



Welcome

Welcome to our very first 'Out of Sight' newsletter! We're thrilled to kick off this journey with you, bringing everyone at Retina SA and our amazing members closer together. Did you know that sight loss is considered the most significant disability in South Africa? According to the 2011 census, 11% of our population reported having a sight challenge. With the rising diabetes epidemic, which often leads to diabetic retinopathy, we've seen a surge in our membership at Retina SA.



This newsletter is our way of showing you the incredible things we're doing on your behalf. More importantly, we want this to be a two-way street where we hear from you, get you involved in our activities, and build a stronger community together. A big shoutout to our long-time friends and supporters - your dedication means the world to us, and we hope this newsletter brings you even closer to the heart of our organisation.

Our management committee, mostly made up of individuals with sight loss, is committed to working tirelessly for our members across South Africa. Many of our members rely on social grants and the support of family carers, and it's our mission to make a difference in their lives. Expect to see this newsletter in your inbox monthly, and we're excited to hear your thoughts and see your participation.

Cheers,

The Editor.

There are a lot of exciting and meaningful projects which we are working on, and we want to share these with you through our jam-packed Out of Sight newsletter.

Your support and involvement in our initiatives could make a world of difference in our fight against blindness. Whether you are looking for social impact, awareness, sporting, or other initiatives to get involved with, we have many opportunities for you to make a difference!

One of my favourite quotes comes from the courageous Helen Keller, who once said, "Alone we can do so little, but together we can do so much."

Help us make a difference!

With Gratitude,



Chairman

Latest News

Campaign Save Our Sight - SOS.

Retina SA is embarking on an ambitious journey to '**Save our Sight**' a campaign dedicated to empowering individuals with retinal vision loss and driving forward the quest for groundbreaking treatments. Through our membership drives, fundraising efforts, and outreach to healthcare professionals, we aim to foster a community of support and innovation.



Our initiative seeks to engage members, previous supporters, and friends of Retina South Africa in a united effort to combat retinal vision loss. With the introduction of an online payment option for donations and membership fees, supporting our cause has never

been easier. By Members paying their annual membership fee of R240 per annum, they can stand a chance, each month, to win a prize of R500. The general public is also encouraged to take part in this initiative by donating R250 towards Retina's Save our Sight Project ([Donate Now](#)) and will also be eligible for the monthly draw. Please enquire at headoffice@retinasa.org.za.

The 'Save our Sight' initiative is more than just a fundraising campaign; it's a movement towards education, empowerment, and breaking the stigma associated with disabilities. By participating in sporting and cultural activities, individuals with vision loss can overcome isolation and embrace a life of independence and fulfilment.

We are on the cusp of a significant medical breakthrough that promises to transform the landscape of treatment for blindness. This development underscores the importance of our continued research and advocacy efforts.

Join us in this vital mission. Together, we can Save Our Sight and pave the way for a brighter, more inclusive future.

SA Blind Golf and Retina SA.



The South African Blind Golf Association (SABGA) is part of the International Blind Golf Association. Over the past ten years, the SABGA has grown from 3 active members to around 25 active members. Golf provides an opportunity to compete against able-bodied players and even beat them. It is also a sport that can be played individually with a family member or guide, or in a group. Golf is a wonderful way to meet new people and enjoy the sun and nature.

The SABGA hosts a yearly Blind Golf Open where players from South Africa and around the world compete against each other. Players can also represent South Africa at the World Blind Golf Championships, which are held every two years.

Once set up, the blind golfer gets comfortable and makes the swing or putt just like any other golfer. The guide serves as the player's eyes, describing how the ball is sitting, the distance to the hole, hazards, bunkers, and direction. They line up the player and the club. After the ball is hit, the guide describes how the ball flies and its result. On the putting surface, they help line up the putt.

SA Blind Golf has three categories: B1, B2, and B3. B4 players can also compete in local tournaments, but they are not allowed to participate in international tournaments due to the rules of Para Sport International.

Experience the Excitement of Para Golf at Our Free Taster Day: August 3, 2024!

We are thrilled to collaborate with SA Blind Golf for a special Taster Day at the **Benoni Lake Club** on **August 3, 2024**. Join us for an unforgettable event where individuals with vision loss can explore

and enjoy the incredible sport of Golf. Don't miss this unique opportunity to swing, play, and have fun!

Transport Summit.



Following President Cyril Ramaphosa's impactful speech at the Transport Summit on Universal Accessibility, attention has turned to the strides South Africa is making towards inclusivity for persons with disabilities. The summit, a crucial gathering of minds and advocates for disability rights, highlighted the ongoing efforts and necessary advancements needed in transportation and beyond to ensure universal accessibility.

This event served as a platform for discussing the integration of technology into solutions for accessibility challenges, showcasing innovative approaches to navigation assistance and medical technology advancements. It underscored the importance of a universally accessible South Africa, aligning with President Ramaphosa's vision and call to action.

The dedication of individuals and stakeholders, which includes Retina South Africa, towards this cause is a testament to the collective effort required to achieve a fully accessible nation. The summit not only reiterated the necessity of universal accessibility in

transportation but also served as a reminder of the broader societal infrastructures that must evolve to include all citizens, regardless of their physical abilities.

