

Down Syndrome South Africa

July 2025

Building a Brighter Future Together!

We can hardly believe we're already halfway through 2025! What an inspiring and impactful year it has been so far for Down Syndrome South Africa (DSSA) and our dedicated Associations across the country.

In March, we marked **World Down Syndrome Day (WDSD)** with a range of national and international activities. Our 2nd annual WDSD Symposium was held online over three dynamic days. Guided by the global theme

#ImproveOurSupportSystems, we explored the following sub-themes:

- Strengthening Support in Healthcare
- Empowering Families and Support Systems
- Self-Advocacy and Voices of Experience

We were honoured to host presenters from both South Africa and international organisations, who shared invaluable insights and experiences. A heartfelt thank you to each of you who contributed to making the symposium such a success.

DSSA also proudly launched our **first-ever Buddy Walks**, held in Kimberley, Amathole, Polokwane, Pretoria, and the Western Cape, where we partnered with the Down Syndrome Association of Pretoria. These joyful walks brought families and communities together to celebrate the abilities and worth of persons with Down syndrome.

March also saw widespread support for our **Rock Your Socks campaign**, with more schools, businesses, and individuals joining the movement than ever before. Across our provinces, Associations delivered awareness talks, sharing facts about the abilities and potential of persons with Down syndrome.

I was privileged to represent both the **Africa Down Syndrome Network and DSSA** at the **World Down Syndrome Day Conference at the United Nations in New York on 21 March**. We presented on **Social Protection and the Inequality in Africa**, drawing attention to urgent gaps and opportunities for change.

In May, **DSSA hosted two impactful events** focused on advancing inclusive education. Our first webinar highlighted the importance of South African inclusive education policies. With over 50 participants on Zoom, we heard powerful stories from parents and a dynamic panel of self-advocates who shared their journeys through inclusive education.

We also held a highly successful Teachers' Workshop on 22-23 May. A **heartfelt thank you goes to Inclusion Specialist Hanlie Swanepoel**, whose in-depth knowledge and practical tools empowered educators, lecturers, therapists, and parents to better support learners with diverse needs.

A huge thank you to Bidvest International Services for their generous donation, which made both the webinar and workshop possible.

In June, **DSSA co-hosted a side event at COSPI8 in partnership with the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities**. The event, themed **"From Awareness to Action: African Voices for Inclusive Futures"**, featured powerful contributions on:

- Inclusive Education
- Access to Social Protection
- Representation and Participation

We are especially grateful to the **International Disability Alliance** for sponsoring sign language interpretation,



and to our esteemed presenters from **Inclusion Africa, Inclusion Ghana, Zimbabwe Down Syndrome Association, Africa Down Syndrome Network, and AURA from Spain**.

DSSA also submitted formal comments on the proposed Disability Rights Bill, advocating for greater alignment with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). We remain committed to influencing policy in support of the rights of persons with Down syndrome and other intellectual disabilities.

As we look ahead, August brings our much-anticipated Women's Day event, and October is packed with exciting awareness activities. Most notably, our **2nd annual Be-YOU-tiful Fashion Show** will take place in **Witbank**, in collaboration with the Intathakusa Support Group. We are currently seeking support to help make this event a success—please reach out if you or your business would like to get involved.

October is also Down Syndrome Awareness Month, with 20 October marking our National Awareness Day. We invite you to **"Wear Your Jeans for Beauty in the jeans"** Purchase and wear our awareness badge or sticker celebrate with us. Get your friends, family, schools, and workplaces involved—let's make awareness visible!

Until next time, stay safe, stay inspired, and keep raising awareness.

With gratitude,
Elaine Passmoor
National Executive Director

DSSA is in need of funds to sustain our services, if you would like to support and make a contribution towards one of our projects, please click here:

- Projects:**
- Inclusive Education
 - Outreach and Support
 - Supported Employment
 - Self-Advocacy
 - Access To Justice
 - Access To Health

DONATE



World Down Syndrome Day - 21 March 2025

#IMPROVESUPPORTSYSTEMS



What Makes a Good Support System?

A strong support system for persons with disabilities includes the following key components:

- **Inclusive Governance:** Laws and policies must be grounded in human rights and developed with the full participation of persons with disabilities. These frameworks should guide the design, implementation, and monitoring of support systems.
- **Accurate Information and Data:** Reliable data is essential to identify the barriers persons with disabilities face and to assess their individual support needs.
- **Social Protection:** Government support—such as financial assistance or services—should address both the direct and indirect costs of disability.
 - Direct costs include expenses like assistive devices, personal support, healthcare, transport, and housing.
 - Indirect costs refer to lost income due to barriers to employment or caregiving responsibilities taken on by families.
- **Human Support:** Personal assistance is vital for daily living and promoting independence. This may come from family, friends, support workers, or formal support services. Individuals with disabilities must have the right to choose and control the support they receive.
- **Assistive Technology:** Tools and devices that support independence—such as communication apps or visual aids—are critical for enabling full participation.
- **Accessible Transport and Housing:** Reliable, affordable transport and safe, accessible housing are essential for inclusion and participation in society.

NATIONAL SELF-ADVOCATES

Our Self-Advocates with Down syndrome have been making a powerful impact, ensuring their voices are heard in spaces that matter. From the WDSY Symposium to the spirited Buddy Walks, thought-provoking Inclusive Education Webinars, and even the global stage at the United Nations COSP18, these advocates have stood firm in their mission—raising awareness, demanding inclusivity, and fighting for their rights. Through engaging discussions and heartfelt advocacy, they continue to shape a future where acceptance, equal opportunities, and respect are the norm, not the exception.

