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Fort Smith Night to Shine to be held Friday at West-Ark Church of Christ

West-Ark Church of Christ hosts event for eighth year

February 7, 2025 at 4:00 a.m.

by [Campbell Roper](#)





West Ark Church of Christ in Fort Smith will host a Night to Shine event in Fort Smith Friday, Feb. 7, 2025. Night to Shine is a prom night for people with special needs ages 14 and older. West Ark Church of Christ has hosted the annual event since 20217. (Pictured) Matthew Vanatta, center, of Siloam Springs laughs Feb. 9, 2018, as he dances with his "buddy" Hannah Cogburn during the Night to Shine at Cross Church in Springdale. (River Valley Democrat-Gazette/Andy Shupe File Photo)

FORT SMITH -- West-Ark Church of Christ is hosting the Fort Smith Night to Shine from 6 to 9 p.m. Friday.

Night to Shine is a free global event for people with special needs sponsored by the Tim Tebow Foundation and hosted by churches around the world, according to the Foundation website. The event is "an unforgettable prom night experience centered on God's love for people with special needs ages 14 and older," the website states.

West-Ark Church of Christ has been hosting the event in Fort Smith since 2017, the church's website states. The church is located at 900 N. Waldron Road.

The church has over 20 volunteer groups that help with the event, including "buddies" to assist attendees, clean-up crews, karaoke hosts, a medical crew and photographers.

The buddies are always one of the greatest needs for Night to Shine, the church says. No special skills are required, but buddies must be at least 16 or older. Buddies should also be willing and able to spend the evening with an attendee.

The church will have limos, provided by sponsors, that transport guests from the church auditorium to the family life center. Hair and makeup touch-ups can be given to guests at the auditorium, the church says. Limo sponsors include My Cloud Limo and Happy Hours Limousine.

Learn, Play, Grow Children's Therapy Services in Fort Smith offers a sensory room with low lights to give attendees "a break" from the activity with a more "chilled-out" environment, said Katie Armstrong, the human relations manager at Learn, Play, Grow. She said the sensory room will be open for all attendees.

Armstrong said Night to Shine is a fun event and a chance for goers to socialize with each other. It also allows them to network with providers to become aware of community support and services, she added.

Learn, Play, Grow offers occupational, speech and physical therapy for people up to 21 years old.

Alma, Fort Smith and the University of Arkansas at Fort Smith Police Departments will provide security and transportation at the event, the church's website states.

"Night to Shine is my favorite night of the year! It's my favorite because we get to celebrate so many Kings and Queens and share how much they are loved by us and by the God of this universe," Tim Tebow, founder of the Tim Tebow Foundation and a former professional football player, states on the Foundation website.

"Our goal is to be able to get to every person with special needs around the world -- until all are celebrated. No matter what city, no matter what country, no matter where you are, we want 'Night to Shine' to be there," Tebow said.

The Tim Tebow Foundation provides each host church with the official 2025 Night to Shine Planning Manual, personalized guidance and support from a Foundation staff member, the opportunity to apply for a financial grant, and access to planning resources to assist them in providing the event.

The Foundation also provides access to ongoing disability ministry resources through Shine On, a ministry of the Foundation, which is a faith-based community and "a source of inspiration, belonging, and education for everyone impacted by disability," according to the Foundation website.

"Shine On envisions a global community of churches and families that foster belonging and purpose for all," the website states.

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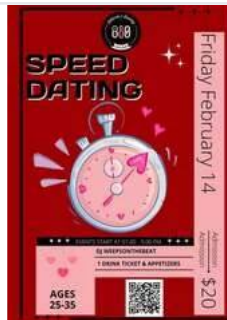
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