

Why are we all so different?



By an anonymous member

Just as our vision varies from one person to another, so do our life experiences and interests. Those brought up before technology became available had very different schooling and early employment experiences and challenges. While children with albinism now attend mainstream schools, in the past many with low vision had wonderful experiences at a school for the blind (and low vision) and learned to use Braille - something that some still advocate for those with very low vision, in order to be able to rest the eyes when reading text or learning music.

With the advent of paralympic sports, audio description in theatres, portable technology, tactile markings and paving, life has become a little easier - but the absence of these has not prevented most of our older members from living full and satisfying lives, with careers, families and friends, participating alongside sighted peers in a range of activities. Having a go at everything with a "can do" attitude seems to have served them well, along with a determination to find a different way to do things and meet challenges.

The level of vision and melanin also shapes experiences, as do the encouragement and opportunities provided as we grow up. Some obviously look different, others don't, some have a driving licence while others struggle to get around. The availability of medical intervention, research and knowledge, the era of diagnosis or geographical location play a part, as does the age of diagnosis – as a baby or an adult.

The resulting personal success at meeting goals, resiliency and life situation vary depending on many factors – **our albinism is our only connection** – giving us a common bond to understand, respect and accept each other as valued members of our albinism community.