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RETINA
SOUTH AFRICA

Out of Sight

October 2025

Organisation News

Dear Retina South Africa Members and Supporters,

As we hit the middle of Eye Care Awareness Month, I'm thrilled this edition of the Out Of Sight lands right in the heart of it. Keep an eye out for Retina South Africa's latest updates on World Retina Week, there's plenty to inspire us all.

Over the next few months, we're diving into some exciting events!

- First up, join our team for the [Ride Joburg](#); sign-up to cycle with Retina and make a difference.
- We're also gearing up for the Dis-Chem Ride for Sight on 15 February; early bookings open in late October, so stay tuned!
- Also, look out for our inaugural [Padel for Sight](#) event on the 22nd of October; Get your friends to join you for a lovely day supporting Retina South Africa!
- Plus, the [Zanzibar Raffle](#) is still live; grab those tickets now!

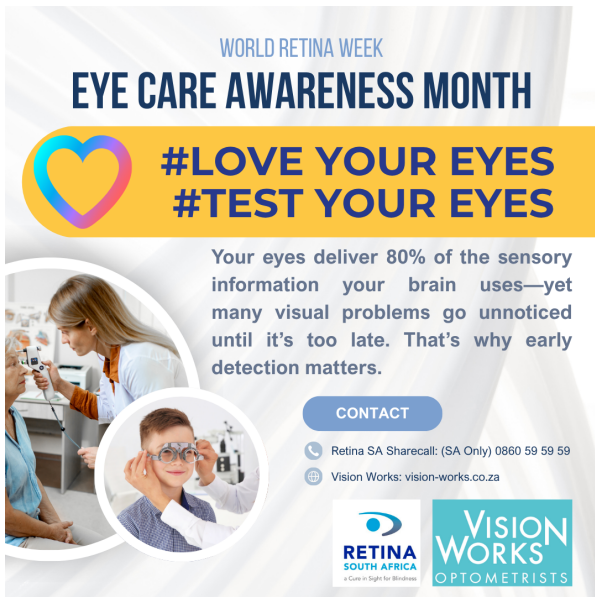
Thanks for being part of our mission. Let's keep raising awareness and having fun doing it.

Greetings!

Mariza Jurgens

The Editor

WORLD RETINA WEEK (21 TO 28 SEPTEMBER) & EYE CARE AWARENESS MONTH (21 SEPTEMBER - 18 OCTOBER)



WORLD RETINA WEEK
EYE CARE AWARENESS MONTH

#LOVE YOUR EYES
#TEST YOUR EYES

Your eyes deliver 80% of the sensory information your brain uses—yet many visual problems go unnoticed until it's too late. That's why early detection matters.

CONTACT

Retina SA Sharecall: (SA Only) 0860 59 59 59
Vision Works: vision-works.co.za

RETINA SOUTH AFRICA
a Care in Sight for Blindness

VISION WORKS
OPTOMETRISTS

Love Your Eyes - Test Your Eyes

Your eyes deliver 80% of the sensory information your brain uses—yet many visual problems go unnoticed until it's too late. That's why early detection matters.

During World Retina Week, Retina South Africa, Vision Works, and the South African Optometric Association offered free vision screenings nationwide. It was a powerful reminder that protecting your sight starts with a simple check.

Although World Retina Week has ended, the momentum continues through Eye Care Awareness Month this October.

It's time to act: **Love Your Eyes. Test Your Eyes.**

Book your eye screening through a participating [Vision Works Optometrist](#), or with a member optometrist of the South African

Optometric Association, to request a list of participating members e-mail info@saoa.co.za.

And for families with young children, Vision Works Optometrists is offering a FREE comprehensive eye test for children aged 6 to 12 years as part of their “Kids See Free 6–12” campaign.

This offer includes:

- ✓ A FREE eye test
- ✓ FREE Single Vision standard lenses
- ✓ FREE frame from a selected range

Terms & Conditions Apply

Non Visual Desktop Access: Empowering Blind Users Worldwide

Developed in 2006 by blind Australian programmer Michael Curran, NVDA emerged as a free alternative to costly screen readers, initially coded in Python for Windows compatibility. Co-founded with James Teh, NV Access, the nonprofit behind it, released its first public version in 2007, now supporting over 55 languages and serving users in 175 countries. Regular updates, like the August 2025 release, enhance braille display integration and touch gestures, funded entirely by donations, corporate grants, and volunteer contributions, no commercial ties.

For professionals with visual impairments, downloading NVDA is straightforward: visit nvaccess.org, locate the download section, and install via a browser or with sighted assistance; USB portability adds flexibility. It requires Windows seven or later, one gigabyte of RAM, a standard processor like Intel Core i-three, and basic audio output-minimal footprint at about twenty megabytes, making it ideal for

seamless workplace adoption. This open-source gem keeps independence front and center.

