy Clinical Research Network.

Dr. Chew obtained her MD and completed her ophthalmology residency at the University of Toronto. She then went to the Wilmer Eye Institute at Johns Hopkins University and the University of Nijmegen in the Netherlands to complete her medical retina fellowships. Dr. Chew was an Assistant Professor in the Department of Ophthalmology at the University of Toronto from 1983 to 1986 and in 1987 she joined the Clinical Trials Branch at the NEI. Currently, she is the Director of the Medical Retina Fellowship program at the NEI.
Two Scientists Recognized for Contributions to Vision Care

Recognizing excellence in vision care and research continues to be an important pillar of the Lighthouse Guild mission. We are pleased that two members of our professional family have recently been honored by the American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO) for their invaluable scientific contributions to vision care.

Research into the treatment of macular degeneration

Daniel Albert, MD, a member of Lighthouse Guild’s selection committee for the Alfred W. Bressler Prize in Vision Science, is the recipient of the American Academy of Ophthalmology’s 2013 Laureate Recognition Award. This is the highest honor bestowed by the Academy, and recognizes exceptional scientific contributions toward preventing blindness and restoring sight.

Dr. Albert is Chair Emeritus of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health. He is also the Founding Director of the McPherson Eye Research Institute at the University of Wisconsin, where he continues to study tumor growth and inhibition. His current research extends his tumor inhibition studies to employ anti-angiogenesis compounds to treat wet age-related macular degeneration.

C.L. Schepens, MD/AAO Award

Lawrence A. Yannuzzi, MD, a member of Lighthouse Guild’s Board of Directors, received the C.L. Schepens, MD/AAO Award at the 2013 AAO meeting. The award was created by the Retina Research Fund, the Paul Kayser Fund and Schepens International Society to recognize a vision scientist who has contributed new knowledge of the visual process of vitreoretinal diseases and/or has made special contributions to prevent and decrease blindness.

The recipient of this award is chosen by representatives from the Retina Society, the Macula Society, the American Society of Retina Specialists, Club Jules Gonin and the AAO.

Dr. Yannuzzi is Professor of Clinical Ophthalmology at Columbia University Medical School, Director of The LuEsther T. Mertz Retinal Research Center of the Manhattan Eye, Ear and Throat Hospital, and is the Founder of Vitreous-Retina-Macula Consultants of New York. Dr. Yannuzzi has made numerous innovative and lasting contributions in imaging, drug development, and therapeutic modalities. He was the first to use oral non-steroid anti-inflammatory medication for the treatment of cystoid macular edema and developed an eye drop to treat this condition.
Columbia University Medical Center’s Department of Ophthalmology has opened its new vision care center at Lighthouse Guild’s Headquarters at 15 West 65th Street. Named the Robert Burch Family Eye Center, the new location offers general ophthalmology and sub-specialty care, including adult and pediatric ophthalmology as well as diagnosis and treatment of glaucoma, corneal and retinal disease.

“By joining Lighthouse Guild’s continuum of services with Columbia Ophthalmology’s clinical excellence, together we have a terrific opportunity to significantly impact the vision health of New Yorkers,” said Lighthouse Guild’s President & CEO Alan R. Morse, JD, PhD. “We look forward to working together to find new and effective ways to deliver the highest quality vision care and services.”

“Our new location will offer a full spectrum of eye care including the most complex diagnostic and therapeutic interventions,” said George A. (Jack) Cioffi, MD, the Edward S. Harkness Professor of Ophthalmology and Chair of the Department of Ophthalmology at Columbia University Medical Center. “Our goal is to provide world-class ophthalmology care right in the community.”

Sir Howard Stringer, Chairman of the Columbia University Department of Ophthalmology’s Board of Advisors, added “This is a wonderful place for the Burch Eye Center, and it’s a remarkable accomplishment. I lived on the West Side when I first came to New York, and this is our first West Side Story, there’s a place for us.”

For almost a decade, Lighthouse Guild and Columbia University’s Department of Ophthalmology have worked together to improve the quality of vision rehabilitation, advance knowledge of the field and better train practitioners. Columbia ophthalmology residents receive low vision rehabilitation training at Lighthouse Guild, where they participate in clinical sessions, while a vision rehabilitation lecture series at Columbia is provided by Lighthouse Guild staff for residents and attending physicians. This new center will help to expand the opportunities to help improve vision and healthcare service delivery and models of care.
Performing Arts Projects Unleash Imaginations and Enrich Lives

The theater is a special place where actors and musicians transport audiences by taking command of their senses. For people who are visually impaired, the arts can present an especially empowering opportunity, while enriching lives and unleashing imaginations. In recent months, Lighthouse Guild students successfully showcased their mastery of the senses, even earning accolades in the *The New York Times*.