"MY VOICE, MY RIGHTS, MY FUTURE!"





NATIONAL *Buddy Walks*



Celebrating World Down Syndrome Day - A Milestone for Inclusion and Support

On March 21, 2025, South Africa proudly joined the global celebration of World Down Syndrome Day, embracing the international theme: **"Improve Our Support Systems."** This theme highlighted the importance of creating inclusive and supportive learning environments for individuals with Down syndrome and intellectual disabilities.

A remarkable initiative unfolded across five provinces, as communities came together for the **first annual Buddy Walks** – a groundbreaking event that brought visibility, advocacy, and connection. In the **Northern Cape, Western Cape, East London, Limpopo, and Gauteng**, families, educators, and supporters walked alongside individuals with Down syndrome, proudly demonstrating that inclusion matters and that everyone has the right to participate and belong.

The overwhelming success of these events solidified their place as a highlight on the annual calendar, setting the foundation for continued awareness and inclusion in years to come. The spirit of unity was evident in the generous support from donors, sponsors, and volunteers, whose contributions made this day unforgettable. Their commitment to embracing and including every member of society sends a powerful message – **we are stronger together.**

A **heartfelt thank you** to all who participated and championed this initiative. Here's to many more celebrations that uplift and empower every individual!



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE PRETORIA BUDDY WALK



**Celebrating our
vibrant community
and World Down
Syndrome Day at
Gauteng's 1st
Annual Buddy Walk.**



AWARENESS PARTNERS

A HEARTFELT THANK YOU TO OUR AWARENESS
PARTNERS WHO TOOK THE INITIATIVE TO SPREAD
AWARENESS



- The Beekman Group
- Con Amore School
- De La Salle Holy Cross College
- Dunlop Express Naboomspruit

- Ark Christian School
- Kings And Queens Daycare And Educare
- Kleutergoud Kleuterskool



- Euphorbia Christelike Onafhanklike Skool
- Francois Medalie & Company
- Grassroots 4 Yaweh

- Laerskool Ottosdal
- Lake, Smit And Partners
- Leppard & Associates
- Melkbosstrand High School
- Michelle Francke



- Hoërskool Drie Riviere
- Hoërskool Hans Strijdom
- Wadely Academy
- The Star Foundation
- The Sisu Hub

- Robert Hicks Primary School
- RP Moodley School
- Sybrand Van Niekerk High School
- Unity College

• Jolene Bester

• Gabbi Noakes

• Marise Botes

• Tamren de Jager

• Kiara Smit

• Tess Naidoo

THANK YOU!

Your generous support through this initiative has enabled us to continue the vital work we do and the support we offer. Without your contribution, this would not be possible.

Association and Outreach News

News just in from across the length and breadth of South Africa!
Share in the achievements, the highlights, the proud moments from DSSA members! Together, we are indeed stronger!

Celebrating Inclusion, Awareness, and Community



At Down Syndrome Association Tshwane, we believe in celebrating diversity, promoting inclusion, and raising awareness in ways that bring joy, connection, and education to all. This past season has been packed with incredible events, bringing people together to support and uplift our amazing community. Here's a look at what's been happening!

Buddy Walk - March 2025

March was a milestone moment for us as we collaborated with DSSA to co-host the first annual Buddy Walk in honour of World Down Syndrome Day. Thanks to Tshwane Municipality, many attendees had transportation to join the festivities, and we were thrilled by the generosity of donors who provided food and water. Exhibitors showcased their incredible products, while Max the turtle from The Beekman Group entertained guests with the Max Dance—what a highlight!

A huge thank you to Mustang Sally Photobus who captured the magic with fun dress-up photographs gifted to guests, adding a playful touch to the day. The tombola, fishing game, and craft activities brought smiles all around, while the much-anticipated Buddy Walk itself saw teams of family and friends walking side by side with our honored guests, moving to the fun and funky beats of our DJ. The raffle prizes had everyone buzzing, and we are so grateful to all who supported the fundraiser, helping to raise much-needed funds for DSSA and Down Syndrome Association Tshwane.

A special thank you to Uitkoms Versorgingsentrum for graciously offering their facility as the event venue—your kindness made this day possible!

Thank You



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News from Down Syndrome Pretoria/Tshwane Continued

Market Day & Mother's Day Celebration – 11 May 2025

What better way to raise awareness than with a day filled with laughter, connection, and love? Our Market Day was a beautiful success, bringing together families, friends, and supporters to celebrate inclusion while treating moms to a special Mother's Day experience. Thanks to the inspiring presence of Dineo Hlongwane, the event raised much awareness in the community.



Art for Inclusion – 17 May 2025



Creativity has no boundaries, and our Art for Inclusion event in association with Dineo Hlongwane demonstrated just that. With vibrant colours, imaginative designs, and inspiring conversations, we celebrated the power of art to foster inclusivity. The turn out was delightful and special moments created between painting, chatter and socializing and creativity. Art truly transcends borders and is the ideal opportunity to create inclusive events for persons with Down syndrome.