To get started learning NVDA right here in South Africa email principal@sancb.org.za to ask about Optima College's in-person course; they run hands-on sessions tailored for us. For free step-by-step videos, head to the American Council for the Blind's site-just search 'AFB NVDA tutorials,' they'll pop up with clear guides. And on Udemy, get 'NVDA All the Way' by following this link: [udemy.com/course/nvda-all-the-way](https://www.udemy.com/course/nvda-all-the-way/); it's packed with beginner to pro tips, usually at an affordable price.

News from Retina International

Retina International Mental Health Study



Retina International has launched a global Mental Health Study to make psychosocial support as central to eyecare as genetics and diagnostics.

This patient-led initiative spans the USA, UK, Ireland, South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand, with future phases extending to underrepresented regions. The study addresses the psychological burden of Inherited Retinal Degenerations (IRDs), including anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation, and will provide policy-ready outcomes to inform support services, clinical care, and workplace accommodations.

Are you a person living with an Inherited Retinal Degeneration?

Please help Retina International by completing an online survey that aims to understand the mental and emotional impact of IRDs. You

can help shape the future of mental health support in the IRD community. This survey will close on 15th November 2025.

[TAKE THE SURVEY](#)

RI World Sight Day Webinar - The Patient Voice and Innovation

This World Sight Day, Retina International will highlight the milestone collaboration between the RDH12 alliance and Opus Genetics and how powerful the patient voice can be in the field of innovation.

Date/Time: October 9, 1:30 PM UK / 2:30 PM CET / 8:30 AM EDT

Duration: 1 Hour

Panelists:

- Silvia Cerolini (Eyes on the Future)
- Christina Fasser (Past President Retina International)
- Ben Shaberman (VP Science Communications, Foundation Fighting Blindness)
- Further panelists will be announced shortly on their website.

Registration is required for this free online event.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

Retina International Youth Conference Recap

On Saturday, 27 September, young advocates from around the world gathered for an inspiring afternoon of learning and connection.

[WATCH THE FULL SESSION](#)

WESTERN CAPE OUTREACH

Cape Town in Focus: Building Bridges Through Retinal Outreach - *by Karen Denton (Head of Advocacy and Awareness)*

Recently, a small but passionate team—Manny Moodley, Claudette Medefindt, Lindsay Engelbrecht, and I, Karen Denton—embarked on an unforgettable outreach journey in Cape Town, all with a shared purpose: to connect with and support those navigating the world of retinal visual impairment.

Our outreach work truly began almost as we landed:

Our first stop: the Cape Town Society for the Blind. What a vibrant, thoughtful group! We spent time presenting, listening, sharing, and exchanging ideas around eye care—each story and voice adding something valuable to the experience.

I then attended the **IFA Global Conference on Ageing**, where I had the honour of presenting two talks close to our hearts:

- *“The Silent Threat on Our Plates: Food Devolution and the Rise of Macular Degeneration and Dementia”*
- *“When the Brain Fills the Gaps: The Strange World of Charles Bonnet Syndrome”*

The response was deeply encouraging—engaged audiences, lively panel discussions, and thought-provoking questions that reminded me why these conversations are so needed. During breaks and mealtimes, I was approached regularly by people wanting to know more, and have even been contacted since for more interaction, sharing and building global relationships.

[READ MORE](#)

GET INVOLVED - MAKE A DIFFERENCE



OUR SAVE OUR SIGHT CAMPAIGN NEEDS YOU!

Our Save Our Sight Campaign is more than a fundraising effort—it's a movement for empowerment, inclusion, and hope.

Through your support, we continue to drive research into retinal conditions, provide essential services, and advocate for a future where vision loss no longer means isolation.

We invite our members to renew their annual membership for just R240. Not only will you be contributing to life-changing work, but you'll also be entered into our monthly R500 draw—a small thank you for standing with us.

The general public is warmly encouraged to join the cause by donating R250 to the campaign. **Spread the word—friends, family, colleagues—because who wouldn't welcome a chance to win R500 every month?** Each ticket purchased brings us one step closer to pioneering treatments and a future where inclusion and independence are within reach for all.

Congratulations to our September Winner **Merle Sowman**.

[Renew Membership](#)

[Donate Now](#)

FUNDRAISING EVENTS



Padel for Sight - Play for a Purpose

Step onto the court for more than just a game. Join us on 22 October 2025 at Techno Padel, Modderfontein, Gauteng for a day of fun, laughter, and community.

Player packages: R1,250 (single) | R2,500 (double) | R5,000 (four-ball)

Expect padel, pickleball, live DJs, and great vibes - all coming together to fuel Retina South Africa's sight-saving mission and bring hope to thousands living with vision loss.

