

UAB Connections Support Group Presents



THE EVENT

A few hours without sight can provide a lifetime of insight. UAB Connections, a support group for those with vision impairment, will host "Dinner in the Dark" on Monday, October 28th. This event provides an opportunity for friends, family, and their healthcare providers to experience a few hours without sight and gain some understanding of the daily challenges presented by vision impairment.

WHAT TO EXPECT

- When you arrive at Rojo, a volunteer will help you check in at the registration table.
- You will be asked to sign a photo consent form. We will provide a name tag so that the Rojo staff and our volunteers can address you by name throughout the evening.
- You will be given an eye mask that simulates total blindness and asked to put it on before being escorted by a volunteer into the restaurant.
- To get to your table, you will follow a volunteer by placing your hand on their elbow or shoulder and walking directly behind them.
- Each table will be set with dining utensils, ice water, chips and salsa.
- Once you are seated at the table, a volunteer will explain the table setting by indicating where items are located using the clock-face method.
- A volunteer will read menu options from a condensed menu once your table is filled. If you are already aware of a menu item that you prefer, you may order that instead.
- All food and soft drinks will be provided by UAB Connections. If you would like to order an alcoholic beverage, you may start a tab and pay at the conclusion of dinner.
- Volunteers will be around every few minutes to check in with diners. If you need something, please raise your hand and someone will help you.
- Enjoy the evening!



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GUEST GUIDELINES

- 1. Walking with a Guide:** Take your guide's arm and hold it gently but firmly just above their elbow. Follow your guide's movements and stay half a step behind the guide when you walk together. Let them know if they are moving too fast for you. It's important to walk at a pace that is comfortable for both of you.
- 2. Sitting Down:** Your guide will assist with seating. To sit down, place one hand on the back of your chair. Raise your other hand up until you touch the edge of your table to see how close the chair is to the table. Pull your chair back, and touch the seat of your chair with your other hand and sit down. Once seated, gently reach forward to find the edge of the table to make certain that you are close enough for comfortable dining.
- 3. Place Setting:** Once you are comfortably seated, do not immediately place your hands on top of the table. Find the edge of the table, then place your hands palms-down on the table and loosely curl your fingers. Move your hand gently forward while keeping contact with the table surface. This will let you explore your place setting without knocking anything over.
- 4. Tips for Eating:** Think of your plate as a clock face with 12:00 at the top and 6:00 at the bottom. This reference system can help you form a mental picture of where each food item is located on your plate. Use your fork and the tip of your knife periodically to check the location and arrangement of the food on your plate. Push food items that have shifted toward the edges back to the center of your plate.
- 5. Darkness:** It is normal for people who have never experienced complete darkness to feel uneasy at first. In the unlikely event that you feel a sense of panic, please alert a volunteer by raising your hand and taking a few deep breaths. If necessary, a volunteer can escort you out of the restaurant.
- 6. Restroom:** If you need to use the restroom during the meal, please raise your hand and a volunteer will guide you to the hallway where you can remove the eye mask before entering the restroom. Please put your mask back on when you exit the restroom.
- 7. Relax:** Dropped forks and spilled drinks happen sometimes. In this setting, that's known strictly as a learning experience. Remember that this unique event fosters an atmosphere of community, understanding, and a sense of humor.

We are looking forward to Dining in the Dark with you!



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