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**RETINA**  
SOUTH AFRICA

# Out of Sight

**Foundation News**

Hello Everybody!

Hope this message finds you cozy and comfy. Winter's the perfect excuse to curl up with a good book, or even better, an audiobook. Despite the chill, the Retina Team hasn't slowed down a bit.

We recently celebrated at the South African Optometric Association's centenary conference and even snagged an award for our stellar work in the eye care field.

Big shoutout to Manny Moodley, our Chairperson, and Claudette Medefindt, our rockstar National Secretary, for their well-deserved recognition by the optometric community.

This month's edition is packed with goodies, including a recap of

our Mandela Day shenanigans and the debut of a new Barbie doll who's just like us - visually impaired. Plus, don't miss out on the scoop from our annual general meeting.

Happy reading!

Cheers,  
The Editor

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## LATEST NEWS

### Blind Barbie Doll.



It is with great excitement that the **South African Guide Dogs Association** announced on 23 July 2024 the launch of the **Visually Impaired Barbie Doll** by Mattel.

The doll is available at all locations where you would normally be able to buy a Barbie Doll for your child, but Tanya Schonwald from the South African Guide Dogs Association cautioned everybody that the availability on the racks might be delayed due to them being imported from the United States. So inquire at your local toy shop.

A novelty for this doll is that the box will also include information in Braille formats

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## Feeding Hope: Retina SA's Mandela Day Food Drive.

In the spirit of Mandela Day, a day dedicated to honouring Nelson Mandela's legacy through community service, Retina South Africa embarked on a mission to support the visually impaired community. Partnering with the Johannesburg Society for the Blind, this initiative aimed to address the pressing challenge of food scarcity faced by the society.



[Read More](#)

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## The South African Optometric Association (SAOA) Centennial Conference 2024.

The South African Optometric Association (SAOA) is a cornerstone in the optometry field in South Africa, established in 1924, making this year its Centenary year. It serves as a professional and representative body dedicated to regulating the Optometric industry, protecting the public and supporting over 1,600 registered optometrists and professional lens distributors- known as Opticians. The SAOA plays a pivotal role in enhancing the quality of eye care through various

means, including regulation, advocacy, education, and support for its members.

The SAOA celebrated its 100-year anniversary with the Centennial Conference & Celebrations, held from July 18 to 20, 2024, at Emperors Palace in Kempton Park, Gauteng. This event aimed to celebrate the profession's advancements and provide a platform for education and networking.

The conference commenced with an inspiring opening ceremony marked by a stirring performance from renowned South African singer, Vicky Sampson. She opened the session with the heartfelt rendition of the National Anthem, and concluded the ceremony with her compelling performance of "African Dream".



### **Retina South Africa receives an award.**

As part of its Centenary celebrations, the SAOA presented an award of **“Friend of the South African Optometric Association”** to Retina South Africa as well as to Manny Moodley, our National Chairperson, and to Claudette Medefindt our Head of Science and



National Secretary. Retina SA and the SAOA have collaborated closely since 1998 in a shared vision of improving the landscape of eye care in South Africa.

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## Importance of Including Alternative Text in Social Media Posts.



Alt text is essential for making the internet more accessible to people who are blind or have low vision. It enables screen readers to convey the content of images through spoken word or Braille, allowing users with vision-related disabilities to fully engage with online content. Despite its significance, the absence of effective alt text can significantly hinder the online experience for many users. Efforts to improve alt text include manual addition by users, AI-generated descriptions by platforms, and advocacy for better accessibility

practices.

Resources or Guides on Adding Alternative Text on Social Media Platforms:

- Facebook: [Guide on adding alt text to Facebook images](#)
- LinkedIn: [Instructions for adding alt text on LinkedIn](#)
- Twitter: [How to add alt text to tweets](#)

These resources should provide a comprehensive guide to implementing alt text across major social media platforms, ensuring your content is accessible to individuals with sight loss.

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## **Empowering Change: The Ratification of the African Disability Protocol and Its Impact on South Africa.**

In a historic move, fifteen African nations, including South Africa, have ratified the African Disability Protocol (ADP), marking a significant milestone in the fight for the rights of over 80 million Africans with disabilities. This ratification is not just a legal formality but a beacon of hope for individuals who have long been marginalized and faced discrimination due to disabilities.

