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Out of Sight

March 2026

Organisation News

Welcome to this month's Out of Sight newsletter.

With World Optometry Day approaching, it feels fitting to pause and recognise the professionals who make such a difference in our daily lives. For many of us, it is less about seeing perfectly and more about making the most of the vision we have. Optometrists do far more than conduct eye tests; they detect early warning signs, refine prescriptions, and support us in navigating a world that is not always designed with low vision in mind. To each of them, we extend our sincere thanks.

We are also delighted to share some encouraging news. The Dis-Chem Ride for Sight, the flagship fundraiser of Retina South Africa, achieved its highest turnout since Covid, with participation up by an impressive 35% on last year. That increase represents far more than numbers; it translates directly into additional funding for vital support services, groundbreaking research, and practical

interventions that genuinely improve lives. It is a milestone of which we are immensely proud.

Looking ahead, we are preparing for Padel for Sight; a lively and fast-paced fundraising event centred around the ever-popular sport of padel. Played on an enclosed court and blending elements of tennis and squash, it promises energy, camaraderie and a healthy dose of competition. Whether you are keen to take to the court or simply come along to lend your support, every rally will contribute to the ongoing work of Retina South Africa.

Finally, a brief but important reminder: the Department of Transport's travel survey for persons with disabilities is currently open. It takes only a few minutes to complete, is entirely anonymous, and provides valuable insight that can help improve essential services; from reliable audio announcements to more accessible public transport routes. Your input truly does make a difference.

That is all for this month. Until next time, take care and thank you, as always, for being part of our community.

Mariza Jurgens
Editor

WORLD OPTOMETRIC DAY

Why your next eye examination matters

The twenty-third of March marks World Optometry Day, a global reminder from optometrists everywhere not to wait for problems to arise before seeking care. For those living with retinal conditions such as Macular Degeneration, Retinitis Pigmentosa, or Diabetic Retinopathy, this day carries particular significance.

Retinal damage often develops quietly. Changes in vision can be subtle at first; a slight blur when reading, difficulty recognising faces, or shadows creeping into peripheral sight. By the time symptoms become obvious, further damage may already have occurred. Regular eye examinations are therefore essential. They enable optometrists to detect early signs of swelling, bleeding, or progression, often before noticeable vision loss takes place.

Routine checks also allow your optometrist to monitor the health of your retina over time, adjust prescriptions where needed, and ensure that spectacles or low-vision aids are providing the best possible support. Small adjustments can make a meaningful difference to daily independence and quality of life.

Here in South Africa, the South African Optometric Association (SAOA) uses World Optometry Week to promote awareness through screenings, educational talks, and public reminders. The message is simple but powerful: seek care early, and seek it regularly.

If it has been a while since your last appointment, consider booking one. Even when everything feels stable, a comprehensive eye examination can help protect the sight you have, and preserve the independence that comes with it.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT TRAVEL SURVEY 2025/2026

**TAKE THE TRAVEL
SURVEY**

THE HEART OF OUR WORK

Celebrating the people who power our purpose

Spotlight on Linsay Engelbrecht: Living with Stargardt's Disease: Strength, Sport, and Community



Rare Disease Week is a time to recognise the resilience, courage, and lived realities of people navigating conditions that are often misunderstood and underfunded.

Inherited Retinal Diseases (IRDs), including Stargardt's Disease, are classified as rare conditions. For many families, a diagnosis brings uncertainty, limited treatment options, and the need to constantly adapt to progressive vision loss. Yet within our Retina South Africa community, rare does not mean alone — and it certainly does not mean without purpose.

For Lindsay Engelbrecht, living with Stargardt's Disease has never been about limitation. It has been about redefining possibility.

A Diagnosis That Changed Direction — Not Determination

At the age of 23, Lindsay was diagnosed with Stargardt's Disease, a genetic macular degenerative condition that causes progressive loss of central vision. Unlike total blindness, Stargardt's affects detailed vision — reading, recognising faces, driving, and navigating unfamiliar environments become increasingly challenging.

A rare diagnosis often comes with invisible emotional weight: grief for what may be lost, fear of the unknown, and the quiet question of “What now?”

For Lindsay, the answer was not retreat — but resolve.

[READ LINSAY'S FULL STORY](#)

FUNDRAISING EVENTS



DIS-CHEM RIDE FOR SIGHT 2026: GROWING STRONGER, REACHING FURTHER

The 37th Dis-Chem Ride for Sight marked a defining year for the event and for Retina South Africa.

