You are cordially invited to a Community Enlightening Event Guide. Join us for a fun evening of dining in the Dark. Have fun raising funds for CNIB.
It’s not just a meal – it’s an experience

Looking for a way to be more involved, to raise money and make a difference for people living with vision loss in your community? Working with your co-workers, members of your service club or a group of friends, you can organize a dinner and evening that everyone will be talking about for weeks to come – a Dining in the Dark community event in support of CNIB.

Based on a restaurant concept popularized in Paris and New York, Dining in the Dark is an event where diners experience a meal without the benefit of sight. Participants eat while wearing eye masks for a unique sensory experience in which they can explore textures, flavours and aromas in a whole new way. It’s a memorable way to raise money for CNIB and boost awareness of the challenges faced by people living with vision loss.

The funds you raise with your Dining in the Dark community event will help CNIB:

- Give children who are blind or partially sighted the building blocks for learning.
- Help people with vision loss learn to get around their homes or cities by themselves, by transit or on foot while using a white cane.
- Ensure adults who are blind and partially sighted have the technology and skills they need to succeed in the workforce.
- Prepare teens with vision loss for rewarding careers and independent adult lives.
- Support seniors to live independently and safely at home as they adjust to age-related vision loss.
- Give Canadians of all ages the emotional and practical support they need to overcome the challenges of vision loss.
Organize an unforgettable Dining in the Dark

Getting Started.
Build your committee. Gather a group of dependable people to share responsibilities and help you execute key tasks including promotion, event logistics, ticket sales, sponsorship, recruiting day-of-event volunteers, publicity and more. Your CNIB representative can provide sample job descriptions for committee members to help you recruit people who are ready to roll-up their sleeves and help out for a worthwhile cause. You may decide to pre-plan your committee meeting dates to ensure all committee members can attend.

Working with your CNIB representative.
We want to ensure your Dining in the Dark Community Event is a huge success. Talk to your CNIB representative, for advice on any of the following items:

- Budget and expense planning and management
- Venue and date selection
- Setting your ticket price and planning other activities at your event to raise funds for CNIB
- All necessary permits, licenses and insurance
- Dining in the Dark branded promotional materials that you can customize with your own event details:
  - Invitation, poster and ticket
  - Sponsorship package
  - Press release
- A client or volunteer to speak at your event

- Approval for use of the Dining in the Dark and/or CNIB logo on any additional materials you’ve created
- CNIB Dining in the Dark eye masks
- An event listing on cnib.ca
- CNIB brochures for your guests
- Tax receipt eligibility information
- Tips for event planning and evening program

Unfortunately, CNIB cannot provide the following:
  - Funding for event expenses
  - Donor lists
  - Promotion or advertising
  - Prizes or awards

Talk to us.
CNIB can help you make the most of your fundraising efforts. There are lots of ways to raise funds for your event, including pledges, sponsorships, matching donations and more. Just ask us for ideas – we have lots of them! Get in touch with us at info@cnib.ca or call 1-800-563-2642.
Organize an unforgettable Dining in the Dark

**Promote your event.**
The venue is lined up, the menu is set – now how do you get people to come to your Dining in the Dark event?

**Tell the world!**
Put it on Facebook or LinkedIn, tweet it, send emails and use your social networks. Working with your CNIB representative, you can get templates for posters and flyers to distribute city-wide including such places as:

- Recreation/community centres
- Health food stores
- Coffee shops
- Dry cleaners
- Workout facilities
- Partner organizations/sponsor facilities
- Restaurants
- Local transit

Call your local radio station and ask that they mention it on a community events segment. See if the local paper will donate space for an ad.

**Choose your cuisine.**
Work with your chef to create a menu that evokes all of the senses focusing on the texture, smell and of course the flavours of the meal. Anything goes, from multi-course gourmet to burgers and fries. It doesn’t have to be fine dining to be fun; finger foods can make eating easier. Serve boneless meats, avoid soups and hot drinks, and stay away from anything on a stick. You may consider serving the meal in bite-sized pieces – navigating a knife in the dark can be dangerous without instruction from a CNIB specialist. Help your guests stay clean by avoiding messy meals like spaghetti or dishes with a lot of sauce. For dessert, you may choose biscuits, profiteroles or ice cream in a tall glass.

**Go dark.**
Purchase eye masks (available from CNIB) and have guests put them on once they are seated at their table to ensure safety. Keep enough light on so that servers can see what they’re doing.
**Train your servers.**

Whether your meal will be served by restaurant employees or your own volunteers, put them through a test run where you have them introduce themselves to their guests and orient diners to their place settings and items on the table. As each course arrives, have them provide descriptions of the plates using clock positions. Here’s an example: “Your plate is in front of you. To the right of your plate are your spoon and knife. Above your knife is your water glass. To the left of your plate is your fork and napkin. On your plate you have vegetables at three o’clock, potatoes at 6 o’clock and your main course at nine o’clock. You’ll find salt and pepper, butter and rolls in the centre of the table.”