The ADP addresses the unique challenges that people with disabilities in Africa face, including combating superstitions, harmful cultural practices, and systemic discrimination. It builds upon the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), tailoring its provisions to the African context to ensure relevance and effectiveness.

For South Africa, a country with a complex history of addressing inequality, the ratification of the ADP represents a commitment to enhancing the rights and opportunities of its disabled population.

[Read More](#)

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## **Reflecting on a Successful Year: Retina SA's AGM Highlights.**

The Retina South Africa AGM was hosted in a congenial atmosphere on the 27th July.

During the reports it was noted by our accountant that we have had a good year, and for the first time since the pandemic we have a positive income again and we are 'in the black'.

Our chairman, Manny Moodley highlighted the achievements of the Retina SA team for the year, stressing again the dedication and teamwork that has resulted in success after success.

Linsay Engelbrecht gave a heart - warming and inspiring talk about her life with visual impairment, and how defining moments in one's life can determine major life pathways.

<https://youtu.be/IYy7gwkVnuU>

After the formalities, attendees were invited to join a 'Retina Spin and Win' where each walked away with a prize or two.

Everyone was eager to learn more about the different devices

available to assist those with visual impairment that were demonstrated by Sensory Solutions (who also donated some of the fabulous Spin and Win prizes).

Sir Nicholas Rose and Jeanne demonstrated the Onyx device - a technological marvel that assists people with central vision loss. Many who tried it found the results way beyond expectations, and at least one person was heard to say 'I can see again ... I can see faces, I can read, I can see pictures!'

All in all, the meeting was a resounding success and we look forward to seeing you at our Retina SA AGM 2025

[Sensory Solutions](#) - latest accessibility products

Sir Nicholas Rose Optometrist- Onyx Smart glasses, for people with central vision loss.

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## **Retina SA at the Paralympic Games.**





# PARIS 2024 PARALYMPIC GAMES

WED, 28 AUG 2024 –  
SUN, 08 SEPT 2024

It is with great excitement that Retina South Africa can announce that three of our members, **Alani Ferreira**, **Danika Vyncke**, and **Jaco Smit** have been selected to represent South Africa in the upcoming Paralympic Games in Paris later this month. We extend our heartfelt congratulations to these talented para athletes for their hard work, dedication, and perseverance. Their achievements are a testament to their exceptional skills and determination, and we are incredibly proud to have them represent our country on this prestigious international stage.

Retina South Africa has, over the last year, been concentrating on fostering inclusivity in sports by encouraging our members to take up sports. It is very difficult for visually impaired persons to engage in sports in South Africa. Nearly all visually impaired sports require a sighted guide to compete alongside the sportsperson. This means that the cost of attending any activity is always doubled, and there is very little funding available to assist these athletes with their events. Often, they receive support only during Commonwealth Games and Paralympic sports events, with no support for attending other

sporting events to qualify for these larger contests.

Despite these challenges, Retina South Africa still believes it is crucial for our members to participate in sports as it leads to better health and overall well-being. Our first event incorporating our new 'Save Our Sight' program, which encourages sport participation amongst our members, was the Ride for Sight early in February, where 34 competitors with disabilities took part. On the 3rd of August, Retina SA hosted a taster session for golf together with South African Blind Golf Association, and we hope to also introduce vision-impaired individuals to lawn bowls and indoor spinning later this year.

Participation in sports offers unparalleled benefits, including improved physical health, vision health, enhanced mental well-being, and greater social integration. For individuals with visual impairments, these activities provide a unique platform for empowerment and inclusion. It is essential to recognise that the ability to see does not define one's capability to participate and excel in sports. Through collective support and the promotion of inclusive sports initiatives, we can ensure that everyone, regardless of visual ability, has the opportunity to engage in sports, enjoy the camaraderie, and celebrate the achievements that come with it.

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## UPCOMING FUNDRAISING EVENTS

**September 3, 2024**

**Swing FOR SIGHT**

**Our Annual Golf Day, Sold Out!**

We're excited to announce that our annual golf day, in



collaboration with the Dis-Chem Foundation, is officially sold out! Adding to the excitement, we will be hosting the Hole-In-One challenge, offering participants a chance to win.

