Ways to be gracious with people who are visually impaired

**ASK**
Offer assistance but let the person decide if your help is needed. By asking, you give the person a chance to say yes or no.

**THE RIGHT WAY TO HELP**
If they need your help, allow them to grasp your arm just above the elbow and walk ahead of them. Be gentle and do not push them forward.

**USE NAMES**
Identify yourself when approaching. The person may not recognize your voice even if you have met before. In a group setting, address the person by name so they know when you are talking to them.

**SPECIFY**
Use words such as “straight ahead”, “turn left”, “on your right”. Do not point and say “go that way” or “look here”.

**BEFORE YOU LEAVE**
Never leave the person in an “open space”. If you have to be separated for any amount of time, be sure the person is in contact with a wall, railing or any stable object until you return.

**TONE DOWN**
Do not shout or change your tone. Speak naturally and directly to the person. Persons with vision impairment can have normal hearing.

**ALERT**
Alert the person of oncoming stairs, doorways, turns, narrow passages etc.

**YOU LATER?**
It is okay to use vision related words such as look, see, watch etc. conversationally. The words ‘blind’ and ‘vision impaired’ are also acceptable in conversation.

**INFORM**
Inform the person when you arrive or before you leave. Failing to do this may cause embarrassment if the person continues to talk to someone who has left.

**PEOPLE FIRST**
A person’s disability is not their identity. It is kinder, and more accurate, to say “a person who is blind” rather than “a blind person”.

**INFORM**
Inform the person when you arrive or before you leave. Failing to do this may cause embarrassment if the person continues to talk to someone who has left.