Health Talk & Inclusive Education – 24 May 2025

Supporting parents, caregivers, and teachers is essential to the journey of inclusion. This enlightening discussion featured experts Dr. Kgomotso Sanyane, Hanlie Swanepoel, and Dr. Cathy Makobe, offering insights on challenges, achievements, and strategies for inclusive education. The attendees left empowered and enjoyed the opportunity to meet other parents, to network and to ask questions from the experts.



Our DSAT community is growing stronger and we invite all our members to attend these meetings, not just to network but to gain necessary and current information to give support in the best possible way.



From the unforgettable Buddy Walk to markets, artistic expression, and meaningful conversations, these months have been filled with impact and inspiration.



**Stronger
Together**



Thank you to everyone who joined us, supported our mission, and helped spread the message of inclusion! Let's continue working together to build a world where every individual is seen, celebrated, and embraced—because together, we make a difference.



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News from Port Elizabeth Down Syndrome Association



PEDSA Starfish Group: Where Young Adults Shine and Thrive

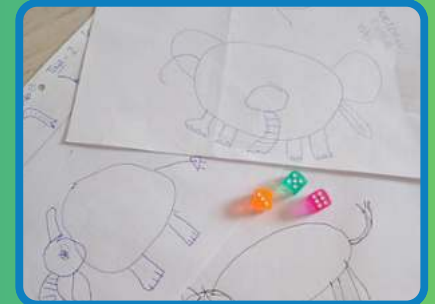
In a world where connection, creativity, and inclusivity matter more than ever, PEDSA's Starfish Group has emerged as a shining example of community spirit. This tight-knit group of young adults, led by the dedicated dream teams of Dave and Cheryl and Paul and Clare, continues to make a meaningful impact, proving that friendship and support can transform lives. With the unwavering help of Shealagh and Pat, each bi-weekly gathering is a celebration of joy, learning, and discovery.



What began as a small initiative has now grown into a cherished space where young adults come together to explore themes, engage in creative activities, and build lasting relationships. The group meets at a spacious church venue, and parents often share how much their young adults eagerly anticipate each session, checking WhatsApp notifications for details about the next exciting theme.

A Year of Enthusiasm, Adventure, and Talent

Every meeting is centered around a carefully designed theme, ensuring that participants are engaged, entertained, and empowered. From learning about wildlife to celebrating birthdays in style, the activities have continued to evolve, creating memorable experiences for everyone involved.



Among the highlights of the past several months:

Elephant Day: Inspired by Elmer the Patchwork Elephant, members discovered the importance of uniqueness and individuality, tested their memories with fun facts, and participated in a relay race featuring spekboom and elephant "trunks". The excitement reached new heights with a matching memory game, an imaginative "Build an Elephant" contest, and an energetic challenge to knock over containers with a swinging "trunk."



Therapy Dog Visit: Few activities spark joy like the presence of eight Top Dogs and their owners, who visited the group for a heartwarming session. Starfish members joined in dog-themed games, including an obstacle course, fetch challenges, and musical chairs—with lucky winners receiving dog biscuits as prizes!

Music Madness: Nothing beats the power of music and rhythm, and this gathering proved it! From kitchen graters to screwdrivers, members experimented with unconventional instruments, celebrating sound and creativity in ways that brought laughter and learning



News from Continued



An Extended Family That Continues to Flourish

The Starfish Group is not just a social program — it's a movement that empowers young adults to embrace their abilities, connect with others, and find joy in the moments that truly matter.



With dedicated leadership, passionate helpers, and an engaged group of young adults, PEDSA's Starfish Group remains a beacon of friendship, creativity, and inclusion. And as new members join and new themes emerge, one thing is certain—this community will continue to shine brightly, proving that every individual has something extraordinary to offer.

A Heroic Morning at the SUPERHEROES CHALLENGE

Under the crisp autumn skies of St George's Park, a league of superheroes assembled—not to save the world, but to make a tangible difference in the lives of children with special needs and neurodiversities. The **SUPERHEROES CHALLENGE**, brilliantly organized by Elsen Academy and Philippa Fabbri, saw about 60 caped champions lace up their running shoes for a 5km fun run or walk, each step symbolizing unwavering support and advocacy.

The energy at the Crusaders Sports Club was electric as participants, donning vibrant capes and costumes, set off on the route, their determination and camaraderie shining as brightly as the morning sun. Every laugh, every cheer, and every stride reflected the commitment of a community united in acceptance, inclusion, and empowerment.

Adding to the spirit of generosity, PEDSA's table became a hub of warmth and delicious treats, thanks to Talisa, her younger brother Jordy (who has Down syndrome), and a friend. The trio, waking up at the crack of dawn, devoted their morning to selling cupcakes, pizza, and cool drinks, ensuring that supporters could refuel while contributing to the cause.



Their dedication and enthusiasm were nothing short of heroic, proving that advocacy comes in many forms— from running to fundraising and simply showing up in support.

As one of the four beneficiaries of this year's funds, PEDSA is deeply grateful to every donor, sponsor, and participant who made this event such a resounding success. Their contributions have ensured that the drive toward greater inclusion and support for neurodiverse children continues, making the SUPERHEROES CHALLENGE a must-attend event for years to come.



Wild West Day: Cowboy bandanas, rodeo skills, lasso practice, and an unforgettable line dancing session transformed this gathering into a high-energy spectacle. After a bingo treasure hunt, members earned their own cowboy gear, making it a day filled with adventure and excitement.

