

ROLLING INSPIRATION

ISSUE 2 2026

The leading magazine for people with mobility impairments

Masterclass in resilience

with Brittany McCormick

Leopard Walk Lodge
Accessible Accommodation in Hluhluwe

Curating Accessible Tours
With Access2Africa Safaris

Prevent shoulder pain
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Your voice, your space, your right

Speaking out against inaccessible spaces is the only way to achieve universal access

Access is a fundamental right. Yet, many of us still encounter islands of isolation, like too few wheelchair parking facilities, non-compliant toilet facilities, or a ramp so steep it feels like climbing a mountain. These are architectural oversights that create barriers to our independence and participation in society.

This is why Universal Design is vital. Unlike “special access” that feels like an afterthought, Universal Design calls for spaces to be inherently usable by everyone, regardless of ability, without the need for specialised adaptation. Access is built in from the beginning rather than something that is added retrospectively. It is the difference between being “allowed” into a building and being welcomed into it.

KNOWING OUR SHIELD

To be an effective advocate for your rights, you must know the rules of the game. In South Africa, the SABS Part S (SANS 10400 Part S:2025 Ed 04) is the legal standard that designers, architects and developers must follow. It provides the National Building Regulations for accessibility, including:

- **Ramp Gradients:** Specific slopes (ideally 1:15 or 1:17) to ensure independent mobility.
- **Doorway Widths:** Minimum clearance of 800 mm to allow for various chair sizes.
- **Ablution Facilities:** Precise requirements for turning circles, grab-rail heights, and basins and toilet placement in the cubicle.
- **Thresholds:** Ensuring entrances are flush (no more than a five millimetre lip).


ROLE OF THE WATCHDOG

Architects and developers often treat accessibility as a checkmark exercise. Without the lived experience of a wheelchair user, they may miss the functional reality of their designs. A bathroom might have the right rails, but these may be positioned in a way that makes a transfer impossible.

This is where we come in. As members of the wheelchair-using fraternity, we must become the ultimate expert on the built environment. When we encounter a non-compliant building, we have the power and the responsibility to point it out. We need to up our civil courage if we are to achieve our environment equality.

ADVOCACY THE ANTIDOTE TO COMPLICITY

If we remain silent when we encounter a barrier, we inadvertently signal that “close enough” is acceptable. We become complicit in a system that ignores our needs. By standing up and demanding compliance with SANS 10400 Part S:2025 Ed 04, we aren’t just asking for a favour, we are enforcing the law.

Our mobility is our freedom. Every time we challenge a non-compliant space, we pave the way for ourselves and the next person. Let’s ensure that South Africa is built for every citizen with no one left at the bottom of the stairs. You are welcome to inform QASA by e-mail when you encounter such discrimination and obstacles on info@qasa.co.za. 



Ari Seirlis is the former CEO of the QuadPara Association of South Africa and now serves as the Treasurer of QASA. He is also, presently, a member of the Presidential Working Group on Disability. He is a wheelchair user and disability activist. Ari has recently published his biography, titled *Wheels of Fire*.

Get in touch: aris@iafrica.com



Support QASA on MyDifference

WRewards or MySchool members are encouraged to join MyDifference to get Woolworth's new loyalty programme benefits from the Woolies app.

MyDifference allows you to support up to three causes at no cost to you. You can select the causes that you want to support through the app.

Supporting QASA through MyDifference only takes a few minutes and will greatly benefit the organisation in its mission to improve the lives of our members. [R](#)

Join the QASA Community

Becoming a QASA member is easily and free! You can complete our [digital membership form](#) on our [website](#), or reach out to us at info@qasa.co.za for a physical form.

With a membership, you can access all our programmes and services including our Driving Ambitions, Accessible Homes and Assistive Devices programmes which are aimed at giving you as much independence as possible.

Sign up or contact us today to get your membership! [R](#)



More independence for Sakhile

QASA member Sakhile recently obtained his driver's licence through the QASA Driving Ambitions programme, which has given him more freedom and independence!

He shares: "A very huge thank you to QASA and the Olympic Academy of Driving. It's a great initiative that you have going. This has been a really great experience. I've learned a lot about myself as well."

Congratulations to Sakhile and we wish him many happy years of safe driving. QASA members who are interested in the programme can enquire at info@qasa.co.za. [R](#)

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The **QuadPara Association of South Africa** (QASA) is a non-profit organisation established and managed by quadriplegics and paraplegics that aim to empower quadriplegics and paraplegics to live their lives to their full potential.

Get in touch: info@qasa.co.za

Masterclass in resilience

Leading with courage, resilience and vulnerability, Brittany McCormick overcame great obstacles to uplift others



There is no life free of challenges. Setbacks and obstacles are guaranteed. All that we can hope for is the resilience to overcome. Brittany McCormick is an embodiment of the resilience, courage and vulnerability needed to succeed in life.

“I’m someone who conquers and overcomes daily. Why? Because I try. I push. Being an overcomer is not a once-off thing. It’s a consistency thing,” she shares.

Diagnosed with cerebral palsy at one-year old, Brittany has faced a lifetime of obstacles. She learned to be resilient from a young age with the support of her family.

“My parents have to conquer and sacrifice a lot for me. When you’re younger, you don’t understand what your parents face. You don’t see the tears, the conversations, the risks, the money spent, the doctor visits and the bills that have to be paid. The older I get, the more

grateful I am for the person they’ve helped me become,” she shares her gratitude.

Her first big obstacle was making peace with her condition. She notes: “I wish I had accepted my condition a lot sooner than what I did. I tried to be like other people, but I would never be them. I was me.”

“My advice to people, especially young adults, is to do yourself a favour. You’ve got a long life. Accept it, love it, live it, learn from it, and conquer with it. I might not be someone’s perfect mould, but I can still make an impact,” she shares.

Rather than comparing, Brittany started learning from her sister and parents to enrich herself. They helped her understand her value, accept her condition and still push for greatness.

“My sister is my role model of how to be a powerful woman, because she’s a woman of

power, grace, elegance and passion. She's just phenomenal. She taught me so much, and still teaches me so much about life and the ins and outs and learning and growing," Brittany reflects.

When she was little, her father would refuse to park in the accessible bays urging Brittany to think of those who may face greater challenge and require the space more. This helped Brittany focus on what she can do rather than what is lacking.

When she found herself struggling to accept setbacks or the slow progress towards her goals, her mother stepped in with some motivation. She recalls: "My mum pulled me aside one day when I was really struggling to find myself. My mum said, 'Brittany, your heart is whole. You have a purpose. You're fighting for what is right, and that is the most important thing. You will have your breakthrough.'"

This encouragement has helped Brittany reach for her dreams and keep challenging herself despite how difficult it might seem. She considers herself fortunate to have mentors so close to home. She encourages others find their own mentors whether these be family, friends, co-workers or community members who inspire and care deeply.

"Find that person for you. Know that when you speak to them, they're not going to judge you. They might speak with concern, but they'll never judge. There is a difference between judgement and guidance. Remember that," she encourages.

The wisdom of her family has shaped her greatly, but just as important is the independence and self-expression her parents encouraged, which she wishes for other children with disabilities.

"There are people that will sit me down and break things down for me so that I can understand it better. If I could give any advice to any parent, please do that. Break it down for your children. Talk to them. Take the time to learn what works best," she shares. "My parents believe in really allowing me to have a voice as an individual.



ABOVE: Brittany McCormick with her family.

From a very young age, my parents allowed me to be a decision maker. Obviously, in controlled environments."

From this loving, nurturing environment Brittany felt encouraged to seek more from her life. At age 15, Brittany came across a video of motivational speaker Nick Vujicic, which brought her to tears. She watched it nearly 20 times in one afternoon. A chord was struck. Brittany felt inspired.

"I'd never done motivational speaking before. I just knew I loved it. I always wanted to change lives, but I didn't know how," she recalls. Brittany took some courses on motivational speaking and started to pursue her passion.

"Having purpose and knowing that you're making an impact and changing people's lives are the greatest blessings that you could possibly give the world; that's a legacy," she shares.

Brittany might have known without a shadow of a doubt what she wanted to pursue in life, but getting there wouldn't be easy. She reflects: "Don't think it's an overnight success. Your greatest success is the gradual steps that you take. I think that's always a difficult one. People do want to have it happen today. I say that because I was there."



ABOVE: Brittany McCormick pursued her passion as a motivational speaker.

“I thought, ‘Oh, great, I’m qualified and I’m going to walk out six months later and have the biggest success rate; the biggest salary’. I’m still growing in my career, and I’ve been doing this for three years,” she adds.

While her business has grown enough for her to be sought out, Brittany often had to pursue speaking opportunities initially. This required the courage to ask for what she want.

“It’s all about asking and understanding that even if the answer is no, you’re not a failure. You’ve succeeded greater than the person before you, because you had the courage to ask,” she shares. “It takes great vulnerability and courage to say, ‘This is what I believe I’m able to do’.”

Her courage has allowed her to pursue her passion, but also raise funds through her philanthropic work. In 2022, Brittany started a campaign dedicated to walking 100 kilometres to raise fund to purchase wheelchairs for people in need.

Brittany had primarily used a wheelchair while out in public (choosing to crawl when at home). In 2020, she challenged herself to walk on a treadmill. She was making good progress when her wheelchair broke while relocating to Cape Town in 2022. She spent 10 days without a chair, which Brittany describes as a “humbling” experience.

With a deep, personal understanding of the challenge of being stranded without a chair, Brittany decided to walk for charity. She launched a BackaBuddy campaign, walked 200 kilometres on her treadmill over 12 months and raised a whopping R57 000.

“

Brittany walked 200 kilometres on her treadmill over 12 months and raised a whopping R57 000.

Towards the end of her campaign, Brittany experienced a great setback. During one session, her concentration slipped, and she fell off the treadmill. Falls are common and often severe for people with cerebral palsy as the condition impacts their balance, ability to recover and reaction time.