**Noye’s Fludde empowers participants**

Marking the 100-year anniversary of Lighthouse Guild’s Filomen M. D’Agostino Greenberg Music School, students presented three performances of Benjamin Britten’s opera *Noye’s Fludde*. In a standing-room-only opening night debut, Music School performers were joined by professional opera singers and church choristers, and conducted by Dr. Samuel Wong, an ophthalmologist who combines his practice with a career in music. The performances were produced in collaboration with community partner Arts at the Park and staged at the Park Avenue United Methodist Church.

“Everyone involved in a collaborative project such as this opera, with or without vision loss, amateur or professional, experiences the same drive for musical and theatrical excellence,” said Leslie Jones, Director of the Music School. “They all commit the time to rehearse, the discipline required to learn roles and music, and they share the gratification of presenting a professional production.”

With more than a hundred students ranging in age from five to 95, The Filomen M. D’Agostino Greenberg Music School is the only community music school in the country dedicated to helping people with visual impairment pursue their interest in, and study of, music. The school serves as a resource for music educators and performers nationwide as the leading provider of accessible music instruction.
Radio theater in the classroom

The therapeutic benefits of the arts are not limited to music students. The students who attend our Harriet and Robert Heilbrunn School are using lessons from the old-time radio theater to spur creativity in a new workshop project called Imagination Machine.

These workshops, specially designed for students with visual and cognitive impairments, bring the radio theater to the classroom. Students learn to use equipment, such as a wind machine, often used in the early days of radio and movie production, to create sound effects.

“The project allows our students to participate in an art form where no one sees anything, not even television,” explained Sarah Valeri, the School’s Art Therapist. “They learn to pay attention to cues, respond to each other’s voices and the sounds that are made, and they use the sound effects to create stories.”

Music reduces stress

Music therapy plays an important role at Lighthouse Guild in a number of programs. Music Therapist Fred Paterno regularly schedules recitals for the clients of the Mental Health Day Treatment Program and they recently enjoyed a recital given by Orin Fader and Jessica Bowers. Ms. Bowers sang, while Mr. Fader accompanied her on the guitar, using transcriptions from the original piano accompaniments by Mozart, Schubert and Kurt Weill.

Mr. Paterno said, “These carefully orchestrated concerts provide exposure to harmonious structured sensory expressions within a supportive environment and they reduce stress, opening our clients up to an active engagement in the therapeutic process.”

Whether preparing and performing an opera, or integrating therapeutic workshops into classroom curriculums, Lighthouse Guild is enriching the lives of all our clients by helping to maximize their talents and abilities.
Expanding Access Through Education and Advocacy

Expanding access to vision + healthcare services through education and awareness is part of Lighthouse Guild’s mission, which is to help people who are blind or visually impaired lead productive, dignified and fulfilling lives. For example, we promote training initiatives to prepare healthcare professionals to identify and meet the specialized needs of their clients, we invite clients to participate in consumer meetings, and we welcome visitors from abroad who wish to learn more about how we do what we do.

Visitors from Israel

We recently welcomed four staff members from Migdal Or, based in Haifa. Founded in 1954, Migdal Or is a multi-service center specializing in the functional and vocational rehabilitation of people with blindness or vision impairment. The visitors spent the day with staff from the Harriet and Robert Heilbrunn School, as well as the Rehabilitation Services department and the Adult Day Health Care program. They were particularly interested in Orientation & Mobility training as well as the programs dealing with Activities of Daily Living.

ONLINE CONTINUING EDUCATION

In pursuit of our goal to promote access to low vision rehabilitation services, Lighthouse Guild recently launched the 2nd edition of its online training program, Low Vision in Older Adults: Foundations for Rehabilitation, at the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) Annual Conference. The course trains occupational therapists in low vision causes, effects and interventions, with an emphasis on optical considerations and strategies for environmental adaptation and occupational performance. The content reflects the expanding role of occupational therapists in providing low vision rehabilitation. The course provides seven hours of continuing education credit through AOTA and is available through www.aota.org.

A screen shot illustrating the anatomy of the eye, from the 2nd edition of the online program Low Vision in Older Adults: Foundations for Rehabilitation. Teaching is supplemented throughout the course with instructional video clips and printable handouts.

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GuildNet expands Participant/Consumer Advisory Committee

In its commitment to communicate with and obtain feedback from its over 15,000 members, GuildNet recently expanded its Participant/Consumer Advisory Committee. Members from GuildNet’s health plans are invited to participate either in person or remotely. GuildNet assists participants with the costs, transportation, and with reasonable accommodations to meet their needs and the challenges of attending meetings in person.

The committee reflects representation from the diverse range of participants served, including individuals with disabilities, family members and/or caregivers, and includes providers who offer direct services, as well as representatives of advocacy or community-based groups.