Camping Extravaganza: Attendees pitched tents, inflated airbeds, and participated in a hiking-themed scavenger hunt, checking off essential survival gear on their bingo cards. The group ended the day by capturing their experiences through art and storytelling, reinforcing the joy of outdoor adventures.



It's time to shift attitudes—and start celebrating potential and ability.

Love and Kindness Day: This Valentine's-themed event encouraged members to explore what love means, decorate heart-shaped biscuits, and enjoy heartfelt conversations. Special handmade Valentine's cards, were coloured in and shared among members, reinforcing a message of kindness and inclusion.

Starfish Talent Takes Center Stage

Beyond these enriching activities, Starfish members have stepped onto bigger platforms to showcase their skills and passions:

Anastashia Barker proudly competed at a KSA Para Division karate event, where she represented the Eastern Cape Karate team with distinction.

Melissa van Huysteen took her love for dance to George, participating in an exciting line dancing event that left the audience captivated.

Meanwhile, social bonds remain stronger than ever, with each gathering offering time for coffee, snacks, and relaxed conversations—proving that the Starfish Group is about more than just activities; it's about belonging.



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YOUR SOCKS 2025



"YOUR SUPPORT & AWARENESS
CREATES A MORE INCLUSIVE WORLD
THANK YOU!"





News from Polokwane Down Syndrome Outreach



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The spirit of unity and joy was on full display as Polokwane Down Syndrome Outreach hosted its first-ever community event, marking an exciting milestone in awareness, inclusion, and connection.

Held at the Old Peter Mokaba Stadium, with generous support from Polokwane Municipality, the event welcomed 68 paying attendees, while toddlers and individuals with Down syndrome attended free of charge. Beyond those who officially signed in, a wonderful group of vendors and volunteers contributed their time, energy, and resources to make the day unforgettable.

Despite the event being managed by a small but passionate team of six volunteers—four of whom were family members—the dedication of everyone involved transformed this gathering into a true success. For many attendees, this was their first interaction with the Down syndrome community, and the experience left them inspired.



Some even called friends to come and join in after hearing about the warmth and excitement on-site!

Heartwarming Highlights from the Day



Netcare 911 paramedics, Lebo and Mashudu, not only provided ambulance support but also offered encouragement and care, ensuring the safety of all participants, a professional DJ, along with sponsored equipment, kept the energy high and the celebration lively while security services created a safe environment for families to enjoy the event stress-free. The Red Box donated adorable teddy bears, which were sold and gifted, adding a lovely touch to the family-friendly atmosphere and Dr. Steve Kekana of Netcare Hospital was instrumental in both event setup and leading a cool-down session after the community walk—a wonderful way to bring people together.

Crowd Favourites

Funky socks were a crowd favourite, as always, capturing the spirit of the global Down syndrome awareness movement in a fun and meaningful way.

Despite a smaller turnout than hoped, the event was a success, with strong community engagement, positive media coverage, and enthusiastic support from vendors and sponsors.

The success of this first event marks the beginning of something truly special, and we look forward to welcoming even more families into the journey next year.

A Special Invitation for October 20

The excitement continues, as Polokwane Down Syndrome Outreach is set to host a **picnic on October 20**, exclusively for individuals with Down syndrome and their families **in Limpopo**. This free-entry gathering will offer a beautiful opportunity to share talents, whether through singing, dancing, poetry, or simply enjoying each other's company. Keep an eye on their **Facebook** page for more information.



News from Down Syndrome Association Western Cape



Down Syndrome
ASSOCIATION
WESTERN CAPE



Every year we are blessed by a group of ladies who knit and crochet tirelessly and at their own expense. They make the most beautiful jerseys, scarves, hats, gloves and blankets. We hand it out at the start of a cold cold winter and hope to someone's winter a bit brighter and warmer. This winter we distributed over 750 items.



Down Syndrome
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WESTERN CAPE



Inclusion is a right, not a privilege.



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News from Down Syndrome Support Cape

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Down
SYNDROME
SUPPORT CAPE

A Place to Play, Learn, and Belong - The Toy Library in the Western Cape

The Toy Library, run by the **Down Syndrome Support Cape Association**, is more than a play space—it's a hub of inclusion, growth, and community. Designed for young children with disabilities, it fosters development through play, helping build essential skills and confidence. It's also a place where parents and caregivers connect, share experiences, and support one another. Here, every child is celebrated for who they are, and every milestone is cherished. Thank you to all who make this nurturing and inclusive space possible.



Celebrating Inclusion and Connection

Greetings from the Down Syndrome Support (Cape) Team! We are thrilled to share some of the heartwarming moments and meaningful initiatives that have brought our community together over the past few months.

World Down Syndrome Day Celebration

This March, we proudly joined the global celebration of World Down Syndrome Day with a vibrant event held at Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital. Families, children, and hospital staff came together to raise awareness, embrace diversity, and highlight the unique strengths of individuals with Down syndrome.

The event was filled with joy, laughter, and connection, serving as a powerful reminder of the importance of visibility and community support. Through shared stories, interactions, and celebratory moments, we reinforced the message that every individual deserves recognition and inclusion in all aspects of life.

Expanding Outreach at Victoria Hospital

In our ongoing efforts to support families on their journey, we have expanded our outreach initiatives to Victoria Hospital in Wynberg. This program aims to connect with families earlier, providing guidance, emotional support, and access to essential resources.