“A kid knows to put their hands out on the floor. My brain doesn’t work like that. It just shuts down,” Brittany shares. “It’s frozen solid for five seconds. You just feel like gravity is taking you. Imagine going skydiving and not knowing where the floor is. That’s what happens in my brain.”

Understandably, the fall shook her confidence. A similar fall in her past made Brittany switch from her walker to a wheelchair when out in public. However, this time around, she decided to overcome. It started with asking for help.



Join us for a free Webinar

HOW TO MANAGE UTI AT HOME WITHOUT ANTIBIOTICS

Manage and assist prevention of Catheter Associated Urinary Tract Infections at home, while reducing or preventing the use of antibiotics

Time: 18h00 - 19h00

Date: 21 May 2026

Platform: Zoom Virtual Meeting



Meet Our Speakers:

Mr Ari Seirlis

Former CEO of QuadPara Association &
Current Member of the Presidential Working Group on Disability

Hear from Ari about the impact of UTI on the life of persons with spinal cord injury and his personal experience with how Hypochlorous Acid has bulletproofed him against bladder infections.



Dr Virginia S Wilson

 MB BS DCH (RCP)

Vice Chair Medical: SA Spinal Cord Association.
Chair of SA Society for Physical & Rehabilitation Medicine
Fellowship advisor International Rehabilitation Forum IRF

Dr Wilson will share her extensive experience in the diagnosis and treatment of UTI for those at home using either indwelling catheters or intermittent catheters. She will discuss the use of Microdox60 in her practice.



Sr Beth Mack

 RN, RM

Registered Nurse, Registered Midwife, Wound Care,
IV Therapy, Platelet Therapy

Sr Mack shares insights from her many years of experience utilising HOCl to treat various infections.

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“It took great courage to say, ‘I need help to get back’. I had to hire a new therapist and reevaluate everything, my entire body. Now, we are working to get me back to where I was, but even better,” Brittany shares. She is now working to improve her core strength and balance while overcoming the mental blocks around falling.

“I need to be comfortable with falling in order to succeed,” she shares. Beyond the fall, Brittany also had to make peace with her non-linear growth.

“I’m learning that it’s okay to not be perfect like everybody else wants you to be, but it’s not okay to give up. Growth never looks the same. What looks pathetically slow to you could be a leap and bound for someone else,” she shares.

“I’m able to wake up every morning, brush my own teeth, shower, wash my own hair, do my makeup, and get dressed by myself. It might take me two to three hours, but I do it.”

She encourages people to be honest and evaluate where they are compared with where they would like to be, but from a place of kindness and gratitude.

“Don’t go, ‘I’m so far back, I can’t get back’. Rather say, ‘I’m there, I’m alive, I’m healthy’,” Brittany explains. Then find the perfect spot between comfort and risk to start challenging yourself to grow, going at your own pace.

“I’ve seen a massive difference in the way that I sleep, in the way that I move, in the way that I do functional exercises. So, I might not be on the treadmill just yet, but I’m far better off than I was a few months back,” she shares.

“It’s not only great for me, but it’s also great for the people who assist me,” she adds. Her friends and family can more easily assist her with walking as her stability improves.

While she credits much of this to the exercise, she acknowledges the importance of reaching out in the first place and being very honest,



ABOVE: Brittany McCormick walked 200 kilometres on a treadmill to raise funds for those in need.

while also allowing others to be very honest with you.

“It’s imperative that you are open, raw and real with your therapist. Don’t hide it. Don’t hide your diet. Don’t hide how your body’s feeling. Don’t hide whether or not you’ve done your exercises. They are your wing person for however long you need it. Allow them to be brutal,” she encourages.

As Brittany slowly rebuilds her strength and confidence, she plans to run another campaign. This time, her focus will be on raising funds for QASA. Details of the campaign are expected to be released towards the end of May.

She concludes with a reminder for people to embrace what makes them different and instead focus on what they can offer: “You are uniquely you. Embrace it. Don’t try to change it. When you try to change it, you’re going to hit a stone in the road. You’re going to stumble and you’re going to fall. The moment that you embrace it, things will change.” **R**

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Enjoy the true comfort of moving freely in your home by choosing Lifta – the discreet, refined choice for safe, elegant home accessibility. Contact Lifta SA today on 080 73 73 73 7 or visit www.lifta.co.za to arrange for a consultation and discover how easily your home can transform into a sanctuary of comfort and freedom. **R**

Caring from a distance



As the extended family or friends of people with disabilities, you can offer care and support without becoming overly involved

When a person suffers a major traumatic injury or just becomes too old to care for themselves, they need personal carers who support them in the activities of daily living. For non-professional carers such as family members or good friends, this is a massive learning curve during which mistakes are bound to happen.

This often allows for interfering, know-it-all busybodies to criticise and offer uncalled-for, irrelevant and irritating advice. Something that the carer or the cared-for do not need in their lives.

What carers and the cared-for do need are understanding and empathic friends who actively and positively support, listen and console. This is what caring from a distance is about; intermittent visits, assistance with shopping, shoulders to cry or vent on and so on.

Let's start at the beginning. You become aware of a need, and you want to help.

APPROACH WITH COMPASSION

Emotional pain and suffering is very personal

and requires a sensitive compassionate approach. A domineering take-over, no matter how well intended, will get you nowhere. A plate of cookies or brownies given with a smile works wonders.

Please know, I am available if you need me, leaves the choice and sense of control of the situation in the hands of the persons you want to help. There is no threat to them.

GROW IN THE RELATIONSHIP

Establish a relationship by listening. An understanding of the circumstances comes from voluntary communication, not from interrogation. If the needs of a friend or family member become apparent, offer assistance, for example, shopping on behalf of the carer (usually a foremost need). As the relationship develops, needs and ways to support will become apparent spontaneously.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE CONDITION

To broaden your understanding of the disability of the cared-for person and the challenges of the day-to-day carer, do some research. *Rolling Inspiration's Deep Dive* booklets are useful sources of

information on various topics and “Today’s Caregiver” at www.caregiver.com is a useful source of caregiving information and challenges faced.

REMAIN A GOOD FRIEND

Make time to visit, but not necessarily in a caregiving capacity. Rather, visit as a friend. Play some card or board games. Or simply have a chat over a cup of tea.

This is a source of fun and it breaks the monotony and stress so often associated with caregiving. Such visits may also be planned to give the day-to-day caregiver some opportunities for me-time, including shopping opportunities.



Make time to visit, but not necessarily in a caregiving capacity.

CONTINUE TO SHOW UP

Once you have committed to offering support, make this a long-time commitment. Build on the friendship and persevere, especially when circumstances become tough.

Be prepared to listen and to be a shoulder to cry on. Avoid becoming a lay councillor with well-meaning but misplaced advice. Sitting with your friends or family when emotions pour out is often all that is needed.

SEE THE SIGNS OF BURNOUT

As an intermittent visitor, you will notice changes in the cared-for and the caregiver, more readily. The old adage of the frog in slowly warming water comes to mind. Slow changes often go unnoticed day to day,

but are more readily spotted when seen as weekly “snap-shots” during visits.

If there is evidence of concern, have the courage of your conviction to act on it. Things to look out for include:

- Are there signs of weight loss and stress?
- Is there evidence of undue suspiciousness against friends and neighbours for “conspiring against them”?
- General appearance and neatness of the home and the persons.
- Give a reason to use the refrigerator and check if there is sufficient food.
- Is there an excessive number of unwashed dishes?
- Use the bathroom and check the general state.
- If an opportunity arises to do so, enquire if they need assistance with paying their bills.

The above are all signs of not coping. Approaching the caregiver and cared-for with your concerns requires circumspection and gentle kindness. Expect aggression at first and don’t react to it. Remain calm. Expect emotion and feelings of hopelessness and allow them to vent.

Work through their fear and anxiety and anger with them and once they have finally settled down, take stock of the major issues and work out solutions. Don’t get sucked in. Help where you are able to.

Remember that the situation is theirs to deal with and overcome. Help them to find their way and where necessary, seek assistance from professionals, religious leaders, communities or friends who can help with chores that fell by the wayside.

Every caregiver situation is unique in its dynamic and challenges but these guidelines, adapted to each situation will make the role of caring from a distance worthwhile. **R**



George Louw qualified as a medical doctor, but, due to a progressing spastic paralysis, chose a career in health administration. The column is named after Ida Hlongwa, who worked as caregiver for Ari Seirlis for 20 years. Her charm, smile, commitment, quality care and sacrifice set the bar incredibly high for the caregiving fraternity.

Get in touch: yorslo@icloud.com



Visiting Leopard Walk Lodge in Hluhluwe

Located near Hluhluwe Umfolozi Game Reserve, Kwazulu Natal, the safari lodge makes accommodations for tourists with disabilities

Leopard Walk Lodge adjoins the UNESCO-listed iSimangaliso World Natural Heritage Site at False Bay, Zululand. Owners Rob Cuthbertson, a civil engineer, and Janet Cuthbertson, an artist and environmentalist, have worked over 35 years to rewild once neglected farmland.

Through dedication, the land has been restored into a natural haven offering a biodiverse area that allowed many red data species to flourish.

The lodge has five Secrets of the Forest Suites that are spacious and luxurious with glass sliding walls that open onto a private veranda and outside jacuzzi bath.

The suites are deliberately scattered and immersed in the forest to offer total privacy.

“

The land has been restored into a natural haven.

This allows you to open any curtain and view the wild from the comfort of your bed as you wake up. There is a changing area, accessible wet room and full bathroom of which the latter has a glass sliding door leading outside.

There are access ramps to all the rooms with mobile ramps available for the few areas that don't have permanent ramps, for example the outside Jacuzzi bath which may have a step.



MAIN PHOTO AND TOP LEFT: Leopard Walk Lodge offers spacious bedrooms with glass-sliding doors looking out on the forest.

