



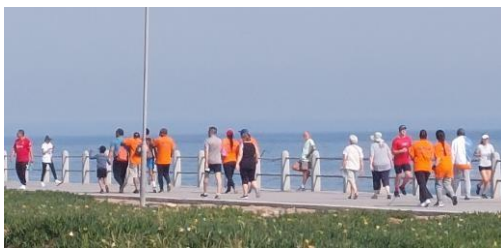
The Torch



Edition #39

The John and Esther Ellerman Long Cane Rally 2024

The John and Esther Ellerman Memorial Trust's annual Long Cane Rally at the Sea Point Civic Centre and Promenade was an outstanding success. This event plays a crucial role in raising awareness about blindness and demonstrating how orientation and mobility training can empower individuals by fostering independence and freedom of movement.



Participants on the Boardwalk at Sea Point Promenade



Participants wearing orange t-shirts and using their white canes

The Western Cape organizations for the blind united for another enjoyable day by the sea. Participants embraced the refreshing sea breeze and ocean spray as they walked along the promenade, creating a truly immersive experience. The collaboration between Sea Point SAPS, volunteer marshals, and the Sea Point Lions Club ensured that everyone crossed busy roads safely and remained on course throughout the event.

A highlight of the day was an inspiring presentation by Winston Fani, the first blind tour guide, who shared his remarkable and uplifting journey. After enjoying delicious Steers burgers, participants eagerly awaited the much-anticipated lucky draw, with hopes high for their names to be called.



A group of volunteers ready to serve food to the participants



The food from Steers neatly packed into individual portions



Hannl Cronje handing over a gift to a participant with her guide dog



Hannl Cronje handing a gift to one of the younger participants

This year, we received exceptional support from a range of sponsors. Our heartfelt gratitude goes to our loyal sponsors: The Two Oceans Aquarium, Greenleaf Olive Company, Peninsula Beverages, Leliefontein Kennels, Wholesun and Puma. Puma especially delighted participants by generously donating a pair of shoes to every individual—a highlight of the event.

Special thanks are also extended to Shoprite, Spur Worcester, Panarotti's N1, Crazy Store, CTSB, Ina Paarman, Vet Point, Awol Tours, and SA Guide Dogs for their kind contributions.



Wholesun sponsored the t-shirts this year. Volunteers received black t-shirts and participants received orange t-shirts



The participants are very grateful for the Takkies sponsored by Puma.



Various gifts in bags

A sincere acknowledgment goes to our dedicated volunteers, both new and returning, whose time and commitment made the event possible. Most importantly, we extend our deepest appreciation to all participants and organizations for joining forces to promote awareness and inclusivity for the blind community. Let us continue to move forward together in this vital mission!



Participants and volunteers in the Sea Point Civic



Sharon Goosen briefing the Marshalls



A volunteer assisting a participant

Here is what a few people had to say about the Long Cane Rally

"I enjoyed the Long Cane Rally much. The weather was perfect, and the route was very enjoyable. The Marshalls were very helpful and the prizes where a big surprise"— James

"My sincere thankfulness and appreciation to the organisers of the long Cane Rally. Everything was well planned and well managed. I could hear the happiness in the voices of all the participants. Thank you to all the amazing sponsors as well"— Graeme

"The Long Cane Rally was an amazing experience. For me it was not about the physical walk, but about building confidence and creating awareness. The Marshalls and the public were very friendly and cheered for us along the route"—Keanan

"I enjoyed the Long Cane Rally. There were wonderful gifts, and I feel a lot of effort was put into the event. The smell of the ocean and the sound of the waves was amazing. I am looking forward to the next one"— Rushda

The Two Oceans Aquarium Welcomes Blind Visitors

The Two Oceans Aquarium recently hosted a special day dedicated to enriching the experiences of visually impaired individuals. In collaboration with Sharon Goosen from Innovation for the Blind and St. Dunstan's, the event welcomed over 30 participants who enjoyed an immersive and inclusive tour of the aquarium.



