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Out of Sight

February 2026

Organisation News

Dear Readers

Happy New Year! As we step into 2026, I want to wish each of you a year filled with clarity, good health, adventure, and moments that truly open your eyes to what matters most.

A special shout-out and huge congratulations to all the incredible cyclists gearing up for the Dis-Chem Ride for Sight on Sunday, 15 February. Whether you're tackling the 116 km challenge, the 62 km route, the new 10 km fun ride, or riding tandem as part of the inclusive para-cycling community—this event is more than just kilometers on the road. Every pedal stroke supports vital retinal research, empowers those living with vision loss, and brings us closer to a future where sight is restored for more people. You're riding for something bigger than the finish line, and we're cheering you on every step (or turn!) of the way.

February also marks Rare Disease Day on the 28th—a global reminder to shine a light on the challenges faced by millions living with rare conditions, including many that affect vision. It's a perfect time to reflect on the work we do together through stories, awareness, and support in these pages.

Thank you for being part of this community. Here's to fresh starts, strong legs (and eyes!), and continued hope in 2026.

With gratitude and best wishes,
Mariza Jurgens
Editor, Out of Sight

OUT OF SIGHT, STILL OUT OF TIME: RARE RETINAL DISEASES IN FEBRUARY

February is the shortest month of the year—just 28 days, or 29 in a leap year. For people living with rare retinal diseases, even that brief window of awareness is often not enough.

Rare retinal conditions are frequently progressive, genetic, and life-altering. Many begin in childhood or adolescence and lead to severe vision loss or blindness. In South Africa, their impact is often intensified by socioeconomic factors such as poverty, limited access to specialist care, high UV exposure, and nutritional deficiencies.

Consider Reena, a 13-year-old from Soweto living with Retinitis Pigmentosa. As daylight fades, so does her vision. Night blindness was her first symptom, followed by gradual peripheral vision loss—a pattern typical of this inherited condition. Or Jabulani, born deaf due to Usher Syndrome, who began losing his sight in early

adulthood as the same genetic condition affected both his hearing and vision.

[READ MORE](#)

Last call for Tax-Smart Giving: February is slipping away

As February draws to a close, so does the financial year for many South Africans. This is your final opportunity to make a tax-deductible donation and ensure it counts toward your current tax return.

Retina South Africa is a registered Section 18A public benefit organisation. This means that any donation of R250 or more qualifies for an official Section 18A tax certificate, which you can claim when submitting your tax return to SARS.

Please note that Section 18A certificates are issued manually, not automatically. Unfortunately, due to this, donations below R250 do not qualify for tax certificates.

How the tax benefit works

The real cost of your donation depends on your marginal tax rate:

- Donate R1,000 at an 18% tax rate = SARS effectively refunds R180
- Donate R1,000 at a 31% tax rate = You claim back R310
- Donate R1,000 at a 45% tax rate = You receive R450 in tax relief

In other words, your contribution goes further, supporting vital retinal research, advocacy, and patient support, while SARS carries part of the cost.

Last year alone, Retina South Africa supporters collectively reclaimed thousands in tax refunds through Section 18A certificates.

What to do now

- Visit www.retinasa.org.za and make your donation or donate here: <https://retinasa.org.za/shop/Donate-Now-p672620095>
- Email headoffice@retinasa.org.za to request your Section 18A certificate
- Complete your donation before the end of February to ensure it applies to this financial year

Thank you for supporting Retina South Africa. Your generosity helps protect vision, advance research, and support those living with retinal conditions—while making smart financial sense for you too.

In Memorium of Poppie Strydom



Poppie Strydom, the beloved matriarch and a steadfast pillar of her community, passed away peacefully at the age of eighty-six in Malmesbury, Western Cape.

Poppie's life was a testament to her extraordinary strength of character. In her early forties, she was diagnosed with Retinitis

Pigmentosa, a condition that gradually claimed her sight.

