



# CAPE TOWN SOCIETY FOR THE BLIND

## ANNUAL REPORT **2023/2024**

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## BOARD MEMEBERS

Jenepher Ibbotson - Chairperson

Kenneth van Aardt- Treasurer

Frederik Greeff

Caroline Toft

Manny Moodley

Malibuye Tom

Dr Kim Lewis

Judith Coetzee (ex officio)- CEO

Vanessa Fredricks (ex officio)- Finance Manager

## MANAGEMENT TEAM

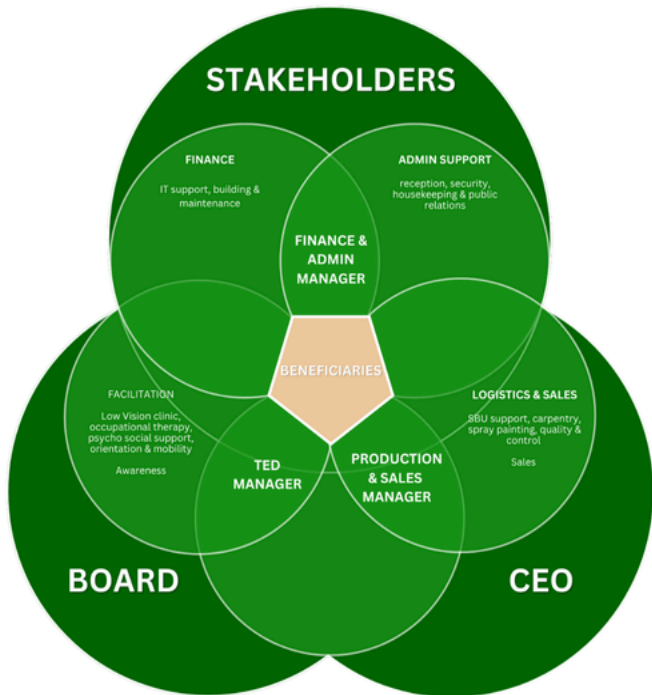
Judith Coetzee - CEO

Vanessa Fredricks - Finance Manager

Charlene Van Niekerk - Production & Sales Manager

Sandra Dreyer - Training, Education & Development Manager

CTSB  
**Meet Our Team**



# MESSAGE FROM CHAIRPERSON



*Jennifer Ibbotson*

Cape Town Society for the Blind (CTSB) has proudly served the blind and partially sighted community of Cape Town for an impressive 95 years. It has been an honour to be involved with this organisation, initially as a board member and now as Chair of the Board. This annual report highlights the wide array of activities undertaken by CTSB and the significant achievements made over the past year. It also sheds light on the challenges and complexities of managing such a large and diverse organisation.

I want to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the management team, staff, and Small Business Unit owners. Despite facing numerous challenges, they have accomplished remarkable feats. Understanding what CTSB does is only part of the story though; grasping the impact of these activities is where the true appreciation lies.

For instance, the mobility and orientation programme profoundly transforms lives. Individuals who once felt overwhelmed, confused, and despairing about their affliction discover that they can navigate their world again, albeit differently. For those of us who are sighted, it is difficult to fully understand how life-changing this single service is. Similarly, the low vision clinic, which literally brings light to people's lives, exemplifies the daily achievements of this organisation.

CTSB's work goes beyond providing services; it restores hope and independence to its beneficiaries, making a profound difference in their daily lives.

I would like to add two comments from our present board members which say it all:

Kim Lewis, "I'm very proud of being on the CTSB board. CTSB helped me adapt when I lost my sight and felt overwhelmed and lost. It's a fantastic organisation filled with amazing people."

Manny Moodley, "CTSB is not just in the business of providing training, education, skills and services to the blind and visually impaired community, CTSB is in the business of providing hope and inspiration."

Thank you to all our board members for their continued dedication and service.

Jenny

# Reflecting on the past year



*Judith Coetzee*

As we celebrate our 95th anniversary, we reflect on a year marked by unprecedented uncertainty, I am pleased to share the significant progress we have made and our unwavering commitment to the growth of our organisation. Our primary focus remains on empowering our beneficiaries to generate sustainable income for themselves and their families. We have worked collaboratively with all our stakeholders to achieve this goal.

Leading this remarkable organisation comes with its share of challenges, but our dedicated team has faced them head-on. By standing together, we overcame obstacles and successfully completed the financial year with notable achievements. We ventured into new areas, fostering the development and growth of our organisation. This last year we've had four key staff members retire, taking with them a wealth of knowledge. We wish them all well and thank them all for their commitment to CTSB.

