



AFTER

# LIGHTHOUSE *Lobby.*

## VISION *of* LOVELINESS

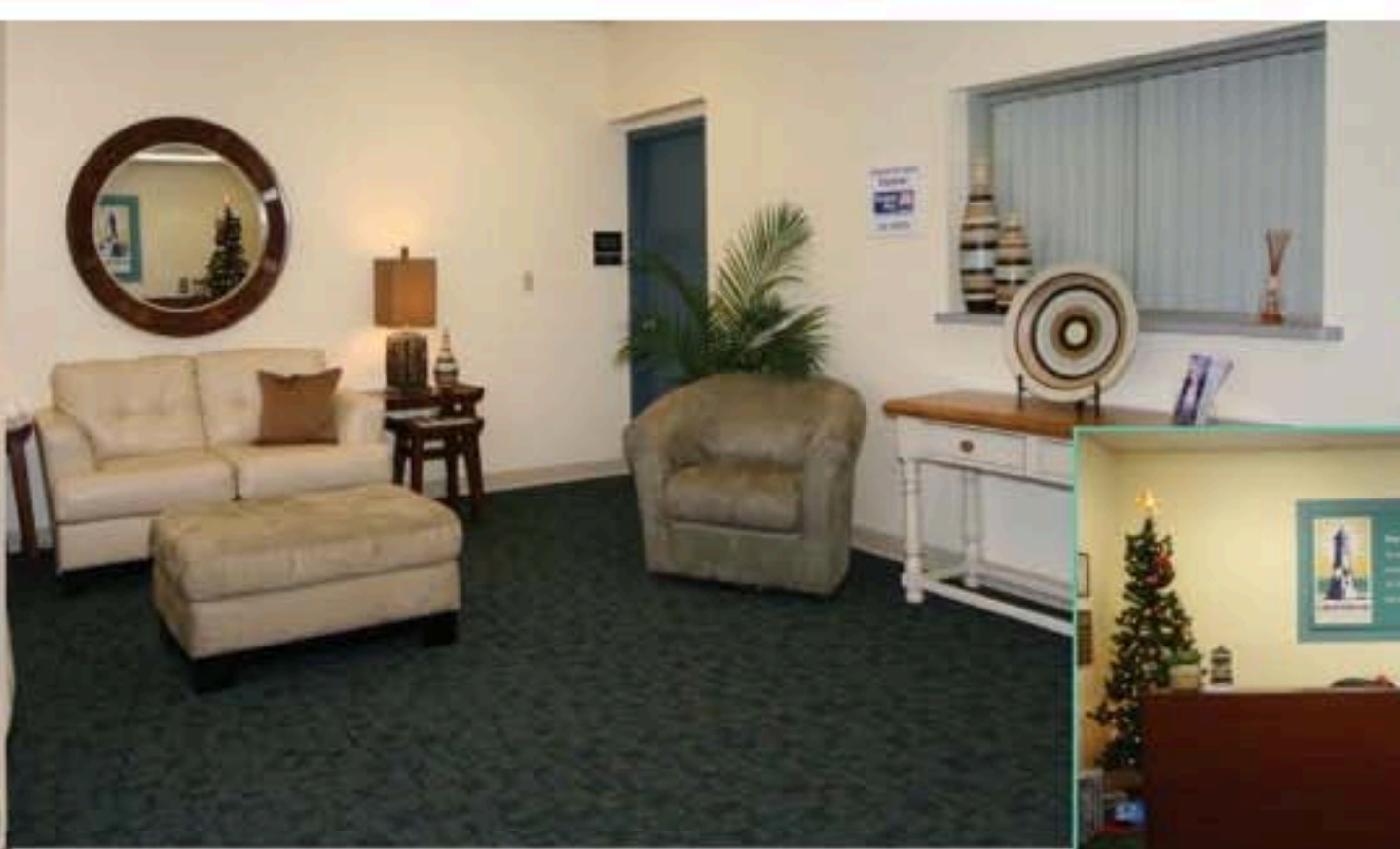


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**W**hen I first walked into the lobby of the Lighthouse of Broward, it reminded me of a doctor's waiting area. The chairs were lined up against the wall and white window verticals overpowered the space adding to the stark look of the room. The staff felt the lobby was neither conducive

for conversation nor did it reflect a warm and inviting environment for their clients. I agreed. These were all decorating dilemmas I could address with new furniture and accessories. However, just as important, I felt the Lighthouse lobby lacked an identity from a branding perspective. Once you walked through the front doors, there was no signage or logo that recognized this non-





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profit organization and the great work they do for the blind and visually impaired. I sought to change this as well.

Designing a room for clients who are blind and visually impaired required a different thought process. I had to take a crash course on color perception and contrast as it pertains to those who have partial sight, aging, and congenital color deficits. I learned that two colors that are sharply different to someone who has normal vision may be far less distinguishable to someone with a visual disorder. In layman's terms, I had to stay away from colors of similar lightness and hue, so that clients of all ages can visually

make out objects in the room. With this knowledge, and also taking the blind into consideration, I wanted to keep an unobstructed traffic flow through the lobby, while still choosing adequate furniture pieces that were comfortable and made the space welcoming.

The main seating was chosen with this in mind. There was a sharp contrast between the new sofa and loveseat against the existing dark blue carpet, plus the leather made it a durable choice

for daily use. The style of the room was inspired by the organization logo itself: a lighthouse. It reminded me of coastal

waters and a beach cottage lifestyle. However, I didn't want to translate it so literally in the lobby. Instead, I wanted the influence to be more subtle in order to create a business-appropriate environment that still felt like home to the clients and staff. Without changing the paint color on the walls, I added warmth in the room by choosing end tables and a round mirror in dark, wood tones that help to balance out the finish of the reception desk throughout the space. In addition to the traditional living room setting, I created a second seating area by placing moss-green accent chairs on either side of an ivory console table. Much better look than the office chairs they had before ... don't you agree? This provides different conversation clusters within the same room, plus by using the oversized ottoman as a coffee table, we have a multi-functional accent piece that can also double as seating if necessary. Finally, we replaced the artificial plants with live palms that bring the outdoors in, and new window treatments now give the room a layer of softness and casual elegance while hiding the verticals.

Even with all the new furniture and decorative elements, the transformation of the lobby would not have been complete without the new signage behind the desk. It brought everything into focus! There is no mistaking this is the Lighthouse of Broward now. The new look of the lobby reinforces their mission to serve the blind and visually impaired, and clients will experience that every time they walk into the center. It was all done for them. It was truly my privilege to be a part of this project and I thank DUO Magazine once again for the opportunity. I also want to thank City Furniture, Lowe's, and Ellen Schulman for all their efforts and donations that made it possible to bring my vision to life, as well as the amazing staff at the Lighthouse of Broward for their hard work and dedication. -DUO

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