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Members of Miami Lighthouse for the Blind experience the smells and sounds of Marlins Park

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Ingrid Garcia, left (white shirt and glasses,) Garciela Lopez, Janet Kelly Marte and Celia Guevara walk on the field of the Marlins Park. Miami Lighthouse for the Blind And Visually Impaired took a group of adults on a hands-on tour to experience the sounds, smells, and feel of the park on Wednesday, July 30, 2014.

Holding the worn baseball bat took Dan Johnson back to Eastside Park in New Jersey when he was just a kid.

He could see then.

He remembers the grassy field and playing shortstop. He remembers what it was like watching a fly ball hit his glove. He remembers running the bases.

"I was really good back then," said Johnson, who was part of a group from Miami Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired that got a behind-the-scenes tour of Marlins Park on Wednesday.

About 30 adults — most of whom have complete vision loss — were led onto the field to touch the grass and clay. They walked the bases, felt the railings and sat in the dugout. They then stayed to experience a game —hot dogs and all — as the

Miami Marlins took on the Washington Nationals.

Marlins President David Samson, who led the group onto the field before the game, said the idea for the day was to show that baseball "is a game for all of the senses."

"The first thing you hear is the crack of the ball against the bat," he said. "Just because they are visually impaired does not mean they can't enjoy baseball."

Samson showed Miami Lighthouse member Victor Brown what it was like to stand on home plate and get a sense where players including Giancarlo Stanton stood to hit the ball. Using a white cane as a bat, Brown assumed a batting stance.

Samson then walked Brown the 90 feet to first base.

"I didn't realize it was that far," Brown said. "It's great that he took time to do this."

After the field time, the group went to the dugout. Pitcher A.J. Ramos took time from practice to shake hands, pose for pictures and speak with the group.

Carmen Davis, who is in her 50s, said she felt honored to meet Ramos and Samson and had a new appreciation for baseball.

“This means so much to us,” she said. Davis said she has been to a game before and listens to the play-by-play on radio.

“There’s just something about being in the park that makes it better,” said Davis, who lost her vision when she was 11.

For Johnson, 53, who lost his vision in 2010, getting a taste of his childhood game — even though he couldn’t see it anymore — was indescribable.

“This is something you never think you would be able to do,” he said, after running his fingers over the grass not far from home plate.

As a kid, Johnson remembers going to New York Mets games with his dad. He also played baseball at East Orange High School, proudly wearing the red and blue. He went on to have a more than 25-year career in the aviation industry. But when he lost his vision he was forced to give up his job and baseball, which he played as a hobby.

Adjusting to life without vision was challenging.

“It can be depressing sometimes,” he said.

But when the National Anthem played Wednesday, Johnson proudly stood with his baseball cap over his heart.

He said “play ball,” and waited for the action. He tapped his feet to the loud music. And when the fans — mainly children visiting for camp day — screamed, Johnson asked, “Did they get a home run?”

They didn’t, but it didn’t seem to dampen Johnson’s spirits.

Virginia Jacko, the CEO and president of the Miami Lighthouse, said that many adults in the program are afraid to go out.

“This gives them confidence that they can go out and enjoy community places,” said Jacko, who took the tour with her guide dog Kieran. “It really is possible to see without sight, and today was an example of that.”