Retina South Africa was represented at the Summit by Mariza Jurgens, Claudette Medefindt, Sandy Cape, and Linsay Engelbrecht. Our awareness table was visited by many and we took part in drafting the summit's aviation and airline communique.

Free State Conference.



Retina SA took part in the Disability Conference hosted by the University of the Free State in Bloemfontein. Mariza Jurgens, our Deputy Chairperson, delivered the Keynote address on day one of the conference. Her theme was "Mapping out the inclusion and equality of persons with disabilities

through information and communication technology".

Lindiwe Maredi and Victoria Musimbo delivered a paper on the status of eye-care in South Africa. They highlighted the fact that South Africa has very few ophthalmologists in relation to the size of the population. They also highlighted the role Retina South Africa is

playing in ensuring that the new National Health Insurance (NHI) includes eye-care provision in its basic basket of treatments.

Introducing Our Free Educational Series: Understanding Vision and Retinal Degeneration

We are excited to announce a free educational series, "Back to Basics - Understanding Vision and Retinal Degeneration." Join Karen Denton for short Zoom presentations every 2nd Tuesday at 09:00 and every Thursday at 17:00, starting Tuesday, 4th June.

For the Zoom link, please email: <mailto:claudette@retinasa.org.za>.

Don't miss this opportunity to deepen your understanding of vision and retinal health!

Save the Date for our Annual General Meeting

We are excited to announce that our Annual General Meeting ("AGM") will be held in Gauteng on Saturday, July 27th and you are invited to attend. The venue and time will be confirmed soon. This is a fantastic opportunity to stay updated on the latest advancements and connect with the Retina SA community.

At the AGM, two leading companies will showcase the newest visual aids. One highlight will be the revolutionary ONYX assistive device, designed specifically for individuals with central vision loss. Lindsay Engelbrecht, the RSA Ambassador for this amazing device, will be present to demonstrate its incredible features. Attendees will also

have the chance to order the ONYX device at a special discounted rate exclusive to the AGM.

Don't miss this chance to experience the ONYX device firsthand.

Additionally, if you are interested in contributing to our efforts, we welcome you to join our management committee, a sub-committee, or the exciting Save Our Sight action group. For more information, please contact Linsay at 084 554 9227 or Claudette at 083 306 5262.

Details to follow.

Upcoming Fundraising Events



July 28, 2024

BOWLS For Sight

Join us for a day of fun at our charity day playing lawn bowls at the Edenvale Bowling Club in Johannesburg.

No previous experience is needed, the event is open to everyone.

Format; 2 games of 10 ends.

Your entry includes:

- Goodie Bag
- Tea or Coffee on arrival
- Mid-Morning Snacks
- Lunch
- Prize Giving



November 17, 2024 Ride For A Purpose, Virgin Active 94.7 Ride Joburg

We invite you to participate in something truly impactful by cycling with **Team Retina SA** in 2024.

Enjoy these Benefits:

- Goodie Bag
- Retina SA Socks
- Retina SA Cycling Jersey
- Dedicated Starting Time
- Race Pack Collection on Your Behalf
- Post-Race Hospitality

Together, let's ride to "**Save Our Sight**".

Why We Fundraise

Did you know that a genetic test can cost up to **R10 000** and is not covered by medical insurance? This makes essential tests inaccessible for many who need them. By supporting our fundraising events, you help provide these life-changing tests to individuals and families who cannot afford them.

Retinal Realities Podcasts

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Episode 17:

Hope Through Trials – A Stargardt's Patient's Perspective – with Melanie Nel

In this episode we explore the remarkable journey of those who dare to participate in groundbreaking medical trials, we delve into a story that embodies courage, uncertainty, and unwavering hope.

Our journey begins when Melani Nel received that life-changing call. The one that would lead her to a clinical trial for Stargardt's disease right here in South Africa.

Listen at [Episode 17 - Hope in Trials: A Stargardt's Patient's Perspective with Melanie Nel - YouTube](#)

Episode 16:

THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS - with Hazel Sacharowitz

In today's enlightening episode, we have the privilege of hosting Hazel Sacharowitz, a distinguished Optometrist from the [Low Vision Care Centre](#). Hazel has over 35 years of experience in the field of low vision including lecturing and training of the Optometry students at the University of Johannesburg. She is well known and respected in her field and has presented at numerous local and international conferences. She is a Fellow of the American Academy of Optometry and remains passionate about low vision.

Listen at [Episode 16 - Through the Looking Glass - Hazel Sacharowitz - YouTube](#)

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS!



If you have any skills, particularly in areas such as fundraising, marketing, finance or networking, or would just like to offer assistance as and when needed, we would appreciate your support. If you would like to volunteer, please register your interest today.



Register to Volunteer – e-mail: events@retinasa.org.za

ALL IT TAKES IS ONE POWERFUL SWIPE



Make us a beneficiary on your Myschool Card and a percentage of your spend will be donated to Retina South Africa, helping raise much needed funds and it won't cost you a cent!

Find out more at [Retina South Africa | My School / My Village / My Planet \(retinasa.org.za\)](http://Retina South Africa | My School / My Village / My Planet (retinasa.org.za))

Follow Retina South Africa on social media!



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