The committee meets quarterly and provides input to GuildNet’s senior management through meetings, minutes and staff liaisons. Participant and community input and guidance will be invited on program management, quality, service and care issues that have an impact on participants throughout the areas that receive GuildNet’s services. Participants can also raise questions, problems and concerns and provide positive feedback at meetings.

For more information on GuildNet’s Participant Advisory Committee, please contact Judy Farrell at farrellj@lighthouseguild.org.

A STUDENT ADVOCATE FOR ACCESSIBLE TECHNOLOGY

Heilbrunn School student Angel Santana demonstrates to Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. the voice over technology available on his iPhone.

As part of his class social studies project, Angel Santana, a student in the Harriet and Robert Heilbrunn School and a Bronx resident, wrote to the Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. This was the first letter in Braille that Mr. Diaz has ever received and he was so impressed with it, that he contacted Angel and his teacher, Christopher Russell and, as a result, they recently visited Mr. Diaz’s office in the Bronx.

Asked to explain Braille to Mr. Diaz, Angel brought with him a tactile map of New York City and an article on Mr. Diaz’s recent State of the Borough speech, which Angel had transcribed in Braille. Angel also demonstrated to Mr. Diaz the accessible technology available to him through the voice over application on his iPhone.

LOW VISION REHABILITATION

For years we have provided training for healthcare professionals in the skills needed to identify and address vision impairment in the clients they treat at home. Recently we completed training occupational therapists (OTs), physical therapists (PTs), and speech language pathologists at Visiting Nurse Services in Westchester (VNSW). In five workshops, they learned to conduct a basic vision assessment, to incorporate basic low vision devices into therapy, and to integrate adaptive devices and techniques into treatment.

This training is part of a broad educational initiative with VNSW in which all of the agency’s nurses, social workers and home health aides are receiving education and training in caring for people with vision loss.
Carmelo Rosado, 75, a retired restaurant chef, benefits from two separate programs at Lighthouse Guild. He is a registrant in our Adult Day Health Care (ADHC) program, GuildCare, as well as a member of a GuildNet health plan. He has been a participant in both programs for nearly 11 years, ever since he lost his vision and many of his physical abilities because of a stroke.

**Care in the community**

GuildNet, with a variety of health plans including managed long-term care, currently serves over 15,000 people in New York City’s five boroughs as well as Westchester, Nassau and Suffolk Counties. All medical needs of clients, including special equipment, transportation and home health aides are arranged for by a nurse care manager who monitors each member. Members receive a comprehensive plan that keeps them safely in their own homes as opposed to residing in a nursing home.

GuildCare is offered at five sites in New York State. With nearly 700 clients statewide, it is New York State’s only ADHC program specializing in services to adults who are blind or visually impaired and who have chronic medical conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure or a history of stroke or heart disease.

**Greatly improved health**

Today, much of Mr. Rosado’s vision has returned except for the peripheral vision on his left side and he has graduated from the walker and cane to the point where he works out with a PT instructor each day and tops it off by speed-walking for 45 minutes or an hour. He is an enthusiastic participant in weekly Tai Chi sessions as well. In addition, Mr. Rosado has received counseling through the Psychiatric Clinic where he overcame the depression linked to his sudden vision loss.

“My overall health is much better since signing up with GuildNet and following my care manager’s suggestion to come to GuildCare five days a week,” said Mr. Rosado. “My GuildNet care manager calls me to check that I’m taking my medications and my GuildCare nurse checks on my blood pressure, glucose levels, and regularly checks my feet for any problems to do with the diabetes. If I need to see a doctor, she can help arrange an appointment for me. The staff here are really like family. I feel like myself again!”

For more information on GuildCare’s operations in New York State, call 212-769-6314. For more information on GuildNet, call 212-769-7855.
Visionary Philanthropy: A snapshot of events hosted in support of programs and services

The Young Visionaries held their annual benefit at the Chambers Hotel in midtown Manhattan. Over 100 young professionals from the metropolitan area met to raise funds for Lighthouse Guild.

Lauren Boxer, Adam Solomon, Jesse Berland, Lauren Berk and Liz Pugatch

The LightYears Gala was held at The Plaza Hotel, honoring Board Member and Optometrist Amelia Quist-Ogunlesi, OD; Jesse H. Davis, President & COO of Creative Mobile Technologies; and Tony Award winning Broadway producers Fran and Barry Weissler.

Honorees Amelia Quist-Ogunlesi, Barry and Fran Weissler and Jesse H. Davis, Master of Ceremonies Diana Williams and Mark G. Ackermann, Lighthouse Guild Executive Vice President & COO.

The POSH® Palm Beach Dinner Dance was held at Club Colette.