BOTTOM LEFT: The suites have a full bathroom with a sliding door.

ABOVE: The rooms have accessible wet rooms.

The generous main building houses the reception, a bar, lounge seating and dining area. The access ramp to the main building is very steep and will require assistance.

The external boma area has natural sand around the fire pit and is adjacent to the main building. A swimming pool with an elevated infinity view of the bush is a short walk from the boma.

The Lodge has used natural components to bring in some of the aspects of universal access into its design. Tree branches are placed at the edges of the pathways.

Rounded pebbles are set into the concrete walkways to offer tactile indicators for individuals with visual impairment and there are paved pathways to the suites. Not all the pathways to the various general areas are paved, for example the boma.

Rob and Janet are truly committed to creating a universally accessible lodge and plan on introducing more accessible features with future upgrades.

They are also committed to community cultural education through Janet's Young Environmental Ambassador movement. Janet also assisted the Young Zulu Dancers, located at the gate of Hluhluwe Game Reserve, to compete at the 2024 Africa's Got Talent competition in Sasolburg, which the group won!

The lodge is partnered with [Access2Africa Safaris](#), which offers airport transfers from King Shaka International Airport to the lodge, game drives, excursions and cultural activities within the area. Access2Africa Safaris has two accessible tour buses offer game viewing in comfort for smaller and larger groups.




- TOP LEFT:** The rooms have accessible ramps.
- TOP RIGHT:** The dining area overlooks a small waterhole, which attracts wildlife.
- FAR LEFT:** The walkways between the rooms and main area are paved for ease of access.
- LEFT:** Leopard Walk Lodge partners with Access2Africa Safaris for accessible transport.
- ABOVE:** The boma area is sand, but beautifully nestled in the bush.

Game viewing within the Hluhluwe Umfolozi park is a highlight of this area as this “Big Five” park offers excellent opportunities to see the game up close.

The spectacular Hilltop Lodge viewing point offers the option of looking down on the soaring raptors and the spectacular views of the park.

Other activities include viewing the wild

cats up close at the Wild Cat Rehab Centre and an Elephant Experience for those who haven’t seen the iconic mammals of Africa up close, river boat tours in St Lucia to see the hippos and crocs, a mangrove walk and so much more.

Northern KwaZulu-Natal is rich in culture, heritage and wildlife. Why not put this area onto your list of places to visit? Happy Travels! 



Mandy Latimore is a consultant in the disability sector in the fields of travel and access.

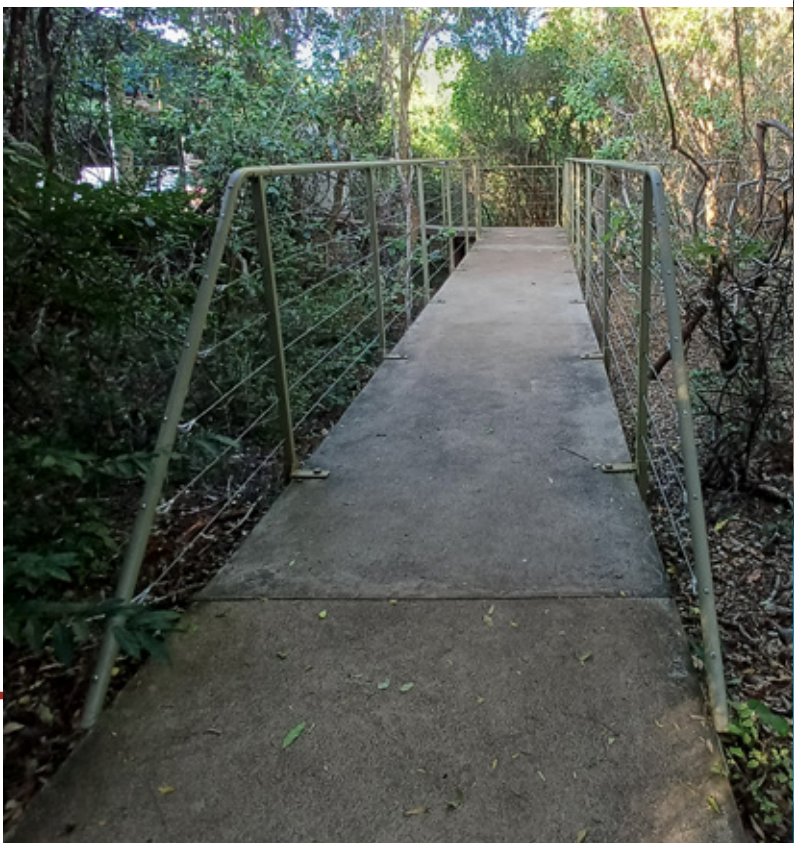
Get in touch: mandy@noveltravel.co.za



ABOVE: Natural elements are creatively used for visual accessibility at the lodge.

RIGHT TOP AND BOTTOM: The Lodge also boasts a swimming pool overlooking the bush. It is accessed via a ramp.

BELOW: There is an accessible ramp up to the pool.



Curating accessible tours

Access2Africa Safaris arranges accessible tours throughout South Africa to bring the beauty of the country to people with disabilities

South Africa boasts breathtaking scenery and diverse wildlife some of which are often nestled in the more rural areas of the country. **Access2Africa Safaris** offers accessible tours in Durban and Cape Town, specialising in the KwaZulu-Natal area, that allow people with disabilities to truly enjoy all the beauty the county has to offer. Their focus is accessible safaris in and around Hluhluwe, including the Hluhluwe Umfolozi Game Reserve.

Founded by Jennae Bezuidenhout, who has a hearing impairment, and her husband JJ, a quadriplegic, Access2Africa boasts two wheelchair accessible vehicles with staff who are well versed in assisting people with disabilities to ensure safe and easy transfers.



MAIN: Mandy Latimore in the Access2Africa wheelchair accessible van during a tour of the Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Game Reserve.

ABOVE: The Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Game Reserve boasts the big five including buffalo.

RIGHT: Access2Africa Safaris founder Jennae Bezuidenhout (behind) with Mandy Latimore, travel columnist for *Rolling Inspiration*.

BOTTOM: Access2Africa boasts two wheelchair accessible vans with ramps.

On a recent visit to Hluhluwe to review the Leopard Walk Lodge, the *Rolling Inspiration* team had the opportunity to visit some of the popular sites that are included in the Access2Africa Safaris tours.

HLUHLUWE-IMFOLOZI GAME RESERVE

Home to the big five, Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Game Reserve is particularly popular. With Access2Africa Safaris, travellers can enjoy all the beauty that the reserve has to offer from within the accessible vehicles. On the late afternoon drive of about two hours, we were able to spot elephants, buffalo, rhinos, lion, warthogs, zebras and a diverse range of buck.

During our visit, we drove through the park to the Hilltop Camp that boasts beautiful views of the game reserve. The building had ramps that were relatively easy to navigate with accessible bathrooms. The reserve is a definite must-see for any bush-lovers looking to enjoy beautiful vistas.

ZULU CROC

Hluhluwe has a crocodile and snake park



that is mostly very accessible. The shop and restaurant at the front of the park is very accessible with accessible bathrooms in the gents and ladies. Travellers can visit these spaces without tickets for the park.

Beyond the restaurant lies the snake displays, which houses an impressive range of snakes including some very big anacondas. Most of the displays can be enjoyed through big windows from a wheelchair.

There is one small room that houses poisonous snakes and some spiders that has a step into the room, making it inaccessible. The descriptions of the snakes are also often placed up high, which would be difficult to read from a seated position.

The croc enclosures are a little less accessible with the divider walls taller than a standard wheelchair. The smaller crocodiles have wooden dividers that allow you to look between the panels, but for the bigger crocodiles, it is a bit more challenging.

There is a viewpoint at the centre of the park, but the ramp up to it is a bit steep and doesn't necessarily guarantee a better view.

ILALA WEAVERS

With a wide range of beautiful, locally made products, Ilala Weavers is a great place to purchase your souvenirs. From baskets and wooden craved figurines to magnets and books, there is something for everyone.

There is also a restaurant on the premises and play area for children if you are looking for a reprieve. Some of the ramps in and around the property might be too steep to navigate independently.

ZULULAND CAT CONSERVATION PROJECT

A true highlight is the cat conservation that rehabilitates cheetahs, servals, caracals and African wildcats. Depending on when you visit, you might be able to see the cats feed, which is truly a majestic thing to witness.

There is also an opportunity to get close to a cheetah for a photo. There is a height minimum

of 1,5 metres, but this is more for children. Entry to the enclosure is carefully managed and only selected persons can enter. On our visit, Mandy Latimore who is a wheelchair user was allowed into the enclosure.

The waiting area has some paving, but the walkways between the enclosures are grassy and uneven and might require assistance for manual wheelchair users.

ST LUCIA ESTUARY BOARDWALK

When visiting the St Lucia Estuary, travellers can explore the boardwalk that lies just beyond the Ski Boat Club. The boardwalk winds along the tidal channel beneath the mangroves to the main beach. The walkway stops at a grassy, sandy area quite some distance away from the ocean with big sand dunes ahead. Beach wheelchairs are available at St Lucia.

On our visit, there were some panels missing from the boardwalk that should be carefully navigated. Aside from this, it was a lovely and easy adventure. The start of the boardwalk is next to several stalls with locally made souvenirs. There are public bathrooms, but these aren't fully accessible.

RIVER SAFARI CRUISE

Another favourite is the river tours with Advantage Tours, which offer hippo and crocodile cruises. Their boat has a ramp to allow wheelchair users to board. Cruise times for special needs guests are coordinated to suit high or low tide for easy access with ramps.