Staff members at the Two Oceans Aquarium

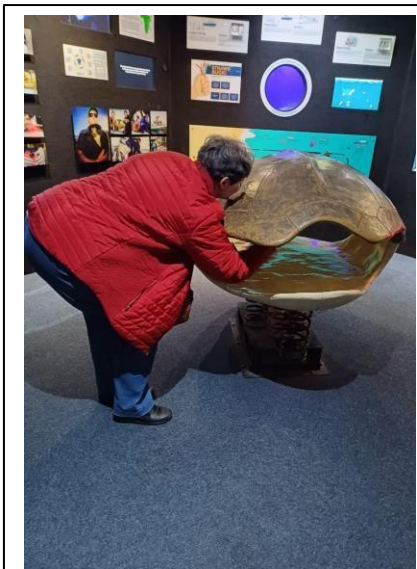


One of the visitors learning more about turtles

One of the Ian Fraser Bursary Fund recipients shared their impressions of the day:

"There's nothing I would say needed improvement. Naturally, given the nature of things, not everything could be accessible—though I didn't exactly expect to put my hand in a shark tank to touch the sharks! However, I truly appreciated the effort made to ensure inclusivity. From the variety of creatures, parts of creatures, and plants we could touch, to the inclusion

of taxidermy birds like the penguin and albatross for size comparison, the thoughtfulness was evident. I even got to touch a squid, something I had never done before.



Our visitors had an opportunity to touch the turtle shells among other things

The aquarium staff and volunteers were fantastic, sharing fascinating facts and thoroughly explaining things we couldn't touch. The rock pool was incredible, and I particularly enjoyed exploring the creatures at the INJ station, such as turtles. My favourite station, though, was the one featuring tactile items like shark fins, sardines, and shells. My partner especially loved the jellyfish tanks. Although I couldn't see them, my partner described them vividly to me. What stood out most was the friendliness and genuine enthusiasm of the staff and volunteers. Their passion shone through, and at no point did I feel like a burden or that they were merely doing us a favour. Unfortunately, as a blind person, I've occasionally encountered that attitude, but this experience was entirely different. I would highly recommend this to any visually impaired individual."

This event exemplifies the value of inclusivity and the difference it can make in creating meaningful experiences for all.



A visitor touching one of the sea plants



A visitor exploring the different turtle shells

Here is what others had to say:

"Thank you for allowing us to touch the creatures and being so helpful. We appreciate that the

Aquarium was especially opened during the after-hours for us “– Karli

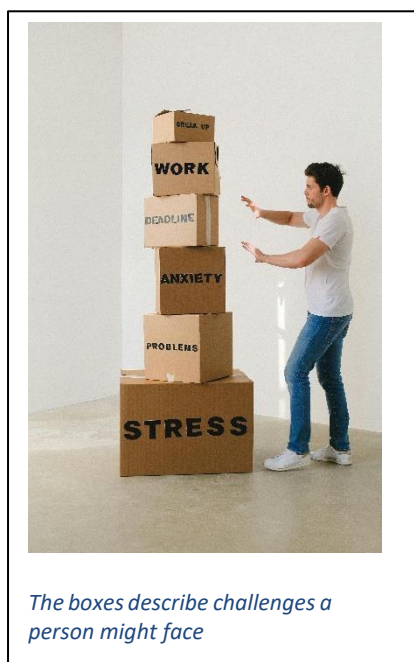
“We had a very educational experience and appreciate it” – Lourens

“I never could imagine that a sea star’s mouth is underneath his body and that it’s sucks up its food with the belly” – Sharon

“I experienced something extra ordinary by getting to touch different creatures. The penguins were very interesting” – Desiree

“The most interesting part for me was the shark eggs, I was allowed to touch the sells” – Johan

What problems do the visually impaired encounter on a daily basis? Read on about six basic challenges explained in this article.



Having to deal with sight loss or low vision is merely one of the challenges that people who are blind or have low vision face when living life. Blind individuals are just like anyone else but they just can’t see. Is this case as simple in real life as in our minds, though?

As one of Envision’s founders said in his TED Gouda talk, we have built a world around us that serves the majority. That means that any individual different from the average, such as the visually impaired, faces difficulties because they’re not what is considered to be average. This article aims to shed light upon the challenges the blind and low vision community face just by living life and being the odd ones out.

Access to information: The major sensory organ of a person is their eyes. One glimpse around us is enough to make us realize how visual is most of the information in our environment. Timetables in train stations, signs indicating the right way or potential danger, a billboard advertising a new product in the market, these are all the visual types of information we all come across in our daily life. Most of this information is inaccessible for the blind and the visually impaired, inhibiting their independence, since access to information signifies autonomy. Consider downloading the free Envision app or check out our Envision Glasses, which offer a hands-free understanding and interaction with the world.