Honoree Mona de Sayve (left) and Honorary Chair Arlene Dahl

Dinner Chairs Susan Bodnar Malloy, Mario Nievera and Grace Meigher

Lighthouse Guild’s President & CEO Alan R. Morse and Board Chairman James M. Dubin

Marc Rosen, Beth de Woody and Tom Quick
Once a week, a large group of registrants in Light-house Guild’s Adult Day Health Care program gather to hear Marilyn Schwartz describe her travels around the world. She is often greeted with “Hi Marilyn. Where are we going today?” After 27 years as a volunteer with Lighthouse Guild, Ms. Schwartz still relishes her Thursday afternoon group, discussing with people who are blind or visually impaired the different aspects of journeys she has taken.

**Becoming a volunteer**

Ms. Schwartz lives in the Lincoln Center neighborhood and, when she retired from her job as a librarian with a major publishing company, she decided to do volunteer work somewhere close to home. Lighthouse Guild provided her with that opportunity. She began as a Teacher’s Assistant in The Harriet and Robert Heilbrunn School, read newspapers to small groups of clients, and then moved on to GuildCare, the Adult Day Health Care program.

After a few years at GuildCare, the Activities Coordinator suggested she might like to concentrate on leading a discussion group, exploring with clients the many trips she and her husband Joe regularly take, both within the US and abroad. The idea behind such a group is to ask and answer questions, to get a major dialog going and to keep the minds of the clients active and alert.

**Travels from Alaska to Australia**

She recalls that a trip to Alaska some years ago was the first trip she discussed with her group while currently they are working their way through a three-week trip to Australia. She displays pictures and travel brochures for those clients who have some vision and for others, she describes what she’s seen. In Australia she took a 24-hour trip on the train from Alice Springs to Adelaide and for her group she describes how compact the compartment was and what they ate at every meal.

“We start with the trip to the airport,” said Ms. Schwartz, “and then I present each leg of the journey. Things come back to me as clients ask questions and we develop a dialogue.” She often finds that a member of the group may have visited the same destination many years before, for example, India, or Morocco and their contribution becomes an important part of the discussion. “Wherever we travel, though, some questions remain the same. People are always interested in how much things cost and what the food was like. It’s amazing how many aspects of a single trip we can cover. Morocco took 11 sessions and Australia will take more!”
Lighthouse Guild Contributes Expertise to Professional Community

At Lighthouse Guild we continually strive to fulfill our responsibility as a leading organization in the vision + healthcare community by contributing to scholarship, taking part in peer education programs, and devoting time and resources to professional workgroups. We’re excited to share some of our team’s most recent efforts:


At the beginning of 2014, the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) reappointed Dr. Morse for a 3-year term to its Advisory Panel on Addressing Disparities. PCORI, based in Washington DC, is an independent, non-profit organization authorized by Congress in 2010. Its mission is to help people make informed health care decisions and improve health care delivery and outcomes.


Laura Brannigan, RN, MA, GuildNet’s Senior Vice President, Quality Assurance/Performance Improvement, has been appointed to serve on a workgroup for the development of a Managed Long-Term Care Quality Incentive for the New York State Department of Health’s Quality Measurement Office.


Judy Farrell, MPA, GuildNet’s Vice President, Government Affairs, authored “Care Management for All: Managed Long-Term Care Transforms the Long-Term Care System for Dually Eligible New Yorkers” Westchester Physician December/January 2014, 29 (1).

Ms. Farrell also recently presented “The Provisions of the Affordable Care Act for Children with Special Needs”, at a webinar hosted by the Children, Youth and Families Task Force of Health Care For All New York.

Chief Compliance Officer Bruce Mastalinski has been elected Chairman-Elect of the Board of Directors of The Foundation for Long Term Care, the education and research division of LeadingAge New York. Mr. Mastalinski also recently became Certified in Healthcare Compliance by the Compliance Certification Board.

Roy Gordon Cole, OD, FAAO, Director of Vision Program Development, presented “Habilitation/Rehabilitation of the Pediatric Patient with Vision Loss” at the XXXV Inter-American Course in Clinical Ophthalmology, held in Miami.

Dr. Cole also participated in Harkness Eye Institute at Columbia University Medical Center’s Basic Science Course in Ophthalmology, in which he presented “An Orientation to Rehabilitation of Patients with Vision Impairment.”
COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS
BRING A BIT OF SPRING TO
DAY PROGRAM

Members of the Congregation Habonim Sisterhood Board visited Lighthouse Guild’s Adult Day Health Care program on one of the coldest days of the winter to bring a hands-on gardening experience to the program’s participants. Congregation Habonim is located on West 66th Street in Manhattan, just around the corner from the Lighthouse Guild campus on West 65th Street.

GuildCare Registrant Armantina Torres plants succulents with the help of Anne Becker, MSN, RN. Ms. Becker, who is GuildNet’s Assistant Vice President for Care Management is also a member of Congregation Habonim’s Sisterhood Board.

Linda Solomon of the Habonim Sisterhood Board assists GuildCare Registrant Robert Olson with the planting compound.