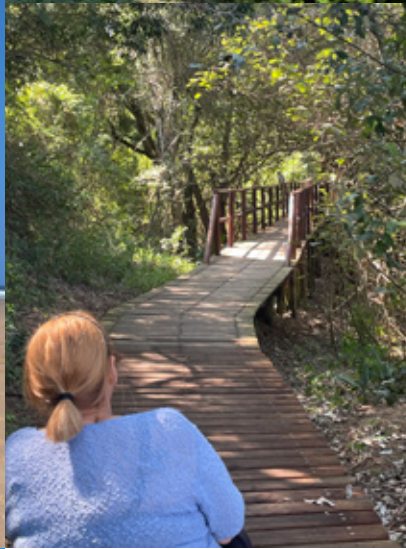
Another highlight for St Lucia is a visit to the Game Reserve Cape Vidal with sightings of rhino, elephant, buffalo and hippos among others. There is also the wild beach with beach wheelchairs and accessible snorkelling at low tide. The team wasn't able to visit these.

RIGHT TOP AND CENTRE LEFT: Ilala Weavers offers a range of locally made souvenirs.

CENTRE RIGHT AND BOTTOM RIGHT: The Zululand Cat Conservation Project offers the opportunity to get close to a cheetah.



ACCESSIBLE



TOP AND ABOVE CENTRE: St Lucia Estuary has a beautiful, accessible boardwalk.


ABOVE RIGHT: There are accessible cruises from St Lucia if the water levels permit.

ABOVE LEFT AND LEFT: There are beaches with beach wheelchairs available in and around.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Access2Africa Safaris works closely with The Kulani Special Needs School just 20 minutes from Leopard Walk Lodge. The school is home to 420 children with disabilities from disadvantaged backgrounds.

In 2023, Access2Africa Safaris transported the children and their volunteers to Sodwana Beach. For many, it was their first time at a beach.

Contact Access2Africa Safaris via telephone on 072 585 4127 or e-mail at info@access2africasafaris.com or visit their [website](#) for more information. 

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Obstacles and access at LIV Golf tournament

Photographer with a disability Johann Meintjes attended the LIV Golf Tournament and shares his experience

Photographer for the South Africa Sport Photographers with Disabilities (SASPD), Johann Meintjes was able to attend the LIV Golf Tournament from 19 to 22 March as an accredited photographer. Despite initial obstacles, he found staff to be helpful. He shares:

After receiving accreditation as a photographer for the first ever LIV Golf tournament at Steyn City, I began preparing to assess how accessible the golf course would be for a wheelchair user. Although I had prior experience as a wheelchair photographer at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris, this offered limited guidance. A new venue and an unfamiliar sport presented a fresh set of challenges. The one reassuring factor was that the event was being held in South Africa.

My journey began on the day as I collected my

accreditation at the media centre. Drawing on 45 years of experience as a wheelchair user, I anticipated potential challenges.

The first obstacle arose with parking. I requested access to a parking space as close as possible to the media centre; however, security personnel initially denied entry, adhering strictly to their instructions. As I was unaccompanied (my caregiver having remained at home), I requested assistance from a security officer to help me out of my vehicle and to push me to the media centre.

The pathway was covered with coarse sawdust, which made movement difficult, as the small front wheels of my manual wheelchair repeatedly sank into the surface. Upon reaching the media centre, the officer acknowledged the difficulty and assured me that, from the following day, I would be permitted to park near the entrance.



MAIN: Photographer Johann Meintjes on an accessible viewing deck at the LIV Golf Tournament where he was an official photographer.

ABOVE: With the assistance of a helper, Johann was able to navigate and photograph from the tees, fairways and greens.

RIGHT: Some of the action shots taken by Johann at the event.

After collecting my accreditation, it became clear that photographing a golf tournament would differ significantly from working behind rugby posts, inside a gymnastics venue, or on an athletics field.

I approached the organisers to request permission for a helper to assist me where necessary. Their response was prompt and highly accommodating. Following a brief consultation, they issued an additional accreditation pass for a helper – an action that reflects the supportive environment in South Africa.

On the first day, my helper and I covered six holes, capturing photographs from tees, fairways, and greens. The pathways were generally well maintained and accessible.

Spectators using wheelchairs were well accommodated, with access to designated parking areas, viewing platforms, and shuttle services via golf carts where required. Certain holes featured designated viewing platforms for wheelchair users; however, the entrances to these areas did not always meet appropriate gradient standards. Despite this, they provided valuable vantage points for photography.


During the event, I was approached by a

representative responsible for constructing various viewing areas, including the “The Lion’s Den”, “Pride’s Nest”, “Eagle’s View”, and the “Birdie Shack”. She requested feedback on their accessibility.

I offered recommendations regarding railing heights to improve visibility for wheelchair users, as well as guidance on appropriate slope gradients for future development.

From the second to the fourth day, my helper and I became more familiar with the course, and our experience improved significantly.

Overall, my first experience in golf photography with SASPD was successful. I look forward to future opportunities and new challenges as a photographer.

Navigating life from a wheelchair presents daily obstacles. How one chooses to confront and overcome these challenges ultimately shapes one’s experience. While the support of others can make a meaningful difference, maintaining a positive mindset and resilience remains essential in overcoming personal barriers. 



Lessons from a mosquito, cockroach, Hadedda and dripping tap

Those small irritants that test our patience could actually be teaching us valuable life lessons

It's late afternoon in our back garden; that calm part of the day when the sun softens before departing from its daily duty, and the air feels heavy with promise. The world seems to be winding down ... then then you hear it ... that familiar, unmistakable haa-haa-haa-da-daaa from the Hadedda Ibis as they return home to roost. Then a mosquito buzzes past your ear, and a cockroach scuttles under your chair.

It's easy to grumble, to wish for silence or a world that behaves the way we want it to. But life has a sense of humour. These small irritations, the ones that poke at our patience, are often the greatest teachers of all. As a life coach, I've learned that the things that bother us most are usually mirrors to show what still needs a little attention inside us.

MOSQUITO THE TEACHER OF PERSISTENCE

Take the mosquito. Nobody likes it, yet it's a master of persistence. Once it sets its mind

on something, it doesn't stop until it gets it. Annoying, yes, but oddly admirable too. That tiny creature knows what it wants and goes for it without hesitation. Imagine if we applied that same level of determination to our own goals.

We start with excitement, then one setback and we're ready to quit. The mosquito doesn't do that. It keeps going until it succeeds. It doesn't overthink. It doesn't need motivation quotes or pep talks. It just does what it's built to do. There's a lesson there about focus, consistency and staying power.

COCKROACH THE TEACHER OF RESILIENCE

Then there's the cockroach. People recoil at the thought of it, yet it's one of nature's great survivors. Through drought, darkness and disaster, it adapts and carries on. It's not beautiful, it's not popular, but it's resilient beyond belief. Life sometimes throws us into

messy situations that don't look or feel good, but like the cockroach, we can still find a way through.

Resilience isn't about appearing perfect. It's about refusing to give up when things look hopeless. Every person who's ever faced disability, loss or disappointment knows that truth all too well. We don't survive because life is easy; we survive because the spirit inside us simply won't surrender.

HADEDA THE TEACHER OF ACCEPTANCE

Then comes the Hadedda: Loud, unapologetic, and impossible to ignore. Some say it's the soundtrack of suburban South Africa, others wish it would just relocate. Perhaps the Hadedda's message is about acceptance. The world is noisy, unpredictable, and sometimes messy, but that doesn't mean we can't find peace within it.

The Hadedda isn't trying to upset us, it's simply being what it is, loud, proud and fully present. What if we could accept life's noise the same way, recognising that peace isn't the absence of sound, it's the presence of calm within the chaos.

DRIPPING TAP THE TEACHER OF PATIENCE

And just when you think the lessons have stopped, there's that dripping tap. Drip ... drip ... drip. At first, it's maddening; echoing through the night like a test from the universe. You try tightening it, stuffing a cloth underneath, but sometimes, no matter what you do, the drip continues. That's when it teaches patience.

Not everything can be fixed right now, and not every sound must be silenced for peace to return. Sometimes the lesson is about learning to rest, even with the dripping still going. In life, we can't always control what happens, but we can control how we respond, and that response determines our peace.

Every irritation we experience, from the whining mosquito to the dripping tap, is an invitation to check our reactions. Why does this bother me so much? What is this moment trying to show me? Often, it's a clue pointing to where we still need patience, humour or compassion, especially for ourselves.

Over the years, I've learned to laugh at life's small annoyances instead of fighting them. They remind me that I'm human, still learning, still growing. The mosquito keeps me humble, the cockroach keeps me strong, the Hadedda keeps me awake to the beauty of imperfection, and the dripping tap ... well, it keeps me patient.

“

**They remind me that I'm human,
still learning, still growing.**

So, next time something small ruins your peace, take a breath before reacting. There might just be a quiet little lesson tucked inside that irritation, waiting for you to notice. Life doesn't have to be silent for us to find peace. Sometimes, we just have to listen differently.

As a matter of interest, did you know that even the mosquito and the cockroach have their place in the bigger picture? The mosquito feeds bats, birds and fish, while the cockroach helps clear waste and recycle what's left behind. They each have a job that keeps life in balance.

Maybe that's the final lesson: Everything, no matter how irritating or unwanted, has a role to play in the greater good. Once we see that, it becomes a little easier to accept the small annoyances that come our way. **R**



Len Davey is a qualified life coach. To book a session, contact him via his website: www.theworldwithin.co.za. A free "goal setting" session is offered without any obligation so that you can experience life coaching first hand.

Get in touch: len@theworldwithin.co.za

Better colour choice for better gaming

Small, simple adjustments could make the gaming experience much more accessible for players with colour blindness as David Williams shares

Video games are among the most visually rich and immersive forms of media ever created. From glowing loot drops and colour-coded mini maps to flashing damage indicators and team markers, colour plays a central role in how players understand and interact with virtual worlds. What happens when players don't see colour the way designers expect?

For millions of people around the world, colour perception works differently. Colour vision deficiency, commonly known as colour blindness, affects how individuals distinguish between certain hues. In a medium that so heavily relies on colour to communicate information, this can create real barriers to gameplay. Designing with accessibility in mind is a fundamental part of creating fair, inclusive, and high-quality gaming experiences.