Rather than yielding to this challenge, she met it with characteristic resolve. She dedicated many years to the Retina South Africa community, serving with distinction as the Chairperson of the Northern Gauteng branch until 2009.

She was widely known for her fierce independence, living alone for many years with a kettle always on the stove and a collection of audio books nearby. She became a mentor and a "soft truth" to many newly diagnosed individuals, teaching them that true independence is a state of mind. Through her counsel, she empowered others to navigate the world with confidence, showing them how to master everything from daily household tasks to using public transport.

Poppie is survived by her children, and her grandchildren, who carry forward her legacy of dignity and perseverance. She will be remembered as a light that never flickered, even in the deepest shadows.

Rest in peace, Poppie.

FUNDRAISING EVENTS



DON'T MISS YOUR CHANCE TO WIN BIG

We have two incredible raffles up for grabs: a sleek **Orbea M30 Road Bike** valued at **R65,000**, proudly sponsored by **Cycle Lab**, and a **Magical Treetop Safari Escape** worth **R16,810**, generously sponsored by **Pezulu Tree House Lodge**. Every ticket purchased brings you closer to owning one of these amazing prizes while making a meaningful difference.

The draw will take place on **15 February** at the **Ride for Sight**, and best of all—you **do not need to be present** to win.

Get your tickets today and let your support take you further than the road... or even into the treetops!



**ORBEA M30 ROAD
BIKE! Valued at
R65,000**

R50.00

Get your Raffle Ticket

This project is registered with the National Lotteries Board Scheme No **00187/29**



4★ Pezulu Tree House Lodge Experience

R50.00

BUY NOW

This project is registered with the National Lotteries Board Scheme No **00187/31**

Every raffle ticket helps fund vital vision research and support for those affected by retinal blindness - and the **Dis-Chem Foundation will match every rand raised!**

Together, we ride to beat blindness

Congratulations to our Zanzibar Raffle Winner - Elnanda Moir



A heartfelt thank you to everyone who entered and supported the Zanzibar Raffle.

Your enthusiasm and generosity made this raffle a true success, and today we're thrilled to celebrate our winner!

Elnanda, we wish you an unforgettable holiday on the breathtaking island of Zanzibar—where turquoise waters, pristine white beaches, and vibrant culture await.

ADVERTISEMENT





Nurture Vision Triple Carotenoid: Advanced Nutritional Support for Macular and Retinal Health

At Nurture Vision, our mission is to empower South Africans to take proactive steps toward lifelong eye health through scientifically formulated, premium-quality supplements. We're proud to offer South Africa's first eye health supplement featuring the complete trio of macular carotenoids: lutein, zeaxanthin, and meso-zeaxanthin - each selected for their critical role in maintaining retinal integrity, macular pigment density, and visual performance.

These three powerful antioxidants are naturally concentrated in the macula, the central part of the retina responsible for sharp, detailed, and colour vision. Together, they protect the eyes from oxidative damage, reduce light-induced stress (particularly from blue light exposure), and may help slow the progression of conditions such as Age-Related Macular Degeneration (AMD). While many international products contain lutein and zeaxanthin alone, our formula is uniquely enhanced with meso-zeaxanthin - a central macular carotenoid that plays a vital role in visual contrast sensitivity and central retinal protection.

As a proudly local brand, Nurture Vision is committed to making world-class eye care nutrition accessible to South Africans. Our Triple Carotenoid Formula reflects global research,

uncompromising quality, and a deep understanding of the growing need for preventative vision care in a screen-intensive, ageing population. We are honoured to partner with Retina South Africa, whose advocacy and awareness efforts resonate strongly with our values. Together, we aim to protect and preserve the gift of sight - one supplement at a time.”

BUY NOW

UPCOMING FUNDRAISING EVENTS

Events Calendar

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

[Padel for Sight](#), Play for A Purpose - Modderfontein, Gauteng -

Date to be confirmed

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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