Participation grew by an extraordinary **35%**, with nearly **4,000 cyclists** taking to the road despite challenging conditions. The Super Classic route was extended to **125km**, elevating the event's competitive standing and reinforcing its position as a key early-season seeding ride.

Inclusion remained central to the day, with approximately **60 para-cyclists and their pilots** lining up at the start- a powerful demonstration of teamwork, visibility, and representation for athletes living with visual impairment.

The event also delivered meaningful financial impact, with estimated proceeds exceeding **R700,000**, alongside matched raffle contributions from the Dis-Chem Foundation.

For Retina South Africa, this growth represents more than participation numbers. It strengthens our ability to:

- Expand access to genetic diagnosis and counselling
- Support individuals navigating vision loss
- Advocate for accessibility and inclusion
- Contribute to emerging retinal research initiatives

Ride for Sight continues to evolve as both a premier cycling event and a powerful platform for awareness — connecting thousands of riders to a cause that impacts millions.



Congratulations to the winner of the Orbea Bike Raffle



Jason Morris is the proud winner of the Orbea bike valued at **R65,000**.

The raffle raised an outstanding **R65,150**, demonstrating the strength of our cycling community both on and off the road.

Our thanks to **Cycle Lab** for sponsoring this exceptional prize and supporting Ride for Sight in a meaningful way.

Congratulations to the winner of the Pezulu Getaway Raffle

Congratulations to **Jaco Maritz**, winner of a two-night luxury treehouse stay at **Pezulu Tree House Lodge**, valued at **R16,810**.



The raffle raised an impressive **R17,950**, once again reflecting the strength and generosity of the Ride for Sight community. Our sincere thanks to **Pezulu Tree House Lodge** for their generous contribution and continued support.

Padel for Sight - Play for a Purpose - 30 May 2026



Step onto the court for a day of sport, laughter, and giving back. Every serve and rally supports Retina South Africa, helping fund vital research

Join us for a full day of padel, music, neon vibes, and feel-good fun — all in support of **Retina South Africa**.

 **R25 000 Prize Money** toward restoring sight and bringing hope to thousands.

VENUE

The Kempton Park Golf Club
Green Ave,
Zuurfontein

ENTRY FEES

Players (Adults): R650 per player

Includes a meal + a drink

Spectators: R50

Come vibe courtside and support the cause!

TICKETS

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Beyond the Drop: Nutritional Therapy for Dry Eye Disease

In today's high-tech, high-stress world, Dry Eye Disease (DED) is no longer an occasional nuisance, it is a daily clinical reality.

With digital eye strain, environmental exposure, meibomian gland dysfunction, and systemic inflammatory triggers on the rise, optometrists are facing a surge of patients for whom artificial tears are not enough.

A New Approach: Support from Within Nurture Vision Dry Eye:

A uniquely formulated nutritional supplement proudly developed and manufactured in South Africa, to support the root causes of dry eye, rather than just masking the symptoms.

This once to twice daily capsule delivers targeted botanical and micronutrient support for the tear film, meibomian glands, and ocular surface, offering a complementary approach to in-practice therapies like lubricants, warm compresses, and punctal plugs

The formula combines several ingredients that work together to support ocular health. Euphrasia (Eyebright) is traditionally used to help reduce ocular inflammation, while bilberry extract (*Vaccinium myrtillus*) enhances microvascular integrity and helps diminish oxidative stress. Sunflower lecithin supports healthy lipid output from the meibomian glands, contributing to a stable tear film. A blend of vitamins A, C, D, E, and K promotes epithelial healing and strengthens immune function. Essential minerals such as zinc, selenium, and copper play a crucial role in antioxidant defence and tissue repair, and B-vitamins further support nerve signalling and metabolic activity within ocular tissues.

The result? A supplement that goes beyond lubrication — one that targets the systemic inflammatory and nutritional deficiencies associated with chronic dry eye.

Who Should Be on Nurture Dry Eye?

- Screen-heavy patients with digital eye strain
- Contact lens wearers reporting dryness and irritation
- Menopausal women or patients with hormonal dry eye
- Autoimmune or Sjögren's Syndrome patients
- Patients using antihistamines, antidepressants, or diuretics

[GET YOURS NOW](#)

UPCOMING FUNDRAISING EVENTS

Events Calendar

30 May 2026 - [Padel for Sight](#), Play for A Purpose - Kempton Park

1 Sept 2026 - [Swing for Sight](#) - Royal Johannesburg Golf Club

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