SEEING DIFFERENTLY

CVD occurs when the cone cells in the eye that are responsible for detecting red, green and blue light do not function as expected. This results in a difficulty in distinguishing between certain colours. Globally, an estimated 300 million people live with some form of CVD.

The most common types include:

- **Red deficiency (Protanopia/Protanomaly):** Reds appear darker and can be difficult to distinguish from green.
- **Green deficiency (Deuteranopia/Deuteranomaly):** The most common form, often causing muted or confusing red-green perception.
- **Blue deficiency (Tritanopia/Tritanomaly):** A rare condition affecting blue-yellow differentiation.
- **Achromatopsia:** An extremely rare condition where vision is largely grayscale.

Importantly, most people with colour blindness do not see in black and white, they see colour differently.

WHERE GAMES FALL SHORT

Colour is often used to communicate information, which can greatly impact the enjoyment and performance of players with CVD. It impacts:

- **Team Identification:** Many multiplayer games rely on colour, like red versus green or red versus blue, to distinguish teams. For players with red-green deficiencies, these distinctions can blur together.

- **HUD and UI Indicators:** Health bars, status effects, mini maps and objective markers often depend on colour alone. A poison effect shown only as a green overlay or low health indicated solely by a red flash can easily go unnoticed.
- **Loot and Rarity Systems:** The familiar rarity system (grey, green, blue, purple, gold) can become confusing when colours are hard to distinguish. Blue and purple or green and brown may appear nearly identical to some players.
- **Puzzle Mechanics:** Games that rely on colour-matching puzzles can unintentionally block progression entirely for colourblind players.

In fast-paced or competitive environments, even a slight delay in recognising visual cues can mean the difference between winning and losing.

WHAT DEVELOPERS CAN DO

Accessibility for players with CVD is grounded in a simple but powerful principle: Information should never rely on colour alone. This idea, widely promoted in accessibility standards like the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, translates directly into better game design. This includes:

- **Use more than colour for markers:** Colour should support meaning, but not carry it alone. Designers can reinforce information through icons and symbols, patterns and textures, text labels or shapes and position, for example using different shapes (triangles vs squares) as team markers.
- **Provide more options:** Many games include colourblind presets, but not all are effective as simple hue-shirts can fall short. Instead, developers can look at adjusting specific UI elements, allow players to customise colours, and test these modes with real players.
- **Prioritise contrast:** A strong contrast between foreground and background is critical for readability and clarity. This is



MAIN: Controls can also be colour coded to assist with people with colour blindness.


TOP: *The Last of Us* played in high contrast.

useful to all players!

- **Avoid certain colour pairings:** Some colour combinations are notoriously difficult to distinguish, such as red and green, blue and purple, green and brown or green and yellow. Instead, combine colour differences with brightness (light vs. dark) to improve visibility.
- **Test early and often:** Real-world testing with players who have CVD provides the most valuable insights. Simulation tools can assist with approximating different types of vision, but real players can confirm if the game is accessible or not.

FUTURE OF INCLUSIVE PLAY

Designing for colourblind players improves usability across the board. Clearer visuals help players who are in bright sunlight on their device, in low-light environments, on smaller screens or are in fast-paced gameplay.

As the gaming industry continues to grow, so does its responsibility to its players. Accessibility is a marker of quality, care and innovation. Designing for colour blindness expands creativity to ensure that more people can fully experience the worlds developers work so hard to build. 



Konke Gamers is a volunteer-driven, non-profit initiative focused on making gaming accessible to people with disabilities. Working with **Able Gamers**, they provide adaptive controllers and specialised, inclusive gaming solutions to break down barriers in the gaming community.

Get in touch: Konkegamers@gmail.com

Who qualifies for disability rebates

SARS has very specific definitions for disability. Tax practitioner Lammert Stavast explains the terms in more detail

One of the most common questions I receive from families is a surprisingly difficult one: “Does SARS actually consider myself, my child or family member as ‘disabled’?” Many people assume the answer is obvious. If someone has a serious condition or requires ongoing therapy, surely that must qualify. However, in the tax world, things are not always that simple.


For medical tax purposes, SARS works with a very specific definition of disability. It is not simply about having a diagnosis or medical condition. Instead, SARS defines a disability as a moderate to severe limitation in a person’s ability to function or perform daily activities. The limitation must last for more than a year and affect one of the following areas: Vision; Hearing; Communication; Physical mobility; Intellectual functioning; or Mental or psychological functioning. Just as important, this limitation must be confirmed by a qualified medical practitioner using a formal SARS document called the ITR-DD form. The ITR-DD form is valid for 10 years if the form was completed after 2023.

This is where many people are caught off guard. A diagnosis on its own is not enough. For example, a person may be diagnosed with a neurological condition, developmental delay or chronic illness, but if the medical practitioner does not confirm that the condition causes a moderate to severe functional limitation, SARS may not classify it

as a disability for tax purposes. This does not mean the condition is not real or significant. It simply means that, under tax legislation, it does not fall within the definition required to unlock the additional tax relief available to people with disabilities.

Another important distinction is between disability and chronic illness. Chronic conditions such as asthma, diabetes, high blood pressure or epilepsy may involve ongoing treatment and medical expenses. However, unless they result in a severe limitation in daily functioning, SARS generally treats them under the ordinary medical tax credit system, not the disability framework.

Why does this distinction matter? Because the tax benefits can differ significantly. When a person qualifies as having a disability under SARS rules, a much broader range of expenses can potentially be considered such as certain therapies, assistive devices, specialised schooling and home modifications. For families already navigating the financial realities of disability, this relief can make a meaningful difference.

Over the next few articles, we will explore some of these practical aspects in more detail, including the types of expenses that people often overlook, and the steps required to ensure claims are properly documented. For more information, contact me at info@yourdisabilitytax.co.za or visit our website www.yourdisabilitytax.co.za. 



Lammert Stavast is a qualified chartered accountant, tax practitioner and founder of **YourDisabilityTax**, which assists persons with disabilities or families with their disability tax rebate claims and disputes to the maximum refund within the legal framework.

Get in touch: info@yourdisabilitytax.co.za

Don't "push through" the wrong pain

Pain that worsens over time is a sign that you need to have your prosthesis adjusted, a normal part of the process

Many amputees hear advice like: "Just push through; it will get better; it's just growing pains; see a physio". I don't believe this to be true. When you're adjusting to a prosthesis, a bit of discomfort is normal. Mild pressure, muscle fatigue or end-of-day soreness are all part of your body adapting. You can also expect some redness by the end of a day, but the next day that redness and pain should be gone.

There's a clear difference between pains. "Good" discomfort is predictable, manageable and improves over time. "Bad" pain does the opposite. It becomes worse. If you're feeling sharp or burning pain, developing blisters or wounds, or noticing that things get worse the longer you wear your prosthesis. Don't ignore it! The same goes if you're walking changes, you start limping more or you dread putting weight on your prosthesis or putting it on in the morning.

Truthfully, I don't think that problem (bad) pain should really be part of any prosthetic fitting process. That's not progress. That's your body telling you something isn't right. Usually, it has to do with the prosthetic socket fit.

One of the biggest reasons people delay getting help is because they don't want to be a bother. They think they should cope, or that needing adjustments means something has gone wrong. It hasn't.

Follow-ups and adjustments are part of the process, not a failure. Your body changes constantly. Volume shifts, activity levels change and even a well-made socket needs fine-tuning over time.

Waiting too long, however, can lead to bigger problems. Skin damage, poor movement patterns and eventually avoiding the prosthesis altogether and regressing. I don't want to see this at all, especially in a first-time amputee.

Here's a simple rule: "If the pain is getting worse, affecting how you move or making you avoid wearing your prosthesis, it's time to go back for adjustments."

Not later. Now. You don't earn anything by suffering through the wrong kind of pain. The goal is simple, you should move well, feel comfortable and trust your prosthesis. If it's working against you instead of with you, that's your sign to get it sorted. **R**



Heinrich Grimsehl is a prosthetist in private practice and a member of the South African Orthotic and Prosthetic Association (SAOPA).

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Tongue tying tech for digital independence



The MouthPad is an incredible innovation that can level the tech playing field, but remains out of reach for many

To stay informed about cool new technology, I regularly watch tech demos. I was again completely mesmerised when I came across a video of an engineering student who was seamlessly navigating her computer to write software by clicking and scrolling with the speed of a seasoned pro. Her hands never moved.

Instead, she was using a **MouthPad**, a custom-fit, high-tech retainer that sits on the roof of the mouth, turning her tongue movements into direct digital commands. Wow!

As an adaptive technology enthusiast from South Africa, my jaw dropped. It felt like science fiction was made accessible. The device uses smart AI to ignore the natural moisture and saliva in the mouth, reading tiny tongue taps and pressure as left or right mouse clicks.

It's a brilliant, completely non-invasive way to give people with severe physical disabilities their digital independence back. You just pop it in, connect via Bluetooth and you are online.

“

It's a brilliant, completely non-invasive way to give people their digital independence back.

As great as this is, I must be honest, I was a little concerned about hygiene and longevity. However, my thinking is that if your oral hygiene practices are good, there's nothing to worry about.

As is often the case with cutting-edge innovation, I had to pump the brakes on my excitement. I looked up the price tag. At an early-access price of around US\$ 1 500 (roughly R25 000), this miraculous piece of hardware is in a different economic universe.

Here in South Africa, where the maximum SASSA disability grant sits at R2 400 a month as of April 2026, purchasing a MouthPad would mean handing over a year's worth of survival money.

It is a harsh reminder of a massive affordability crisis. We are seeing incredible tech that can change lives, but it is built for wealthy nations, turning our digital divide into an insurmountable cliff.

