

NEWS RELEASE

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Physically Disabled Awareness Week at UCSD

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Take a few minutes out of your day to go blind - it will open your eyes to the difficulties faced by the disabled students on the University of California, San Diego campus.

Or, you can try getting into Bonner Hall in a wheelchair or listening to a chemistry lecture with earplugs.

All of these disabilities will be part of the three-day Physically Disabled Awareness Week at UC San Diego sponsored by the Disabled Student Union Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, May 19-21. Activities will include disability simulations during the day and seminars in the evenings.

Wheelchairs, earplugs, canes and blinders will be lent to students, faculty and staff interested in experiencing an hour or two of everyday life with a disability. The focus will be on experiencing and understanding. Those taking part in the simulation will do nothing more than what disabled students are asked to do everyday to attend classes.

The purpose of these simulations, and of Awareness Week as a whole, is to enhance a realization of the real nature of a physical handicap. People generally accept that the disabled have difficulties, but few really understand just what the particular problems are. The most fundamental barrier confronting the disabled student is a lack of awareness of the real problems.

For example, even the shortest stairway becomes a major obstacle for a person confined to a wheelchair. It slows the progress between classes and becomes a hazard in an emergency.

Lending centers for wheelchairs, blinders, canes and earplugs will be set up each day in the Student Center (near the Mandeville Center), in the Chancellor's Complex on the Matthews campus and at the University Hospital near downtown San Diego.

The evening seminars are being presented in an attempt to open a meaningful dialog on the problems faced by disabled students. The first, set for Wednesday, May 19, titled "Attitudes Toward the Disabled" will deal with the psychology and treatment of the disabled.

The second seminar, on Thursday, May 20, titled "Sexuality and the Disabled" will include a film as well as the dialog. The third seminar on Friday, May 21, is titled "Career Planning and Placement for the Disabled." All three seminars are scheduled for 7 p.m. and will be held in the North Conference Room of the UC San Diego Student Center.

For more information on the Awareness Week, the lending centers and the seminars call the UC San Diego Student Activities Office at 452-4636 (452-info).

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