Our resilient team remained steadfast in delivering essential services to our beneficiaries and clients. Even during the most challenging times, we found innovative ways to offer support when it was most needed. A significant focus this year was our online learning management system, which is now available to the public. Our aim is to provide a quality, accessible online learning platform that we all take pride in.

While we encountered a mid-year slump in sales that impacted our production team's pace, the situation improved as the season changed and our clients sought year-end gifts. This recovery helped stabilise our operations and mitigate the initial setback.

I am delighted to report that all our programmes, including weaving, training, and the low vision clinic, have been running smoothly. The subsequent reports from our teams will provide further insights into the accomplishments and progress of CTSB over the review period. We are immensely proud of what we have achieved.

On behalf of the organisation, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to our donors, the Department of Social Development, the Department of Employment and Labour, our stakeholders, the board and management team, our dedicated staff, students, small business units, our families, and our service providers. Your unwavering support and contributions have been instrumental in our success.

As we move forward, we remain committed to our mission and vision, and we are excited about the opportunities that lie ahead. Together, we will continue to make a positive impact on the lives of our beneficiaries and contribute to the growth of our organisation. Thank you once again for your invaluable support.



## Conclusion

The past year has been a testament to our collective resilience and dedication. As we celebrate this milestone anniversary, let us continue to build on our successes and strive for even greater achievements in the years to come.





*Vanessa Fredricks*

The past financial year has been marked by significant challenges for Cape Town Society for the Blind (CTSB). Despite these obstacles, our organization has demonstrated resilience and a commitment to maintaining our services and support for the visually impaired community.

In light of a global decline in donor funding, CTSB operated under a very tight budget. This necessitated a thorough review and reduction of all our expenses to ensure continued operational efficiency with a focus on key budgetary measures.

Every line item in our budget was scrutinized and pared back to the absolute minimum required. This approach, while stressful, was necessary for maintaining a healthy cash flow throughout the year. Unfortunately, our staff development budget was once again put on hold. However, we continued to prioritize in-house staff development wherever possible, ensuring our team remained skilled and motivated despite the financial constraints.

To manage our limited resources effectively, we implemented several strategic measures. By carefully planning our client visits and deliveries, we minimized transport costs and maximized efficiency.

Raw material purchases were restricted to placed orders, and standard stock items was minimal to help us manage cash flow and reduce inventory costs.

The financial constraints also affected our Small Business Units (SBUs). With fewer incoming orders, the income generated by our SBUs saw a slight decline. Despite this, the SBUs continued to operate and contribute to our overall mission, showcasing the resilience and dedication of our team.

Despite the financial challenges, we are extremely proud of our organisation's achievements and the unwavering commitment of our team. The team continues to work tirelessly to improve the lives of visually impaired individuals, embodying the spirit of perseverance and innovation.

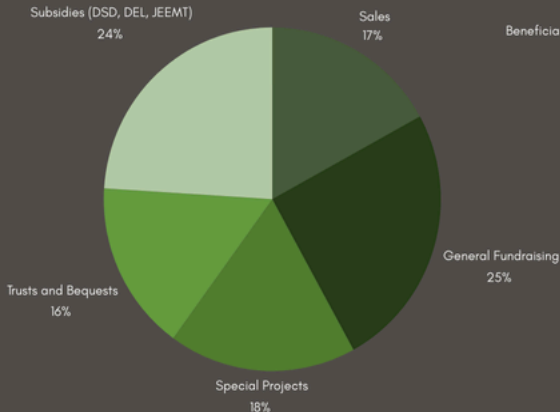


We extend our sincere gratitude to the CTSB Board, leadership team, and colleagues for their patience, endurance, and positivity during this tough financial year. Your collective efforts have been instrumental in navigating these challenging times, and we remain optimistic about the future.

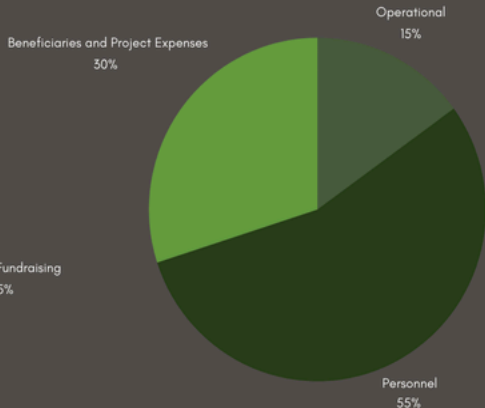
In conclusion, the past financial year has been a testament to the resilience and dedication of Cape Town Society for the Blind. By making strategic adjustments and maintaining a focus on operational efficiency, we have managed to sustain our mission and continue supporting the visually impaired community. We look forward to a brighter financial outlook in the coming year and will continue to strive for excellence in all that we do.