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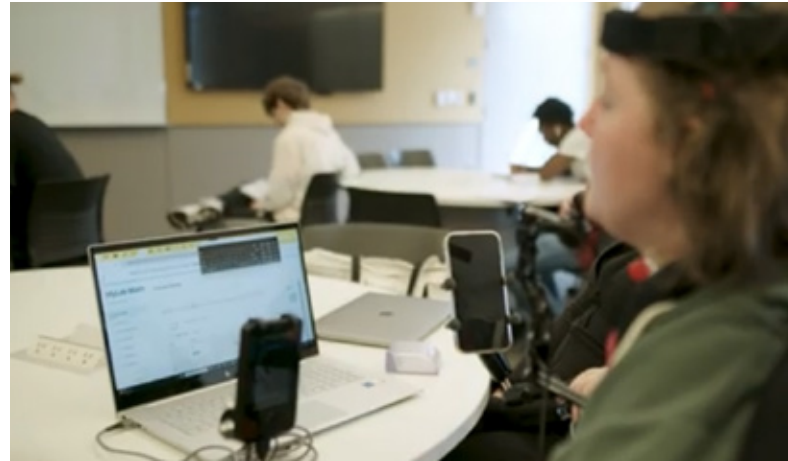
We are seeing incredible tech that can change lives, but it is built for wealthy nations.

—

The reality on the ground is stark. South Africans with spinal cord injuries or severe mobility impairments are largely locked out of the digital economy. Without the ability to use a standard mouse or keyboard, getting a job in today's tech-driven world feels impossible.

An AI-powered tool like the MouthPad could instantly level the playing field, allowing people to code, design or study with the exact same speed as anyone else.

But this isn't a story about what we can't have. It is a call to action! South Africa has a rich history of leapfrogging hurdles using our own unique constraints. The MouthPad relies on 3D printing and clever software. We



ABOVE: Augmental featured Keely and the Augmental MouthPad on [Youtube](#).

have world-class rapid prototyping hubs at universities right here at home.

I am able to make a lot of progress using Large Language Models so I'm sure lots of creativity and potential can be unlocked. We have the local engineering talent to build our own tech. Imagine a locally manufactured device that costs a fraction of the import price, customised for our market.

“

Imagine a locally manufactured device that costs a fraction of the import price.

—

We need to see local telecoms companies stepping up to subsidise these tools, just as they do with smartphones. We need to work with organisations like the QuadPara Association of South Africa to get these devices into the hands of the people who need them most. [R](#)



Sandile Mkhize, a T5 complete paraplegic and drone industry research and development software engineer. Passionate about improving accessibility through smart engineering, assistive technology, and global collaboration.

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Guide for accessing legal advice

Legitimate legal advice is available to anyone, but will require some caution when seeking it out



The legal system is far more than a collection of statutes. It is the essential machinery required to secure basic dignity, access healthcare and enforce constitutional rights. Whether navigating a complex Road Accident Fund claim, seeking redress for medical negligence or fighting for workplace accommodations, the stakes are exceptionally high. The path to justice is fraught with risks. The first (and perhaps most vital) step is ensuring that the legal advice you receive is both competent and legitimate.

LEGITIMATELY LEGAL

The cornerstone of safety within the South African legal market is the Legal Practice Council (LPC), which is the national body established by the Legal Practice Act 28 of 2014 to regulate the profession and protect the public. Every legitimate attorney and advocate must be enrolled with the LPC.

More importantly, any practitioner who handles your money or manages a trust account must possess a valid Fidelity Fund Certificate (FFC). This certificate is issued annually only to those who meet strict ethical and financial standards.

It serves as your primary insurance policy as the Legal Practitioners Fidelity Fund exists to reimburse the public should a registered practitioner steal money entrusted to them.

Unfortunately, a growing number of “bogus” lawyers have sought to exploit those in desperate need of help. These “bogus” individuals often pose as legal experts, promising quick settlements in personal injury or disability matters only to vanish with the funds or cause irreparable harm to a case.

The risks of engaging an unregistered person are severe. You could suffer total financial loss and be barred from claiming from the Fidelity Fund, which generally only covers theft by enrolled practitioners.

Before signing any mandate, you have a right to ask a practitioner to produce their current FFC. You should also verify their status independently via the LPC provincial offices or the [public verification portal](#).

CREDIBLE ALTERNATIVES

For those who cannot afford private representation, South Africa offers several credible avenues for assistance. [Legal Aid South Africa](#) remains the largest provider, though it is subject to a means test. Currently, individuals earning less than R8 700 per month (after tax) or households with a total income under R9 500 per month may qualify for free representation.

Another invaluable resource is the network of university law clinics, such as those associated with the [South African University](#)

Law Clinics Association, that provide clinical legal education while offering high-quality, supervised legal services to the indigent. Many private firms and advocates also take on pro bono matters. They are strictly prohibited from charging fees for these instructions unless specific statutory exceptions apply.

SEEKING SPECIALISATION


The right lawyer is not just someone with a licence. It is about finding the right specialisation for your specific needs. Disability rights and medical negligence are highly technical fields.

The LPC Code of Conduct allows practitioners to hold themselves out as specialists based on their qualifications and experience. When selecting a representative, look for a practitioner who understands the nuances of your situation; someone who might serve as

a *curator ad litem* if a client cannot manage their own affairs, or a firm with a proven track record in constitutional matters.

Professionalism and ethical standards are the heartbeat of the legal profession. A legitimate lawyer is bound by a strict Code of Conduct that mandates honesty, integrity and the duty to treat your interests as paramount. They must provide a true account of your prospects of success, rather than simply pandering to your desires.

They are also required to keep your information confidential and maintain independence from any undue influence. In your journey toward empowerment and justice, do not settle for anything less than a practitioner who is fully accountable to the law and to the high standards of the South African legal community. **R**



Aaron Mupeti is a duly qualified and admitted Attorney of the High Court of South Africa, and founder of **Mupeti Attorneys**, which offers a full range of legal services while giving each client the individual attention they deserve.

Get in touch: info@mupetilaw.co.za



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Make friends with food

There are some creative and fun ways to encourage children to try new foods, especially if mealtimes are challenging

Food, feeding and eating can be anxiety provoking for families with children with disabilities. Many kids are “fussy” eaters. They don’t like new food textures, colours or tastes. Others have difficulty chewing and swallowing. They are unable to feed themselves or require adapted utensils like sporks (a combined fork and spoon) or modified hand grips. They take longer to eat or are nasogastric-tube or percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy-fed. Finding ways to make this daily activity more fun can help ease some of the anxiety.

FREEDOM OF CHOICE

For many children with disabilities, all decisions around their care are made by parents, healthcare providers and therapists. This includes food! They have no control or choice. This sometimes leads to frustration.

You might want to provide your child with choices for food options. For example, give them two options of food that you may have in your house or that fit with their calory requirements for example. Obviously, you would need to provide options that are suitable, but giving them the choice may help them feel in control. Some children can verbally tell you what food they would like.

Others may be able to point, gesture or look and confirm which choice they would prefer.

EATING TOGETHER

In many cultures, family eating meals together is central to their days. For many of us with children with disabilities, we don't eat as a family. Rather, the priority is getting food into our children while we eat on the go.

Research shows that children are more likely to try new foods and eat a variety of different textures and flavours if they see others eating the same food. Children in playschool often eat foods at school that they would never eat at home because their friends are eating it! Eating around friends or family makes eating a social occasion and the pressure around food is reduced.

VARIETY IN DIET

For some children, eating the same food makes them feel safe. However, not exposing them to a range of colours, textures and flavours from an early age, can lead to them not wanting to try new food or getting a balanced diet.

Research shows that children need to be exposed to food multiple times (up to 10 or 15

times) before the child accepts it. Sometimes, we try a food like butternut or sweet potato with our child once; the food is pushed away, spat out or refused, and we give up.

Rather, try the same food again in a few days or weeks. Mix or serve the new food with food that they do like and keep persevering. For some children, putting the new food into their mouths is a big challenge. You might want to try the following (using the example of peas), and remembering their age and abilities:

- Give them a fork and encourage them to mash the peas.
- Let them let them squish cooked peas with their fingers.
- Get them to “help” you hide the peas into mash potato.
- Show them how to shell raw peas from the pod and encourage them to taste.
- Blend the peas into a puree and let them play and smear them.

The more they play, smell, touch and move the food, the more likely they are to taste it. Don't force, bribe or nag children to eat as this may increase their resistance.

RELIEVE THE PRESSURE

My young son refused to eat due to severe reflux and allergies that made him associate certain foods with pain. I was so anxious that he wouldn't get enough calories; that he'd would lose weight and fail to thrive. I would become desperate for him to eat. He picked up on my anxiety.

A friend popped over one afternoon and volunteered to feed him. Her relaxed attitude reduced the anxiety and stress. My little one tried food that he had refused to take from me. While I know that this isn't always practical, you might want to find your own way to reduce your own anxiety around food.

SNACKS AND SMALL PORTIONS

For some children, sitting down and eating

a regular sized meal is impossible. Here you might want to provide snacks or break portions into smaller amounts. You can make eating fun by placing different snacks and food in different brightly coloured containers. For example, place a cut up banana in a small plastic Tupperware that they open.

That way, they can decide which they want to eat first and opening the lids becomes part of the process. They have a little control and involvement.

GIVE THEM STRUCTURE


Try to maintain regular, predictable meal and snack times to help children manage their own hunger. For some children, routine is vital due to their disability or medication regimes.

Keeping things the same is important. Encourage them to be an active participant in this process. For example, get them to collect their own spoon or fork, help set the table, bring you their plate each and every day.

GET THEM INVOLVED

Let children help with food shopping. They could physically take items off the shelf or point to the item. Also get them involved in preparing the food like washing fruits and vegetables, cutting, peeling or grating ingredients, mixing and pouring, or even stirring food on the stove.

