

## Media Release

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**For Immediate Release**

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### **Little Rock man overcomes blinding gunshot wound, later earns achievement award**



**From the left are Production Manager Curtis Chase and Director of Operations Jay Swindle with employee David Cameron, all of Arkansas Lighthouse for the Blind, DSB Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Darline Tucker of Batesville and Bill Johnson, past president of the Little Rock Founders Lions Club. Cameron was named as an outstanding Consumer of the Year by the Department of Human Services Division of Services for the Blind, and his employer, Arkansas Lighthouse for the Blind, was recognized by as an outstanding business partner.**

DSB Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Darline Tucker nominated him for the achievement award because of his determination to overcome adversity and succeed at work. His employer, Arkansas Lighthouse for the Blind, was recognized by DSB as an outstanding business partner for its commitment to promoting the employment of persons with vision impairment.

David Cameron of Little Rock, formerly from Beebe, has been named the area's outstanding Consumer of the Year by the Department of Human Services Division of Services for the Blind (DSB).

After suddenly becoming blind from an accidental gunshot wound, Cameron, 33, lost his job as a plumber. After facing many challenges, he moved to Little Rock in April to accept a job as an Assembler/Fabricator with Arkansas Lighthouse for the Blind.

Cameron was selected from an area that includes Independence, Izard, Stone, Cleburne, Fulton, White, and Sharp Counties.

The award presentation was made March 9, at the noon meeting of the Little Rock Founders Lions Club, held at World Services for the Blind (WSB).

Cameron said he was close to becoming a journeyman plumber when a relative, who thought his gun was unloaded, accidentally shot him. The gunshot rendered him totally blind in both eyes. Recently he has been experiencing some hearing difficulties that the doctors feel are a delayed result of his gunshot wound. Nevertheless, Cameron has a remarkably positive attitude.

Cameron said he appreciates the DHS Division of Medical Services, which provided him with prosthetic glass eyes. He also expressed his appreciation for the services he received from DSB. The agency bought him a white cane and provided orientation and mobility training for him to gain the skills to travel independently. His DSB counselor helped him find housing and paid his rent deposit. DSB staff taught him independent living skills and sent him to WSB for additional training.

“DSB taught me computer skills in the DSB Tech Lab and bought me a computer, printer, scanner and JAWS software (for synthesized speech),” he said. Job Access with Speech (JAWS) is screen reading software that makes personal computers accessible to people who are blind and visually impaired. Information is displayed on the screen via text-to-speech or a Braille display.

“Mr. Cameron contacted DSB for services only two weeks after his accident. He was very adamant that his main priority was to seek services that would help him to function as independently as possible, so that he could find a job and get back to work,” Tucker said. DSB provided job placement services.

Cameron said that he likes his job at the Lighthouse and is thankful for the opportunity to work there. He makes military uniforms and has been trained on 11 different machines in three departments. He would like to better himself in order to be able to make a more lucrative income to support his family. Cameron has a son, age 6, and a daughter, age 5. He plans to marry Beverly Kelly of Little Rock on March 17.

“Mr. Cameron is a rather impressive gentleman who never ceases to amaze this counselor with his persistence towards successfully accomplishing pretty much any goal he sets his mind to,” Tucker said.

Cameron volunteers at charity events that benefit WSB and Arkansas Lighthouse for the Blind. His hobbies are karaoke and sports. He is a Razorbacks fan and his favorite NFL team is the Green Bay Packers. A kind doctor provided him with a spare set of prosthetic glass eyes with the team logos; he said when he wears them, people think they're contact lenses.

This is the ninth year that DSB has given Consumer of the Year awards to recognize individuals who have managed their rehabilitation plans, gained marketable skills, secured good jobs, and become role models for others. An overall state winner will be selected at the end of the year.

DSB provides vocational rehabilitation services to adults who are blind or severely visually impaired and whose goal is successful employment. The division also serves youth and older blind individuals. For information about DSB's programs and services, visit the DSB website at <http://humanservices.arkansas.gov/dsb/Pages/default.aspx> or call 1-800-960-9270, 501-682-5463, or TDD 501-682-0093.