**Drawing Strength from Adversity**

Sahithy Gudavalli

As I made my way to the session hall, I brushed my crude fingers across the Braille-imprinted wall. I didn’t know exactly how to feel when I first walked into the Lighthouse of Houston. My mind was blank but it was also open. I knew this week’s meeting was going to cover the general theme of philanthropy and charity. It made sense as the Lighthouse of Houston acts as a service center for the blind and the visually impaired, but I still didn’t fully understand what to expect from this session.

Mr. Gibson McTerroil, the President of the center, humbly introduced the setting, discussing the visually impaired community, shedding light on how they adapt to their circumstances, explaining the determination and achievement each of these individuals harbor. Even through the tour, Mr. McTerroil continued to further his stance.

The same energy that Mr. McTerroil embodied was reciprocated in Ms. Sandhya Rao, a visually impaired Law Clerk and a board member of the Lighthouse of Houston. In such a casual demeanor, Ms. Rao recounted her life and how she was able to rise above her physical ailments. As she spoke, not once did I see the fragile woman that one would expect from someone facing such physical difficulties. The desire for pity never flickered in her eyes. Ms. Rao simply did not give off that vibe.

At the end of the session, I once again ran my fingers across the Braille-imprinted wall as I exited the building. The letters carried so much more weight and meaning. That day I learned so much more than the insight I gained from on the visually impaired community. That day I understood that individuals only develop and grow by seeking strength from adversities. Part of being human is learning. This includes learning from experiences whether they are good or bad. Life is not fixated and the only way to keep up with its twists and turns is by adapting to its measures. It is the simple most effective way an individual can become a better person than they were the day before.