LEARN MORE

Ride Joburg on 26 October with Purpose - Join Our Charity Team

Seeding entries for Ride Joburg may have closed, but it's not too late to ride for something bigger. Join Retina South Africa's Charity Team and enjoy exclusive perks - from our cycling kit to preferred seeding -while helping fund vital advocacy and support for people living with Retinal Degenerative conditions.

Already entered? We can still link you to our charity team so you don't miss out on these benefits. Both the 97km and 35km distances are welcome!

The final day to join or be added is Friday, 3 October.

Email: events@retinasa.org.za

Support Our Riders on the GivenGain platform

<https://www.givengain.com/campaign/purpose-power-pedal> and

Make every kilometre count. Ride for hope. ❤️

Ride for Sight - Early Bird Entries

Opening Soon!

Our flagship cycling event, Dis-Chem Ride For Sight, returns on 15 February 2026. Join thousands of cyclists riding to support retinal research and empower South Africans losing their sight. This year, you can make an even bigger impact -and save - with our Early Bird special!

- **Early Bird Entry Window:** 21–28 October 2025
- **Exclusive Discount:** 20% off your entry fee
- **Event Location:** Boksburg City Stadium, Gauteng
- **Distance:** 116km / 62km / 10km

[ADD TO CALENDAR](#)

THE HEART OF OUR WORK

Celebrating the people who power our purpose

Every third edition, we'll be shining a light on one of the incredible staff members or volunteers who make our work possible. From behind-the-scenes champions to frontline changemakers, this series is our way of saying thank you—and sharing the stories that inspire us all.

In this edition, we're honoured to spotlight Claudette Medefindt—

one of the founding members of Retina South Africa and a lifelong advocate for people with inherited retinal conditions.

Claudette's passion for the science of retinal degeneration has driven decades of impactful work. She represented South Africa at Retina International and served as Deputy President of the global organisation for ten years, helping shape international research and support networks.



She is also the editor of Retina South Africa's quarterly [E-News](#) publication, which focuses on the science of retinal vision loss and emerging developments in the field. In addition, Claudette serves as Secretary to the Management Committee, a role she has fulfilled with dedication and precision. Remarkably, she has been a full-time volunteer in these capacities for the past 45 years—a testament to her unwavering commitment.

As a trained peer counsellor, Claudette offers compassionate guidance to patients navigating genetic retinal diagnoses. Living with a dominant form of Retinitis Pigmentosa herself, she brings both expertise and empathy to her advocacy.

Beyond her professional contributions, Claudette is a yogateacher and an aspirant watercolourist—proof that creativity and resilience go hand in hand.

Her legacy is woven into the DNA of Retina South Africa, and her continued service reminds us that progress begins with people who

care deeply and act boldly.



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Premium Omega-3 for Visual Clarity and Everyday Vitality

At Nurture Vision, we believe in holistic wellness, starting with scientifically backed nutrients that support both eye health and overall wellbeing.

Our Premium Omega-3 supplement is specifically formulated to deliver a therapeutic daily dose of 2000 mg of fish oil, containing 810 mg of EPA and 612 mg of DHA. These essential fatty acids are well-established in clinical research for their ability to reduce inflammation, support retinal integrity, and relieve dry eye symptoms. DHA plays a vital structural role in the retina, while EPA helps regulate inflammation and promotes healthy tear film stability, making this an ideal solution for those facing screen fatigue, dry eye, or early signs of visual strain.

But the benefits go far beyond vision. Omega-3s also contribute to heart health, cognitive function, joint flexibility, skin health, and mood balance; making this supplement a smart, all-round addition to your daily health routine. Nurture Vision Omega-3 is sugar-free, free from

heavy metals and contaminants, and manufactured to the highest international quality standards. Whether you're safeguarding your vision or supporting your overall health, Nurture Vision's Premium Omega-3 provides a trusted, all-in-one solution for daily, long-term wellness.

Available Now:

For more info on their full product range, wholesale pricing and retail pricing please reach out to them on: enquiries@nurturevision.co.za

You can also visit nurturevision.co.za for more information.

UPCOMING FUNDRAISING EVENTS

Events Calendar

22 October 2025 - Padel for Sight, Play for A Purpose - Modderfontein, Gauteng

26 October 2025 - Ride Joburg, Ride For A Purpose - Gauteng

22 November 2025 - Double Century Tour - Swellendam

15 February 2026 - Dis-Chem Ride for Sight - Gauteng

Retina SA Disclaimer

Information disseminated by Retina South Africa is for information purposes only. Readers must discuss any intervention with their Eye Care Practitioner. Information in this Out of Sight Newsletter does not imply that Retina South Africa endorses any particular therapy, intervention or medication. Retina South Africa assumes no responsibility for the use made of any information provided in this newsletter.

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