**Offer tips.**

Talk to guests about techniques used by people living with vision loss:

- To pour wine, place the tip of your finger into the glass as you pour so you can feel when it’s full.

- Always put your glass back in the exact same place so it’s easier to find – and avoid spills.

- Eat from the outside of the plate towards the middle so food isn’t pushed onto the table.

- Need some salt? To control the flow from the shaker, shake some into your palm and gage the amount with your finger.

**Share your story.**

Telling everyone why you’re so passionate about this event/cause will help motivate people to support you, and makes a great story for local media. What are your reasons for organizing the event? Are you raising money in support of a parent who uses CNIB services? Are you supporting a child in your community? The more meaningful it is, the more it will draw people in.
The first step in planning your Dining in the Dark community event is filling out the Event Proposal Form by visiting [cnib.ca/fundraise](http://cnib.ca/fundraise)

CNIB strongly encourages you to take precautions when holding a Dining in the Dark community event. We recommend the use of CNIB Dining in the Dark eye masks instead of dining in complete darkness. If you are a sighted or partially sighted person, please do not attempt to use a stove, oven or other cooking device with the lights off. Only individuals who are blind and feel safe cooking in the dark should ever attempt to prepare a meal without the lights on. Additionally, please use your better judgment in deciding what level of darkness is safe for you and your guests to comfortably eat in, and whether or not it is safe for you to have sharp knives or other items that may be dangerous. If at any time you do not feel safe or feel there is a risk of someone getting hurt, please turn on the lights – or choose to use a dim light as opposed to eating in complete darkness.

**Food hygiene:** This is vitally important. No one likes an upset tummy, especially as a reward for raising money for a charity. Please take great care when handling food and work to basic rules for safe preparation, cooking, storage and display.

**Congratulations!**
You’ve completed your first ever Dining in the Dark community event. Feels great, doesn’t it? Now all that’s left to do is…Submit your funds. Work with your CNIB representative to ensure you have collected all of the necessary information to make submitting your funds a seamless process.

**Say thanks**
Let everyone involved know how much you appreciate their support, and how their time or donation has made a difference in the lives of Canadians who are blind or partially sighted. Work with your CNIB representative to use the thank you letter templates available to make this task an easy one.

**Health and safety:** It’s all about common sense. Follow the professional advice of equipment manufacturers and staff supervising any facilities. The formal bit: CNIB cannot accept liability for any loss, damage or injury suffered by you or anyone else as a result of taking part in a fundraising event.
Meet Necole and Joshua

In November 2005, Necole Hoskins moved with her three boys to Calgary, Alberta, to take advantage of a booming job market. A single parent, Necole didn’t know anyone in the city. Her youngest son Joshua was three and had been diagnosed with a condition that causes low vision.

Necole wanted to be proactive about getting a good support network in place for Joshua, so she called CNIB to get started. CNIB connected Necole to many community resources that made life a lot easier, including an assistant who picked Joshua up at daycare, and later on, an itinerant teacher to help him in the classroom.

When she decided to enroll Joshua in French immersion, she called CNIB for advice about whether it was feasible for him to learn French braille along with large print, as a backup in case his vision worsened. It was possible, and Joshua is now in Grade 3, a French braille whiz.

They also made use of a CNIB toy lending library. An assistive devices program allowed Joshua to get a portable electronic magnifier that also works as an accessible camera and music/video player (“It’s pretty fabulous,” says Necole.)

Joshua’s latest adventure with CNIB was at summer camp, where he went indoor rock climbing, had a water gun fight, learned to cook rotini, visited the CNIB Outdoor Classroom, saw a firefighter demonstrate the “jaws of life” on a pop can and dressed up for superhero day – all in one week. He also made a close friend at camp, and learned about the CNIB Library, which he plans to explore next.

“He’s totally enjoying what he does with CNIB,” says Necole. “He’s so comfortable there. He just loves it!”

Any questions? We’re happy to help. Get in touch with us at info@cnib.ca or call 1-800-563-2642.
Thank you!

When someone loses their vision, even something as simple as eating a meal can be a challenge. Dining in the Dark is a unique fundraiser that you can do right in your own home. It’s a great opportunity to raise money for CNIB, and give your guests a small taste of what it might be like to experience the world without sight. Though the event takes place in the dark, it’s an enlightening experience every time.

We’re here to help
There are lots of people at CNIB who can’t wait to help you with your fundraising. You can contact them by email at info@cnib.ca or call 1-800-563-2642. Visit cnib.ca/fundraise to learn more about how we can support you.

Thank you so much for fundraising for CNIB – good luck and bon appétit!