**The National Federation of the Blind Announces Collaboration to Add Accessibility Features to the Presto Smart Dining System Used in Applebee’s and Other Restaurants**

The National Federation of the Blind has partnered with [E la Carte](http://www.elacarte.com/), Inc., creators of the Presto™ Smart Dining System™ for full-service restaurants; the Applebee’s™ restaurant franchise; and LightHouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired of San Francisco to produce a text-to-speech capability for the Presto Smart Dining System that will be incorporated into all current and future Presto-system tablets, including those used in Applebee’s restaurants. This partnership is a result of negotiations that began last year among E la Carte, the Applebee’s franchise, and the National Federation of the Blind, the LightHouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired of San Francisco, and several blind Californians.

The new functionality enables blind persons to interact with the Presto system to independently order menu items, pay their bills, and perform other functions using a Presto-system tablet. By performing certain gestures, blind patrons can turn on the text-to-speech capability of the tablets in order to access the new functionality. In addition, blind patrons can take advantage of the audio jack available on newer PrestoPrime EMV tablets to activate the text-to-speech capability by simply plugging in a pair of headphones. The audio jack on PrestoPrime tablets can be found and identified by a Braille tactile label located next to the jack.

The National Federation of the Blind and LightHouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired of San Francisco have been working with E la Carte and the Applebee’s franchise for several months to develop the new functionality, which has been tested by blind consumers. This continued testing and the related feedback will help E la Carte to fine-tune the implementation such that it provides a user experience for blind consumers that is similar to that of other mobile and small screen device applications and, as a result, is familiar to them.

“Like many new technologies, the E la Carte system has the potential to provide the blind with greater independence than ever before, since we will now be able to access a restaurant’s menu choices in the same way that other customers do,” said Mark Riccobono, President of the National Federation of the Blind. “We therefore applaud E la Carte in its efforts to provide to blind diners the same access to the Presto system that sighted persons enjoy, while also helping the restaurants who deploy the system comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act and other applicable laws.”

The new accessibility functionality will be included as a standard part of the Presto system and tablets and is available to all E la Carte customers.