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LEE NASEHI HONORED AT FEARLESS CAREGIVER CONFERENCE

ORLANDO, FL., February 26, 2015—Drawing on her 15 plus years of experience as President and CEO of Lighthouse Central Florida, and as the mother of a son who is blind, Lee Nasehi today addressed a crowded room at the 20th Annual Fearless Caregiver Conference convened at the Holy Trinity Reception & Conference Center in Maitland.

Today's conference, titled, Caring for Someone with Low Vision, was organized by the Caregiver Media Group a leading provider of information, support and guidance for family and professional caregivers.

"It was a tremendous honor to be recognized today with the Fearless Caregiver Award," said Lee Nasehi, President/CEO of Lighthouse Central Florida and Lighthouse Works. "I know first-hand what it's like to be a caregiver, having raised my son Joe, who was born with multiple disabilities—including blindness, so I can appreciate the work that the Caregiver Media Group does to inform individual caregivers who feel like they have nowhere to turn."

Lee's address focused on her personal story:

Thirty-three years ago, Lee Nasehi remembers standing weak-kneed and dazed in the parking lot of a physician's office. She and her husband had moments ago received news that their infant son, Joseph, was diagnosed with retinopathy of prematurity—a condition of the eye affecting prematurely born babies.

"After the ophthalmologist said the word, 'blind,' we could hear nothing else, the room began to spin," recalls Nasehi, who was then working part-time in Atlanta. "I remember sobbing and having to literally lean on my husband to stay upright."

Scrambling to find treatment and support options to a diagnosis for which they were wholly unprepared, Lee and her husband moved to Orlando, FL and were eventually referred to Lighthouse Central Florida (LCF).

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At the time LCF, was a newly created community-based organization called CITE (Center for Independence, Technology and Education) formed to serve those with severe vision impairment and blindness. Lee was so impressed with the impact the agency was having on Joe, she went to work for them as a grant writer determined to help the nascent nonprofit expand its reach.

Today, Lee still serves as President/CEO of LCF, which has grown to serve more than 100,000 individuals since 1976. In recent years, against the backdrop of a weakened economy and growing competition for diminishing dollars, Lee and her management team charted a course to create a unique, subsidiary corporation, Lighthouse Works! (LW!).

Focused on employing people with blindness and impaired sight in meaningful work, LW! is generating revenue, enabling LCF to be less reliant on state funding and traditional fundraising appeals.

What's resulted is a truly innovative model of employment and enterprise for a population many people simply dismiss as helpless. Joe, now 34, is an active, member of his community with a full schedule of supported employment, Special Olympics and church ministry activities.

Founded in 1995, the Caregiver Media Group produces Today's Caregiver magazine, the first national magazine dedicated to caregivers, the "Fearless Caregiver Conferences", and operates the caregiver.com website, which includes topic specific newsletters, online discussion lists, back issue articles of Today's Caregiver magazine, chat rooms and an online store. According to their website, Caregiver Media Group and all of its products are developed for caregivers, about caregivers and by caregivers.

About Lighthouse Central Florida

Lighthouse is Central Florida's only private, non-profit agency offering a comprehensive range of services to people living with sight impairment in the tri-county area. Through effective programs, proven curricula, certified instructors and years of personal and professional experience, Lighthouse ensures that individuals of all backgrounds have the tools they need to lead productive, independent lives while pursuing their dreams and goals without limitations. To learn more, please visit www.lighthousecentralflorida.org

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