We are deeply grateful for the collaboration with hospital staff, whose commitment to inclusive care has helped create a welcoming and informative space for parents navigating the early stages of raising a child with Down syndrome. The overwhelmingly positive response reaffirms the importance of early intervention and continued support.

Strengthening Bonds Through Support Groups

Our monthly support groups at Red Cross Developmental Clinic continue to flourish, offering a safe and encouraging environment for parents and caregivers. Held every Tuesday at 9:30 AM, these sessions have become a cornerstone of mutual support, shared experiences, and lasting friendships.

As new families join, we witness the incredible power of community and connection, reminding us that no one walks this journey alone. The courage, openness, and empathy displayed in these groups continue to inspire and uplift everyone involved.

We extend our deepest gratitude to everyone who plays a role in strengthening our mission, from families and volunteers to hospital partners and supporters. Whether you attend our events, share our messages, or simply offer a listening ear, your involvement makes a difference.

We look forward to more opportunities to grow, connect, and create a world that embraces every individual.

Warm regards,

The Down Syndrome Support Cape Team



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"INCLUSIVITY STARTS WITH AWARENESS —
THANK YOU FOR LEADING THE WAY!"



News from Down Syndrome Kimberley Outreach



Embracing Inclusion - Vuyolwehu School Reaches Out

KIMBERLEY
DOWN SYNDROME OUTREACH

Down Syndrome Kimberley Outreach, led by the dedicated Mpho Zenani, welcomed a special group of visitors from Vuyolwethu School for an informative session on disabilities. The learners, accompanied by their teacher Ms. Makhatha and deputy principal Mrs. Moremani, arrived with curiosity and enthusiasm, eager to expand their understanding of inclusion, diversity, and the realities faced by individuals with disabilities.

The session was designed to be engaging and educational, offering the learners a deeper insight into Down syndrome and other disabilities. Through interactive discussions, they explored the importance of acceptance, respect, and equal opportunities for all individuals, regardless of their abilities. The visit also emphasized breaking down misconceptions, encouraging the learners to see beyond labels and recognize the unique strengths and contributions of every person.

A highlight of the day was the opportunity for the students to engage with individuals at the center, fostering meaningful connections and firsthand experiences that reinforced the message of inclusion and empathy. The learners asked thoughtful questions, participated in discussions, and left with a greater appreciation for the challenges and triumphs of those living with disabilities.

This visit was more than just an educational experience—it was a powerful step toward building a more inclusive society, where understanding and support replace stigma and barriers. Down Syndrome Kimberley extends its heartfelt gratitude to Vuyolwethu School, Ms. Makhatha, and Mrs. Moremani for their commitment to fostering awareness and inclusion.

We look forward to welcoming more schools and community groups in the future, continuing the journey toward a world where every individual is valued, embraced, and empowered.



Empower, educate, advocate!

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YOUR SOCKS 2025

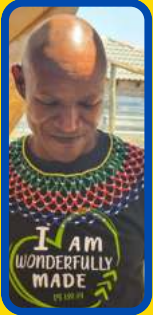


"THANK YOU FOR CHAMPIONING
ABILITY OVER LABELS!"



News from Down Syndrome Limpopo Outreach

Empowering Abilities: Skills Development Through Handwork and Craft in Limpopo



In the heart of Limpopo, a transformative initiative is unfolding—a mission dedicated to equipping adults with intellectual disabilities with essential skills, confidence, and opportunities. Our Outreach in Limpopo has been working tirelessly to provide hands-on training in handwork and crafts, ensuring that each individual's potential is nurtured and celebrated.

This program is about more than just learning a skill; it is about recognizing and embracing ability within disability. From weaving intricate beadwork to mastering sewing techniques, participants are not just crafting items—they are building independence, fostering creativity, and unlocking new possibilities for themselves. Whether it's creating decorative homeware, handmade jewelry, painted ceramics, or beautifully crafted wooden pieces, every item reflects dedication, talent, and the joy of self-expression.

Support Our Initiative: Donations Welcome

To continue this valuable work and expand our offerings, we welcome donations of materials, stationery, and craft supplies that will help participants refine their skills and develop sustainable livelihoods.

Items such as:

- Beads, fabric, sewing kits, and yarn for textile crafts
- Paints, brushes, colored pencils, and sketch pads for artistic projects
- Wood, glue, carving tools, and clay for handwork and sculpting
- Paper, scissors, adhesives, and craft embellishments for general crafts

Your contribution will make a meaningful impact, ensuring that each participant has the resources needed to learn, create, and thrive.

To donate, please reach out to our coordinator:

Difference Motseo at ☎ 0782460888 ✉ motsiri.motseo@gmail.com

Celebrate potential. Embrace ability.



***Together, we can empower individuals, foster inclusion, and celebrate ability beyond limitations.
Thank you for taking hands with us in this journey!***

ROCK

YOUR SOCKS 2025



"TOGETHER WE RISE—THANK YOU FOR
ADVOCATING FOR DISABILITY RIGHTS!"



Honoring a Legacy of Dedication

Denise Taylor's Remarkable Journey

After decades of unwavering commitment and tireless advocacy, Denise Taylor bids farewell to her distinguished career, leaving behind an extraordinary legacy that has profoundly shaped the landscape of Down Syndrome awareness, inclusion, and support in South Africa. As a champion for individuals with Down Syndrome and intellectual disabilities, Denise has been at the forefront of initiatives that have empowered families, transformed lives, and strengthened communities.