Overly helpful individuals: It’s very common for sighted individuals, strangers, friends or family, to be overly excited to help a visually impaired person. Very frequently, this behavior holds

the assumption that the blind or low vision individual requires assistance, although this might not reflect reality. Blind people might perform a regular task slower but that doesn't mean they're incapable of completing it. Rushing to help the visually impaired without asking or being asked to do so, might make them feel helpless instead of independent. Moreover, not allowing a visually impaired individual to perform a task by themselves, does not give them the room to learn how to do so independently.

Societal stigma: Being blind in a world suited for the sighted, it means there will be multiple normal mishaps. Stumbling upon an office chair that wasn't neatly tucked under the desk or knocking a glass off the table because it was left right on the edge, are small accidents that can happen and that's okay. However, such mishaps tend to be perceived by sighted individuals as the inability of the visually impaired to perform tasks, while, in reality, they stem from the inaccessibility of our world. Blindness or low vision does not indicate the intelligence of the individual nor how sad their life is. Just because the sighted cannot imagine their world without vision does not mean that the visually impaired have a sad or unhappy life because of their visual condition.

Finding and keeping a job: Work is a whole different matter if you're visually impaired. Considering the lack of accessible work and working spaces, one can already imagine why hiring a visually impaired individual would be considered a liability for a company. This has a negative impact on the confidence and emotional well-being of the visually impaired, while it totally cripples their economic independence. Having little to no opportunity to support oneself, blind or low vision individuals are incapacitated from their independence.

Leisure: The lack of accessibility for the visually impaired is central to several of the issues the blind or low visual individuals face. Leisure is another one on the list. There is a limited number of inclusive/accessible activities for the visually impaired, which are as simple as a museum visit. Moreover, accessible books are not abundant either. According to the World Blind Union, "more than 90% of all published material is not accessible to the blind or partially sighted." The internet, as in the new era we all surf the internet for fun, is not fully accessible either, since numerous websites disregard their visually impaired visitors and do not curate content that is accessible for the blind and low vision individuals. Considering these points and many more that are not listed here, one can clearly see how limited leisure options there are for the visually impaired.

Often living in isolation: Considering all of the above, it's not a surprise that living with a visual impairment might signify, often, living in isolation. Dealing with sight loss, already, is a challenge. The lack of emotional support at diagnosis centres, the limited accessibility to activities and information, the societal stigma and the lack of unemployment, are all factors frequently leading blind or low vision individuals in isolation. This last point illustrates how the problem for the visually impaired is not their blindness or lower vision in itself but their segregation from anyone else.

Source: [Let's Envision](#)

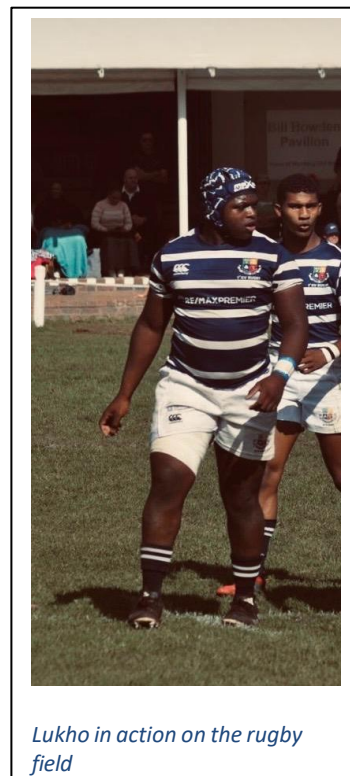
Beneficiary News

Lukho Mtwana had a remarkable year. He performed excellent in academics and extramural activities.

He played 1st XV Rugby for Wynberg Boys' High School in his grade 11 year and Captained the Blues Rugby Team. One of the 1st XV's notable achievements is beating Paarl Boys High School for the first time in 30 years and finishing in the Top 20 best Rugby Team in the country.



Lukho with his rugby tshirt



Lukho in action on the rugby field

He achieved a gold diploma in the Eisteddford (95%+) for tuba - musical individual instrument. Having achieved high honours in the music department he was awarded provincial colours in the form of a braided blazer and an honours tie. He also received colours for choir and concert band and being co band leader of the concert band for 2024.

Lukho was also elected as house captain of Silverhurst 2025, having been 1 out of 10 candidates and voted in by the boys.

We are very proud of him and foresee a bright future.

The End