Thank you

## Income



## Expenses



*Charlene Van Niekerk*



The Production Department provides logistical support to the Small Business Units (SBUs) within various departments of our organisation. The 2023-24 financial year under review was particularly demanding for our SBUs, as they successfully managed both bulk orders and bespoke pieces, consistently meeting deadlines and delivering handwoven products of the highest quality.

#### ›SBU Activities and Achievements

The SBUs showcased their commitment and willingness to take on challenges, including custom-made baskets. One notable accomplishment was fulfilling a bulk order for special weave baskets. Despite the increasing price of cane, through effective negotiations with the SBUs, we managed to keep product price increases to a minimum, ensuring we remain competitive in the market.



*Andre weaving a baby cradle*



*Weaving a basket*

The Material Weaving Department experienced a busy year with ongoing bag orders from clients, providing financial sustainability for the SBUs within this department. The continuous demand for these products has ensured a stable income stream and growth opportunities.



Our Packaging Department also had a productive year, receiving increased orders from a key supplier. This rise in line items allowed us to employ additional SBUs, further contributing to the department's growth and the organisation's overall success.

The Production Department's primary role is to assist and support all SBUs in manufacturing products of the highest quality. We provide the necessary resources and support to ensure that all production processes are executed professionally and efficiently.



The 2023-24 financial year was a fulfilling and successful period for the Sales Department, despite the challenges faced. Through vigorous marketing efforts, the department secured significant orders from renowned clients both existing and new.

The marketing strategy employed this period has significantly benefited all departments:

- Cane and Weaving Department: There was a noticeable increase in orders, bolstered by the marketing campaigns.
- Repairs: A marked uptick in repair orders was observed, indicating increased customer trust and satisfaction.

Our commitment to regularly upgrading our website has paid off, enhancing our online sales platforms. The introduction of a new product range has been particularly well-received, and we anticipate further growth in sales and increased orders for production, as a result.

A heartfelt thank you to our sales and production teams for their unwavering commitment, loyalty, and relentless drive towards the financial sustainability of our SBUs. Your efforts have been instrumental in achieving this year's success.

The 2023-24 financial year demonstrated the resilience and capability of our staff and SBUs. We look forward to continuing our mission of delivering top-quality hand crafted products while maintaining financial stability and growth in the coming years.

Thank you,  
Charlene

## STORY OF

Carla Thomas



Carla Thomas a 38-year old mother of four who demonstrates resilience and independence after becoming completely blind 8 years ago. Her experience at Cape Town Society for the Blind (CTSB) showcases her strong and creative ability.

Carla's life was suddenly changed when she became blind due to glaucoma. But instead of giving in to hopelessness she welcomed her new situation, showing remarkable resourcefulness and strength by maintaining her household and caring for her children.

Becoming part of CTSB was a major milestone for Carla. She discovered a friendly, encouraging group of classmates. "The students are joyful, there is a constant pleasant conversation." She observes. "The sense of camaraderie shared among everyone is worthy of admiration." She notes of the place where she found great value and a feeling of belonging and mutual support.

Carla's development has greatly benefited from the continuous assistance provided by CTSB. She says the facilitators are excellent, and the professional staff are engaged in her training. "They receive weekly updates on my progress." The continuous assistance and involvement has allowed her to excel in her academic pursuits and skills



## Judith Coetzee & Vanessa Fredricks



In this report, we provide an overview of our operations, which encompasses various areas such as administration, health & safety, security, housekeeping, IT infrastructure, transport, building maintenance, and HR-related matters. We recognize the significance of operating within budget and minimizing overheads and costs.

During the year under review we reduced costs by finding smart solutions to saving. We were blessed with a donation towards our solar panels, which means that we no longer have downtime during loadshedding. We also managed to cut down our electricity account by more than half.

Adhering to health & safety regulations remains a primary focus and we diligently maintain the safety of our facility, first aid boxes and certification.

During the period under review, we bid farewell to a number of employees, several of whom retired. We appreciate the efforts of all our team members and their dedication to our organisation. We have welcomed several new staff members and interns to our team. Their expertise and contributions have strengthened our operations.