Her work has been characterized by passion, perseverance, and an unshakable belief in the potential of every individual. From leading critical programs to spearheading awareness campaigns, Denise has been instrumental in driving meaningful change, ensuring that education, resources, and opportunities reach those who need them most. Her dedication has not only uplifted individuals with Down Syndrome but has also inspired countless educators, parents, and advocates to carry forward the mission of inclusion and acceptance.

Denise's impact extends beyond policies and programs—it is woven into the lives of the individuals she has touched. Her leadership, guidance, and advocacy have paved the way for a more inclusive and supportive society, reinforcing the fundamental principle that every person deserves respect, dignity, and the opportunity to thrive.

As she steps into retirement, Down Syndrome South Africa expresses deep gratitude and admiration for her exceptional contributions. Denise's work will remain a beacon of hope and inspiration, guiding future generations in the continued pursuit of equality and empowerment for all.

Denise, thank you for your immeasurable dedication, your wisdom, and the legacy you leave behind. Your impact is indelible, and your influence will continue to shape the future of inclusion in South Africa.

Wishing you a fulfilling and peaceful retirement — you have more than earned it!

"Your years of service have been a beacon of kindness, advocacy, and unwavering commitment. You didn't just work in the disability sector—you made a difference in countless lives. Your legacy is one of inclusion, empowerment, and compassion. Thank you for all the moments of hope and change you've created!"





Down Syndrome
AMATHOLE

News from Down Syndrome Association Amathole

At the heart of Amathole Association's mission is the unwavering commitment to celebrating diversity, fostering awareness, and empowering individuals with Down syndrome. Through a series of meaningful events and programs, the community has come together in remarkable ways, reaffirming the values of support, advocacy, and inclusivity.



World Down Syndrome Day - Walking for Awareness

A highlight in the calendar, the Buddy Walk served as a symbol of unity and acceptance. Families, friends, and advocates walked together, stepping forward in support of the belief that every person, regardless of their abilities, deserves respect, opportunities, and recognition. The event was a powerful reminder of the strength found in togetherness, as participants embraced the message of ability over limitation.

Amathole's first ever Buddy Walk was hosted on 21 March 2025 along the promenade and it was a day to remember. We look forward to making this an annual event and invite all East Londoners to join us next year for World Down Syndrome Day's Buddy Walk!



Culinary Achievements

Young Adults Thrive Under the Guidance of Chef Miss K

A group of enthusiastic young adults recently celebrated a delicious milestone, as they wrapped up a cooking class series guided by the beloved Chef Miss K. With aprons tied and certificates in hand, smiles beamed across the room as participants proudly showcased their new skills and culinary creations.



Under Miss K's mentorship, the young chefs not only honed their cooking abilities but also built confidence, friendships, and lasting memories. Her warm and inclusive approach ensured that each student felt welcome, capable, and celebrated.

Spreading Warmth and Kindness - A Special Hospital Visit

In a touching act of generosity, a visitor from Australia—Dianne, sister of the Chairperson—joined the Chairperson and Outreach Coordinator in bringing warmth to premature babies in the neonatal unit of a local hospital.

With handmade jerseys, beanies, and knitted teddies, lovingly crafted by Dianne and a dear friend, the team delivered more than just physical comfort—they shared a moment of human connection and hope. Families were deeply moved, expressing their gratitude for the kindness extended to their little ones, while hospital staff welcomed the visit with open arms.





Honoring the Dedication of Volunteers

None of these incredible initiatives would be possible without the selfless dedication of volunteers, whose commitment uplifts individuals and families alike. Their hard work, compassion, and generosity create an environment where those with Down syndrome can flourish.

Autism Expo at College Street: A Platform for Advocacy

Once again, Amathole Association partnered with College Street for the Annual Autism Expo, an event that fostered awareness and understanding across communities. Among the voices leading the way was self-advocate Tasha Oosthuizen, a remarkable young woman with Down syndrome, who delivered an inspiring poem and spoke on the importance of self-advocacy.

Her mother, Mimette, further enriched the conversation with a presentation on inclusion in schools, offering valuable insights and strategies for ensuring every child receives the support and education they deserve. The day ended on an uplifting note as young adults took to the dance floor, spreading joy, energy, and a deep sense of community.



Thank You

A special thank you to-

- Vicky, Josie, and their teams, who bring joy to the community through dance classes every month.
- Johan and his team at Bona Buntu Programme, for testing vision and supplying necessary glasses to those in need.
- The financial donors, whose contributions help sustain these life-changing programs.

Their unwavering support continues to make a profound difference, reminding us all that acts of kindness, big or small, can transform lives.

Moving Forward with Purpose and Passion

As Amathole Association looks ahead, the foundation of community, advocacy, and inclusion remains stronger than ever. Each event, gathering, and initiative adds to the tapestry of progress and empowerment, proving that together, we can create a world where every individual is valued, embraced, and given the opportunity to thrive.



ROCK

YOUR SOCKS 2025



"YOUR VOICE HELPS BUILD A WORLD
WHERE EVERYONE BELONGS—THANK YOU!"

A Celebration of Inclusion and Learning



Promoting Inclusive Education: DSSA's May Webinars and Teachers' Workshop

In May, Down Syndrome South Africa (DSSA) hosted two impactful events focused on advancing inclusive education in South Africa.

