Tips For Interacting with a person with a...

Museum of disABILITY History

Visual Impairment

Identify yourself before you make physical contact with a person who is blind. Tell him your name and be sure to introduce him to others who are in the group, so that he's not excluded.

If a new student is blind or has a visual impairment, offer him a tour of your school.

People who are blind need their arms for balance, so offer your arm-do not take his- if he needs to be guided.

If the person has a guide dog, walk on the side opposite the dog. As you are walking, describe the setting, noting any obstacles, such as stairs or large cracks in the sidewalk.

If you are going to give a warning, be specific. Hollering, "Look out!" does not tell the person if he should stop, run, duck or jump.

If you need to leave a person who is blind, inform him first and let him know where the exit is, then leave him near a wall, table, or some other landmark. The middle of a room will seem like the middle of nowhere to him.

Do not touch the person's cane or guide dog. The dog is working and needs to concentrate. The cane is part of the individual's personal space. If the person puts the cane down, do not move it. Let him know if it is in the way.

If you serve food to a person who is blind, let him know where it is on the plate according to a clock orientation (twelve o'clock is furthest from them, six o'clock is nearest).