Despite the challenges posed by changing conditions, we remained resilient and focused on maintaining our operations. Through perseverance and adaptability, we managed to sustain our business activities, albeit under slightly different circumstances. Our commitment to delivering value to our beneficiaries, clients and stakeholders remains unwavering.

Looking ahead, we recognize the importance of continuous improvement in our operations. We strive to enhance efficiency, streamline processes, and identify further cost-saving opportunities. Our commitment to the well-being and safety of our staff, students, and Small Business Units (SBUs), as well as the smooth functioning of our organisation, remains paramount. We plan to upgrade our building, giving it a fresh look & feel as we head into our 95th year.

We extend our gratitude to all service providers, employees, and partners for their support throughout the year. Your collaboration and dedication has been instrumental in our operational achievements.

Thank you.  
Judith and Vanessa

As we reflect on the past financial year, we bid a fond farewell to our dedicated colleagues who retired and those who moved on to better opportunities. Their hard work, commitment, and invaluable contributions have helped shape our organisation, and we extend our deepest gratitude for their service. We wish you all the best.

Simultaneously, we warmly welcome the new members of the CTSB team. Their fresh perspectives, talents, and enthusiasm are essential as we continue to innovate and grow.

Together, we look forward to achieving new milestones and upholding the legacy of excellence established by our predecessors.

*We said a special farewell to...*



**Vanessa Fredricks**  
Finance Manager



**Lynette van Niekerk**  
Cane Weaving Facilitator



**Tony Mathee**  
Production & Sales Manager

*Among others, we welcomed...*



**Jolyn Crow**  
Finance Manager



**Carryn Gomez & Lilitha Clair Dike**  
Digital Marketer & PR intern



**Asheeqah Adams**  
Occupational Therapist

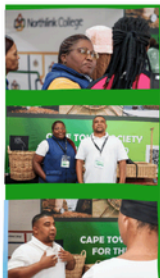


# TRAINING, EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT

*Sandre Dreyer*

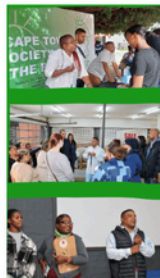
This report details the achievements and activities for the period April 2023 to March 2024. The data includes the number of people reached in various areas such as awareness, assessments, therapeutic services, capacity building, orientation & mobility, placement services, and the low vision clinic. The total target was 1710, but we reached 2982, showing a positive variance of 1272.

Various workshops and educational sessions were held at institutions like the National Consumer Commission, Minor Design 360, Wesley Practising School, Orms School, and many others throughout the year, reaching a total of 2476 people, this number excludes media and social media audiences.



Career placement data shows that 93 individuals were placed through 238 interventions from April 2023 to March 2024. The report lists placements, including both formal and informal job placements, as well as learnerships and SBU placements, totaling 22.

Job placement interventions include career and education guidance, job readiness workshops, and assistance with higher education and bursary applications. We also offered assistance with interview preparation and collaboration with companies for employment opportunities.



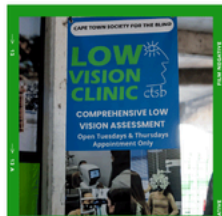


The low-vision clinic provided services to more than 350 individuals, including low-vision intake, assessments and sports classifications. Orientation and mobility services reached 58 individuals with 71 interventions, provided in various locations.

Capacity building included assessments and therapeutic services for 91 and 82 individuals respectively. Interventions covered applications for accommodations, counseling, mediation, health and safety services, SASSA queries, and legal assistance.

The graduation ceremony on November 30, 2023, awarded 59 graduates with 101 certificates. Awards included the Janie Mouton Top Achiever Award, FEM Most Improved Student Award, Vodacom/Smart Digi Award, CTSB Congeniality Award, and CTSB Certificate of Appreciation.

Highlights of the year included events like Mandela Day, the SABWIA Woman's Day Event, Eye Care Awareness Month, participation in the Africa Aviation & Travel Innovation Summit, and attendance at the African Union for the Blind General Assembly in Morocco. Other notable events were the IEC voter education workshop, Disability Rights Awareness Month workshops, and various exhibitions and tours.



# SUCCESS STORIES OF

Miranda Smouse

At 50, Miranda Smouse has taken a decision to empower and upgrade herself at the Cape Town Society for the Blind (CTSB), where she discovered her resilient spirit and determination in the face of obstacles. Miranda demonstrates her resilience and determination while facing life-changing challenges in her experience with CTSB.