Often, parents are afraid of children hurting or burning themselves. Try build up their skills and confidence slowly as we eventually want them to be as independent as possible. Their involvement in the shopping, preparation and cooking will help build up their ownership of food and cooking.

The more involved they are, the less pressure they experience around food, and the more likely they are to try new food! 



Dr **Emma McKinney** owner of Disability Included Consultancy, a company providing disability employment and educational research, training, support, and resources.

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Preventing shoulder pain

Shoulder pain is common, but doesn't have to be inevitable for wheelchair users.

Jenna Loughor-Clarke provides some insights

Shoulder pain is one of the most common challenges faced by wheelchair users. As the arms take on the role of mobility, they are used repeatedly throughout the day for pushing, transfers and daily activities.

Over time, this can place a large amount of stress on the shoulder joints, leading to pain, fatigue and even injury. The good news is that with the right strategies, shoulder pain can often be prevented or reduced.

WHY SHOULDER PAIN HAPPENS

Unlike the legs, the shoulders are not designed for constant weight-bearing and repetitive propulsion. Wheelchair users rely heavily on their upper body, which can lead to overuse of the muscles and joints.

Poor posture also plays a big role. Sitting in a slouched position or having an incorrect

wheelchair setup can place extra strain on the shoulders. In addition, weak core muscles can reduce stability, forcing the shoulders to work even harder.

Over time, this combination of overuse, poor alignment and muscle imbalance increases the risk of pain and injury.

WAYS TO PREVENT SHOULDER PAIN

Small daily habits can make a big difference in protecting your shoulders, including:

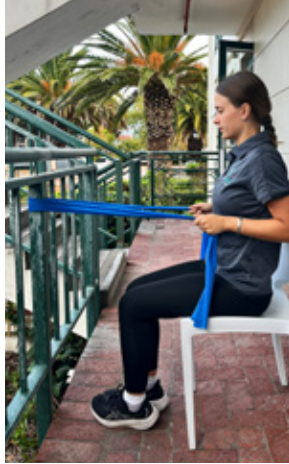
- **Improve posture:** Sit upright with your shoulders relaxed and not rounded forward.
- **Check your wheelchair setup:** Ensure your wheelchair is correctly fitted to reduce unnecessary strain.
- **Use efficient pushing technique:** Use long, smooth pushes instead of short, repetitive ones.
- **Take regular breaks:** Allow time for your muscles to recover throughout the day.

STRENGTH AND MOBILITY MATTER

Strengthening and stretching are key to keeping the shoulders healthy. These exercises can be done at home using a resistance band or light weights:

Resistance band rows

- Sit upright and loop a band around a stable object.
- Pull the band towards your chest, squeezing your shoulder blades together.
- Slowly return to the start.
- Repeat 10 to 12 times for two or three sets.



External rotations (rotator cuff)

- Keep your elbow close to your side, bent at 90°.
- Rotate your forearm outward against the band.
- Control the movement back.
- Repeat 10 to 12 times per arm for two or three sets.



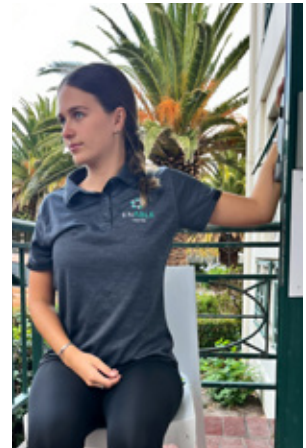
Shoulder blade squeezes

- Sit tall and gently squeeze your shoulder blades together.
- Hold for three to five seconds, then relax.
- Repeat 10 to 15 times.



Chest stretch

- Place your arm against a wall or doorway.
- Gently rotate your body away until you feel a stretch in the chest.
- Helps counteract rounded shoulders.
- Hold for 20 to 30 seconds for two to three sets.



Seated overhead reach

- Reach both arms overhead as far as comfortable.
- Keep movements slow and controlled.
- Repeat 10 to 12 times for two to three sets.



These exercises help strengthen and stretch the upper back and shoulder stabilisers, which reduces strain on the joints and improves posture.

LISTEN TO YOUR BODY

Pain is a signal that something needs attention. If you experience ongoing discomfort, it is important to address it early. Ignoring pain can lead to more serious injuries over time. Consulting a Physiotherapist or Biokineticist can help identify the cause of pain and provide a personalised management plan.

Shoulder pain is common among wheelchair users, but it is not inevitable. By improving posture, using proper techniques and maintaining strength and mobility, you can protect your shoulders and stay active for longer. **R**



The **Enable Centre** is an outpatient physical and cognitive rehabilitation centre with branches in Cape Town and Durban. It operates as a social enterprise, meaning it provides therapy to people from all socioeconomic backgrounds whilst incorporating innovative technology and evidence-based treatments.

Get in touch: admin@enablecentre.org



Robust roots to back the bloom

The backing of family empowers ex-rugby player to bloom into a figure of strength and inspiration

The robust roots of a nurturing family tree enabled Adriaan Kruger to overcome the devastation of a life-changing rugby injury and blossom into a figure of strength and inspiration. As a 17-year-old lock and learner at Frans du Toit High School in Phalaborwa, Adriaan was left a quadriplegic after a freak rugby accident on 27 September 1990.

“During a Physical Activities class, our teacher decided to let us play touch rugby,” Adriaan recalls. “The game gradually became rougher, and touch rugby turned into full-on tackling. I remember sitting on the field with my legs stretched out.”

“Then, from behind me, some of the guys pushed one of my friends, who landed on top of me. The impact forced my head down between my legs and broke my neck.”

As terrifying and tragic as the injury was, it was just the start of a living nightmare, which Adriaan nearly didn't survive.

“My heart stopped at one point while I was at HF Verwoerd Hospital, and I developed severe lung infections. On top of that, I'm allergic to penicillin, which made treating the infections even more complicated,” he shares.

“It was a long and challenging road from the very beginning. Eventually, I was strong enough to undergo the neck fusion surgery, and after that, I could finally begin my real journey toward recovery.”

The unwavering support of his family powered that journey and pulled him out of the darkest depths. He comments: “My family has always been my foundation and support system, particularly my mother, who never stopped caring for me. I can honestly say that without my parents, I would not be where I am today.”

“I would probably have given up a long time ago. My family is what truly matters to me, including my sister, my brother-in-law, and their children. They play an important role in my life.”

Now 53, Kruger is still in Phalaborwa and living life to the fullest, having enjoyed many personal and professional highlights, including matriculating, completing a number of courses in Web Development through Unisa, building websites and receiving a 10-year certificate recognising his exceptional dedication and outstanding service at Foskor, where he works as a switchboard controller.

“Receiving such a certificate is truly an honour. However, my parents deserve that

same recognition for their devotion and the countless sacrifices they've made. My father, who is now 81, drove me to and from work for years until he lost his leg, and my mother now drives me to work," Adriaan says.

He also gave special praise to the Chris Burger Petro Jackson Players' Fund, affectionately known as Rugby's Caring Hands, for their support over the years.

"The Players' Fund has played a massive role in my life. Whenever I needed something, they never said no ... no matter what it was. Every year, they assist with essential medical items that I simply cannot live without; items that would've been extremely expensive if I had to pay for them myself," Adriaan shares.

"When it's time for a new wheelchair, new wheelchair gloves, or anything else I cannot afford on my own, they help without hesitation. Their support has given me security and dignity in ways that are hard to explain."

When he's not at work or designing websites, Kruger likes to add to his growing collection of Hot Wheels cars and Pokémon cards. When it comes to passions, though, nothing trumps the love of plants shared by his entire family. One of his biggest dreams is to restart the family plant business.

"My father began growing orchids while I was still in school, and my mother has always loved all kinds of plants. Together, we ran a nursery as part of our business, where we grew, bought and sold a wide variety of plants," Adriaan recalls.

"For the past 15 years, we've focused mainly on growing and importing Adeniums, which were hybridised to resemble roses. However, we stopped importing plants due to COVID."

"Growing and watching those plants bloom brings us so much joy. More people should experience these beautiful plants. There's




MAIN: Adriaan Kruger (far left) with his mother and father who he credits for his successes.

ABOVE: Adriaan Kruger dreams of relaunching his family's plant business.

a real sense of accomplishment when they flower," he said passionately, adding, "I've received my customs code, so we've taken the first step in restarting our plant business."

Until the day that seed grows into an all-new plant venture, Adriaan is committed to his role at Foskor. However, getting to work has become increasingly more challenging and even dangerous.

"I'm doing my best to live and work independently as a quadriplegic, but my current VW Transporter keeps breaking down and has already cost us a fortune. I don't want to feel as though I'm working only to keep my Transporter running. It is my only means of getting to work and maintaining my independence."

He is currently fundraising for a safer, more reliable vehicle. Visit his [BackaBuddy campaign](#) to make a contribution. 



Quintin van Jaarsveld writes on behalf of the Players' Fund. If you would like to support the Chris Burger Petro Jackson Players' Fund, visit their website at www.playersfund.org.za and select any number of the giving options available, which include EFT, payfast, Snapscan and Zapper.

Get in touch: contact@playersfund.org.za

Smooth Sailing for adaptive water adventures



The Adaptive Sports Fund hosted adaptive sailing and canoeing, which offers many health benefits

There is something uniquely freeing about being on the water. The quiet rhythm of the wind in the sails. The steady movement of a canoe gliding across the surface. The sense of independence that comes with steering your own course.

For many people with disabilities, water sports can seem intimidating. Balance, stability and safety are the first concerns that come to mind. However, with the right equipment, guidance and environment, sailing and canoeing quickly reveal themselves to be incredibly accessible and rewarding activities.

Recently, the Adaptive Sports Fund had the opportunity to experience the freedom of being on the water firsthand during a memorable day of adaptive sailing and canoeing at the Pretoria Sailing Club.