Our first webinar explored the importance of South African inclusive education policies. With over 50 participants joining via Zoom, the session featured powerful stories from parents sharing their lived experiences, alongside a panel of self-advocates who spoke about their personal journeys through inclusive education. Their voices brought valuable insight and inspiration to all who attended.

We also hosted a highly successful **Teachers' Workshop on 22-23 May**, which proved to be an enriching and empowering experience. **A heartfelt thank you goes to Inclusion Specialist Hanlie Swanepoel for her outstanding contribution.** Her deep knowledge, practical strategies, and engaging delivery left educators, lecturers, parents, students, and therapists feeling inspired and better equipped to support learners with diverse needs.

The workshop provided practical tools to help educators support learners with barriers to learning and encouraged a shift in mindset toward more inclusive and responsive teaching approaches. Hanlie's insights reaffirmed the importance of inclusive education and the need to create learning environments where every child can thrive.

A huge **thank you to Bidvest International Services** for their generous donation, which helped make these webinars and the workshop possible. Your support has made a meaningful impact on the lives of learners, educators, and families.

To everyone who participated, shared experiences, and contributed—thank you. Your commitment to inclusive education is helping us build a more inclusive future, together.

Understanding Inclusion
A right, NOT a privilege DSSA
Down Syndrome South Africa

Join us as we unpack what inclusive education really means. Hear from self-advocates and parents who are living it. Let's create a future where every child belongs.

Presenters

Elaine Foummer Parent
Magda Lourenco Parent
Dr Maria Pestana Parent
Tereza de Jager Parent
Ninette Oosthuizen Parent
Basilia Bont Former Teacher

Self-Advocate Panel

Caral Louren
Vitoria Orlach
Nacio Schoeman
Lisa Swaneepoel
Tasha Oosthuizen
Jacques de Poot

17 May 09H30

TO REGISTER

Meet other parents
Ask your Questions
Discuss important information

Sponsored By Bidvest Services International

Inclusion
a
Right
NOT
a
Privilege

Bidvest
Services International

Down Syndrome South Africa
Teachers Workshop Embracing Diversity Through Multi-level Teaching
Registration R350

Hanlie Swanepoel Presenter

22 & 23 May
09H00 - 14H00
Zoom

www.downsyndrome.org.za
+27 72 652 2377
dssa.ned@icon.co.za

Sponsored By Bidvest Services International

Easy-To-Read Recipe Book

Our Easy-to-Read recipe book is available for purchase. Featuring a variety of breakfast, main course, and dessert recipes in an accessible format, this recipe book aims to empower individuals with Down syndrome and intellectual disabilities to be more independent in the kitchen. At just R150 for a PDF copy, it's excellent value for money.

Email dssaoffice@icon.co.za to order your copy today.

DSSA PRESENTS



Only R150

the Easy to Read Recipe Book

Here's what one parent had to say:
'The amount of thought and effort that went into this is absolutely astounding. It truly is a brilliant concept, and I hope to see more of it in the future'

Order your copy today

 dssaoffice@icon.co.za  072 652 2377





...loves his family, animals and his creature, sport, snacking on chips, and drinking juice or water, something he only began doing at the end of last year!

You are a bright light Brave, so strong and courageous!

Brave recommends this smoothie bowl and hopes you like it as much as he does!

...he likes to really run things daily - like horseback riding, singing and swimming. was once a model for an agency advertisement. Jaco has been a top performer in athletics and he represented his province multiple times.

This is Jaco's favourite recipe and he hopes you like his recipe!

11. Breakfast Recipes

- Brown Breakfast Bowl
- Scrambled Eggs
- Egg Casserole
- Flapjacks
- Banana Flapjacks
- A French Affair (French Toast with Bacon and Bananas)

31. Main Dishes

- Chutney Chicken
- Sauté
- 2 Ingredient Pizza
- Macaroni and Cheese
- Boiled Rice

41. Desserts

- Anthony's Spice Biscuits
- No Bake Chocolate Square Oreolet Gnocchi
- Grandmothers Frying Pan Doughnuts
- Brownies
- Easter Chocolate Squares
- Peanut Butter Tart
- Chelsea Buns
- Apple Donuts

71. Healthy Plate

Enjoy!

...loves his family, animals and his creature, sport, snacking on chips, and drinking juice or water, something he only began doing at the end of last year!

You are a bright light Brave, so strong and courageous!

Brave recommends this smoothie bowl and hopes you like it as much as he does!

...he likes to really run things daily - like horseback riding, singing and swimming. was once a model for an agency advertisement. Jaco has been a top performer in athletics and he represented his province multiple times.

This is Jaco's favourite recipe and he hopes you like his recipe!

Ingredients:

- 4 Eggs
- 1/4 Cup / 60 ml milk
- Pinch of salt
- Pinch of pepper
- Pinch of parsley
- 1 Teaspoon / 5ml oil

How to make it:

- Crack eggs and put them in the bowl.
- Pour milk into the measuring jug.
- Use the fork to mix the eggs and milk together.
- Add a pinch of salt and a pinch of pepper.
- Place the frying pan on the stove top.
- Turn the stove plate on.
- Pour a teaspoon of oil into the frying pan.
- Pour the egg mixture into the frying pan.
- Gently stir the egg mixture by lifting and folding towards the centre with egg lifter.
- It will take about 5 minutes to be cooked.