Thank you to everyone who signed up to support Retina South Africa. We look forward to a fantastic day on the greens at the Royal Johannesburg Golf Course, filled with friendly competition and great fun, all for a good cause. See you there!

[Read More](#)



## September 28, 2024 Spin FOR SIGHT

This event is a collaborative effort between Virgin Active and the [Specialist Eye Centre](#). An exhilarating indoor spinning event.

Get ready for a fun-filled day full of high-energy cycling, camaraderie, and impactful fundraising and creating

[Book Here](#)

awareness of those who live with a visual disability.

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## October 6, 2024 Bowls FOR SIGHT

Interested in trying lawn bowls? Join us for the Bowls FOR SIGHT fundraiser at Edenvale Bowling Club, Gauteng on Sunday, October 6th. Entry fee per player: R350. Bring along family, friends, or colleagues for a day of fun and socialising to support Retina South Africa's "Save Our Sight" initiative.



[Book Now](#)

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## November 17, 2024 Ride Joburg For A Purpose

Riding Towards a Future with Restored Vision! Join us, and let's show Joburg what we can achieve on Sunday 17th November at the Virgin Active 947 Ride Joburg. Exciting benefits!





[Join our Charity Team](#)

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## Why We Fundraise.

There are no cures and few treatments for vision loss caused by retinal diseases, but with your support, we can fund top medical research and provide hope. We offer essential information, clinical trial opportunities, and support for the newly diagnosed and their families. Your involvement brings hope to those in need.

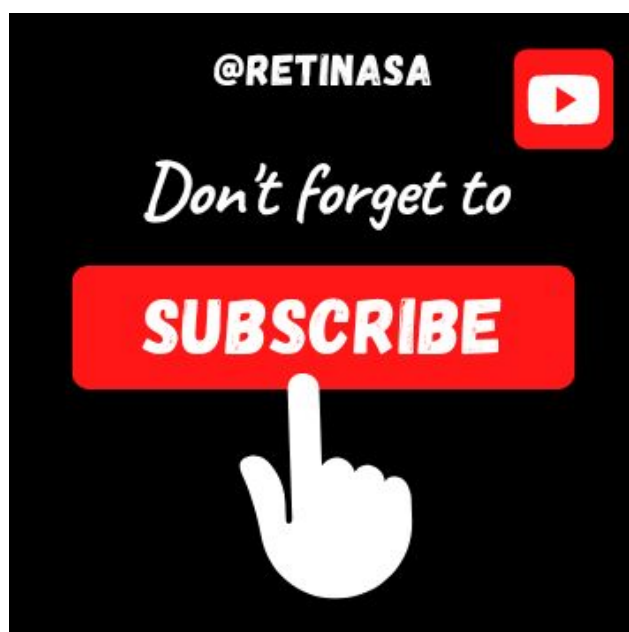
We aim to empower individuals through sport, boost confidence, and challenge disability stigma. Sport is a powerful tool for breaking down barriers, fostering inclusion, and showcasing the incredible abilities of all individuals, regardless of their physical challenges.

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## Explore Our YouTube Channel

**@RetinaSA**

Check out our YouTube channel **@RetinaSA**! Engaging content awaits— from insightful interviews to exciting event coverage. Subscribe today to stay updated, enjoy exclusive content, and connect with us. Help us grow and make a bigger impact together. Click below to subscribe now and join our community!



**Subscribe**

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## 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**

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## CALENDAR

- Aug 03 | [Para Golf Taster Day](#) | Golf | Benoni Lake Club, Gauteng.
- Sep 03 | [Swing FOR SIGHT](#) | Golf | Royal Johannesburg Club, Gauteng.
- Sep 09 | [Low Vision Matters Conference](#) | Protea Hotel, Gauteng.
- Sep 28 | [Spin FOR SIGHT](#) | Indoor Cycling | Virgin Active, Gauteng.
- Oct 06 | [Bowls FOR SIGHT](#) | Lawn Bowls | Edenvale Bowling Club, Gauteng.

## Follow Retina South Africa on social media!



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