Miranda first became a student at CTSB after facing a major health obstacle. At 17, she was diagnosed with glaucoma and slowly lost her eyesight, beginning with her left eye and retaining some vision in her right eye until she went completely blind. In the face of these challenges, Miranda's experience with CTSB has been characterized by significant changes and priceless assistance. Miranda appreciates the variety of individuals, personalities at CTSB, enjoying the chance to interact with people from different walks of life. This community has given her a feeling of belonging but also enhanced her personal development.

Miranda takes pleasure in delving into new technologies, like becoming adept at Google Chrome and Outlook in order to design email signatures on her own. With the help of CTSB, she has made significant progress in her digital skills and confidence in utilizing technology. In her academic pursuits, Miranda has thrived thanks to the support of CTSB. Her typing abilities have greatly progressed, and her knowledge of computers has grown, demonstrating her dedication to continuous learning and improvement.

Miranda's dedication is evidenced by these accomplishments and highlights, the important role CTSB plays in her educational path. Looking ahead, Miranda stays concentrated focused on her objectives. Her commitment is unwavering as she pursues additional education and hones her skills in CTSB's computer training programs. Miranda's strength and steadfast resolve are an example of how perseverance and support from others can be transformative.

Salayha Chogley

Introducing Salayha Chogley, a student whose experience with Cape Town Society for the Blind (CTSB) has been truly life-changing. Even though Salayha encountered major health struggles early on in life, she found strength and perseverance during her time at CTSB.

Salayha started with the ICDL course at CTSB when she was 23 years old, and here she found a helpful, caring community. This was her initial exposure to computers, a project she eagerly took on with the help of her facilitator, Adrian. The supportive environment at CTSB ignited her love for learning and supported her at every turn.

At the core of her progress in education was the use of assistive technology like JAWS, a screen reader program that allows her to type, organise files, send emails, and navigate software. These new skills not only expanded her skill set but also increased her confidence. She embarked on her journey after a routine school check-up revealed a visual impairment, which was later confirmed by medical professionals to be inherited. Even though she started uncertainly, she showed impressive strength in adjusting to her situation and succeeding in her studies at CTSB.

She is extremely grateful for her facilitator's pivotal guidance and support throughout her educational journey. This continuous support has not just helped her academic advancement, but also boosted her confidence in her newly acquired abilities.

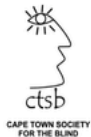


# NOTES



CAPE TOWN SOCIETY  
FOR THE BLIND

# NOTES





# 95th Birthday



# OUR SUPPORTERS

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our exceptional donors, funders, sponsors, and supporters who have demonstrated overwhelming kindness, friendship, and generosity. Your unwavering support enables us to carry out our mission and make a positive impact. We recognise that our work would not be possible without you. We would also like to express our sincere appreciation to those who choose to contribute anonymously. Your selfless contributions are deeply valued and acknowledged.

## Corporates, Trust and Foundations

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- CPI Engineering
- Douglas Jooste Trust
- Dr Heinz-Horst Deichmann-Stiftung
- E R Tonneson Will Trust – Low & Co
- EMSS Antennas Pty Ltd
- Estate Late Grunebaum
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- FW De Klerk Foundation
- George and J Levy Trust
- Given Gain Foundation
- Gray Trust – Low & Co
- Inner Wheel Durbanville
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- J Anderson Charity
- Jannie Mouton Foundation
- JE Van Der Merwe Will Trust
- Jet Lee Charitable Trust
- John & Esther Ellerman Memorial Trust
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- Peggy Grant Trust
- Penso – Low & Co
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- Rawbone Trust – Low & Co
- RE Harvey Trust
- Rolf Stephan Nussbaum Foundation
- SFG Engineering Services
- Sheila Daikin Charitable Trust
- The Little Tew Charitable Trust
- The Mapula Trust
- The Yates Charitable Trust
- WW Richardson Residuary Trust

## Individuals

- Claudia Kalil
- L Cunning
- Micaela Baartman
- Mr EAK Royker
- Mr Hacker
- Mr Rossou
- Mrs A Benadie
- Mrs S Marlie
- Paul Duncan
- R Johns

## Government

- City of Cape Town
- Department of Employment & Labour
- Department of Social Service
- National Development Agency

# THANK YOU!



CAPE TOWN SOCIETY  
FOR THE BLIND

# CONTACT US

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## DONATIONS



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*Your contribution will help  
CTSB to continue serving  
the blind and visually  
impaired community*