Extras you can put in:

- Bacon
- Cheese
- Ham
- Mushrooms
- Onions
- Peppers
- Potatoes
- Spinach
- Tomatoes
- Zucchini

Ingredients:

- 2 Slices of white bread
- 1 Egg
- 3 Pieces of bacon
- 1 Banana
- 2 Tablespoons maple syrup
- 1 Tablespoon of oil
- Salt & pepper to taste

How to make it:

- Place the pan on the stove plate.
- Turn stove plate on.
- Fry the dipped bread in a little bit of oil until golden brown.
- Once golden brown, take out of pan and place on plate.
- Cut each slice into triangles.
- You must have 4 triangles in total.
- Arrange the bread triangles with bacon in between and put banana and syrup on top.

Enjoy!

- Fry the bacon until nice and crispy remove from pan and leave to one side for use later.
- Cut the bananas into slices.
- Put the bananas in the bacon pan.
- Add the maple syrup and fry until golden brown.
- Take the bananas out and leave to one side for later.
- Crack the egg into a bowl.
- Use the fork to beat the egg.

FACE OF THE MONTH *competition*



**Come celebrate the uniqueness and beauty of every child with us,
because every little picture tells a story worth sharing.**

Join our 3rd Annual Face of the Month competition and let your precious one shine! Open to all individuals with Down syndrome, this is an opportunity to showcase the charm, personality, and remarkable abilities within the Down syndrome community.

The winner will be featured in our 2026 calendar, launching in mid-November, proudly representing the joy and brilliance of our community.

Entries are open to voting for two weeks for each category and age group.

Entry cost is R150 per entrant.

Categories are:

January: Newborn – 2-year-olds:

February: 3 – 5 year olds

April: 6 – 8 year olds

May: 9 – 12 year olds

June: 13 – 15 year olds

July: 16 – 18 year olds

August: 19 – 21 year olds

September: 22 – 25 year olds

November: 26 – 29 year olds

December: 30 and older

Voting happens on the Facebook page at Down Syndrome South Africa – the entrant with the most likes wins!

Let's celebrate every smile, every sparkle, and every special moment.

Entry forms are available from dssaoffice@icon.co.za or 072 652 2377

Shop for exclusive gifts at the DSSA Gift Shop



**MORE ALIKE THAN DIFFERENT.
MORE POWERFUL TOGETHER!**

New Merchandise Available

Pens - R15 Keyrings - R25 Badges - R30
Lapel Pins - R40 Bracelets - R300

Courier fee - R100 or collect in Centurion

Place your order today at dssaoffice@icon.co.za
Cell: 072 652 2377 website: www.downsyndrome.org.za



**"DIFFERENT, NOT LESS-
AWESOME, NOT AVERAGE!"**

New Merchandise Available

Lipstick Holders - R30 Phone Pop Sockets - R30
Make Up Bags - R50

Courier fee - R100 or collect in Centurion

Place your order today at dssaoffice@icon.co.za
Cell: 072 652 2377 website: www.downsyndrome.org.za

Old favourites still available -

- fridge magnets
- shopping bags
- recipe books
- car magnets
- coffee mugs
- funky socks
- lapel pins
- bracelets
- calendars
- stickers
- t-shirts

DSSA is thrilled to announce that our online rooms on Zoom are a huge hit and very popular! Join us for our monthly Bingo Room and Dance Room, both hosted on Zoom. These sessions are open to teens and adults with Down syndrome and intellectual disabilities, and we aim to expand these enjoyable social activities every month. Each experience is only R100, and we look forward to seeing many teens and adults join in the fun.

DOWN RIGHT *fun online*



**Bingo Room
on Zoom**

Calling all teens and adults :
Join us for our monthly BINGO NIGHT

BINGO Night

ONLY R100

FRIDAY NIGHTS

5H30PM - 7H30PM

072 652 2377
dssa.ned@icon.co.za



**DANCE ROOM
ON ZOOM**

Calling all teens and adults with Down syndrome to join us for our monthly Dance Room on Zoom

Online Sakkie

Only R100

FRIDAY EVENINGS

6PM - 8PM

Email or whatsapp to register
072 652 2377 dssa.ned@icon.co.za

LET'S **SOCIALISE**
AND MAKE NEW
friends

Support & Outreach Group Contacts



Mpumalanga/Witbank

Intathakusa Down Syndrome Support Group



072 586 5261



nmalinga391@gmail.com



Kwa-Zulu Natal

Down Syndrome Support Group



078 144 6767 Jessie



067 139 5252 Elaine Pieterse



083 635 2682 Janus Horn

downskzn@iafrica.com



Limpopo (Polokwane)



073 847 5447 Dionne Davidson



dionne.davidson@gmail.com

Tzaneen



078 427 9258



motsiri.motseo@gmail.com



Northern Cape (Kimberley)



083 427 9258 Mpho Zenani



dskimberley.outreach@gmail.com

Mafikeng

Lerato Mmokele



067 246 6525



bhibolm@gmail.com

Reach out to your local Association or Outreach group

To Our Sponsors



NEW ZEALAND
HIGH COMMISSION
Te Aka Aorere



Coker Family Charitable Trust



We want to extend our heartfelt gratitude for your unwavering support and generosity. Your contributions have made a significant impact on our events and initiatives, enabling us to raise awareness and support for individuals with Down syndrome. Thanks to your support, we have been able to make meaningful progress in our mission. We look forward to continuing our partnership and creating more opportunities to celebrate and uplift individuals with Down syndrome.

*We
thank
you!*