The day was made possible through the generosity and support of the Pretoria Sailing Club and the Centurion Canoe Club, who welcomed the group with open arms and ensured that the facilities and boats were ready for adaptive participation. Their willingness to share their knowledge and

passion for sailing made the experience both educational and unforgettable.

Participants had the chance to try their hand at both sailing and canoeing, each offering a unique perspective of the water.

Sailing provides a wonderful balance of strategy and calm, where understanding the wind and adjusting the sails becomes part of the adventure. To make the activity more accessible, a clever hoist mechanism has been installed at the club to assist with safe transfers into the boats.

This system allows participants to be lifted securely from their wheelchairs and gently lowered into the vessel, ensuring the safest possible transfer while limiting the risk of mishaps and keeping participants out of danger. It is innovations like these that truly make adaptive sport possible.

Canoeing offers a more hands-on experience with participants paddling at their own pace and enjoying the tranquillity of being close to the water. For many, the highlight was the moment they realised that they were truly in control from steering the boat, adjusting



MAIN: Participants were able to try adaptive canoeing.
ABOVE: The Pretoria Sailing Club installed a clever hoist mechanism to assist with safe transfers to the boats.
RIGHT: Participants had the opportunity to try their hand at sailing.


their direction and moving across the water independently. The smiles and laughter across the harbour were a clear sign that adaptive water sports are not just possible, but deeply enjoyable.

Beyond the thrill of being on the water, sailing and canoeing also offer important health and wellbeing benefits. They help build upper-body strength, coordination, balance and endurance, while encouraging focus and confidence. Spending time outdoors, in nature, has proven benefits for mental wellbeing by offering a sense of calm and escape from everyday stresses.

Events like this also highlight the strong sense of community that surrounds adaptive sport. Participants supported one another, shared tips and celebrated each small victory along the way. Whether it was someone mastering their first paddle stroke or confidently steering a sailboat across the dam, every moment was a reminder of what can be achieved when barriers are removed.



A special thank you to the Pretoria Sailing Club and the South African Sailing community for hosting the event and for their dedication to making the sport more accessible. Their enthusiasm and support ensured that everyone felt welcome on and off the water.

At the end of the day, adaptive sailing and canoeing are about more than sport. They are about freedom, independence, and adventure. With the wind at your back and water beneath you, the possibilities feel endless. And sometimes, all it takes is the courage to set sail. 



Jeffrey Yates writes for the [Adaptive Sports Fund](https://www.adaptivesportsfund.org) (ASF) is a non-profit company, committed to supporting individuals with disabilities and breaking down barriers and creating a more equitable and just world for all people, regardless of their abilities. and with the following objectives: Supporting, enriching, encouraging, motivating and providing resources that empower individuals with disabilities to achieve their goals for them to live their best lives and creating a more accessible and equitable society for all.

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Contractual triangle more cost effective

Outsourcing the learnership hosting can help companies gain B-BBEE points without additional strain on human resources

A few years ago, I sat across from the human resources director of a high-volume, national firm. She looked at her mandate to onboard 30 learners with disabilities for their upcoming B-BBEE scorecard audit and flatly refused. She argued that she did not have the time to manage specialised industrial mentorship, chase daily logbooks, facilitate SETA site visits, and handle the administration of 30 learners.

Financial directors and compliance officers consistently view disability learnerships as a forced obligation that drains both cash and time. This assumption is based on a fundamental misunderstanding of how the system works.

Rather than finding the resources, companies can separate the funding of the learnership from the physical execution of it. Disability inclusion doesn't have to be an administrative nightmare if you set up the right structure. By bringing in a specialist partner, a company can create a buffer between their core business and the compliance paperwork.


In this specific case, we implemented what I call a "contractual triangle". The corporate entity funded the initiative, securing their necessary B-BBEE points, while the daily liabilities and practical workplace oversight

were legally transferred to a pre-vetted non-profit organisation host employer.

To eliminate the human resources headache, my team handled the back-end compliance. We deployed digital location pins for unforgeable daily audit trails and managed the entire SETA tracking loop. The client secured their B-BBEE points at the end of the financial year without spending a single hour of their internal team's time.

Once you remove that administrative friction, the financial argument becomes undeniable. The perceived "sunk cost" of learner stipends and training fees immediately triggers the Section 12H Tax Allowance, significantly reducing the company's taxable income. Concurrently, it activates the Employment Tax Incentive, yielding up to R1 500 per learner per month in direct cash-back.

For 15 years, my career has been defined by solving this exact equation. I have watched countless companies surrender high-margin B-BBEE points because they try to manage systems in-house that could be outsourced.

Executing this strategy simply requires discarding the legacy myth of the disability "burden" and applying strict commercial logic to your operations. 



Rustim Ariefdien is a disability expert who assists businesses to "let the Ability of disAbility enAble their profitAbility" through BBEE, skills development, employment equity and socio-economic development. His purpose is the economic empowerment of persons with disability in Africa. As a person with a disability himself, he has extensive experience in the development and empowerment of persons with disability.

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Going Beyond Barriers to empower

After his rugby dream ended in a nightmare, Dano Swart unlocked the champion within and discovered that barriers are meant to be broken

In May 2019, as a fullback for the first team at Hoërskool Brandwag, Dano Swart featured in the final Under-18 Eastern Province Craven Week trials at Framesby High School in Gqeberha when tragedy struck.

“Just before the second half, I broke through the defensive line and was tackled by two players around the 22-metre line,” Dano recalls.

“One came high from the front and the other low from behind, almost like a scissor. I remember lying there in intense pain, trying everything to make it stop, but I was unable to move.”

“Then I heard my mother’s voice and told her, ‘I think I broke my neck’. She and the coaches kept everyone calm and instructed no one to move me until the ambulance arrived.”

“It arrived within a few minutes after actually being called to the B-field, but mistakenly

arrived at the A-field at exactly the right moment. For me, that timing was a clear sign of how amazing God is,” the now 24-year-old shares.

Dano broken his C4/C5 vertebrae and was left paralysed. Unfortunately, things went from bad to worse for him at Greenacres Hospital.

“The neck operation was performed, and I spent three nights in the high care unit, eating for the first time on the third night. That evening, I aspirated and was moved to the ICU to be intubated and ventilated, where I stayed for about three months,” he notes.

“After that, I returned to high care for another month before being transferred to Aurora Rehabilitation Hospital, where I spent around two to three months.”

Dano admits that things were extremely tough, both physically and mentally, but he

was born with the eye of the tiger, and a shift in focus allowed him to start building towards a new future.

"The early months were the hardest. I couldn't breathe on my own, had many setbacks due to my lungs, couldn't use my hands, sit up straight, speak, or eat. I was just lying there looking at the ceiling," he recalls.

"The turning point came at Aurora. Seeing and feeling the constant support of my family, friends and the rugby community made me feel stronger and convinced me that everything would eventually be okay."

He returned to school and matriculated in 2020 and has since co-founded the Beyond Barriers Foundation along with Frans-Hendrik Badenhorst and Rickus Strydom.

"When I was in Potchefstroom, I noticed that many people only saw the wheelchair and not me as a real person. I forced myself to push through that, but I kept thinking about others with disabilities who might not feel strong enough to face that kind of disappointment," Dano comments.

"Some might end up staying home and missing out on life because of how people make them feel. We started the Beyond Barriers Foundation to build a community where people with disabilities can be the hero in their own story," he explained.

"Our mission is to provide opportunities and support so people with physical disabilities can pursue active lifestyles through physical fitness and competitive athletics."

"We believe that involvement in sport at any level increases self-esteem, encourages independence, and enhances quality of life. We want to create adaptive sports, fitness and rehabilitation opportunities, along with active adventures and events

for differently abled people living in South Africa."

"I've been involved in motivational speaking at schools about the Foundation, raising awareness and helping able-bodied people understand that there is so much more to a person with a disability than their appearance. We continuously look for individuals whom we can support to become the next Natalie du Toit," he adds.


An athlete to his core, Dano (with the help of Badenhorst) completed the Cape Town Marathon last year, finishing in four hours and 13 minutes. He shares: "It was an incredible experience. The energy and support from the crowd were electrifying!"

In addition to growing Beyond Barriers and training for his next marathon, Dano's studying online for a Bachelor's degree in IT and App Development while coaching rugby at his former high school.

He gave special thanks to the Chris Burger Petro Jackson Players' Fund for their support since his injury, saying: "The Players' Fund has been a lifeline, from practical support like equipment and modifications, to emotional encouragement and support."

"I can't thank them enough for everything they've done for me and are still doing!"

Powered by the heart of a champion, Dano's story is a striking revelation that resilience, community and purpose can turn even the toughest challenge into a platform for growth.

Touching on this, he comments: "The biggest lesson I've learned is that your life can change at any moment, so enjoy it to the fullest. On top of that, I've learned that your circumstances don't define you. Your response does." 



Quintin van Jaarsveld writes on behalf of the Players' Fund. If you would like to support the Chris Burger Petro Jackson Players' Fund, visit their website at www.playersfund.org.za and select any number of the giving options available, which include EFT, payfast, Snapscan and Zapper.

Get in touch: contact@playersfund.org.za



The Royals drive change in Eersterust

Profiling wheelchair rugby clubs competing in the South African Wheelchair Rugby League, we head to Eersterust to meet a young club

Poort Wheelchair Rugby Club, known as The Royals, was officially established in late 2022 by Coach Samuel “Sam” Ramatladi. In 2021, Coach Sam partnered with the Eersterust Community Health Centre, specifically its therapeutic services department, to host a disability sports day. The event introduced wheelchair rugby to the community for the first time.

Coach Sam has been involved in wheelchair rugby since 2015, when he was introduced to the sport by therapist and classifier Lea Swanepoel and later mentored by Victor Buitendag. He went on to coach and manage the Vikings Wheelchair Rugby Club in Soshanguve for seven years. During this time, he also helped facilitate a strategic partnership with Philadelphia Special High School, ensuring sustained access to the sport for learners and graduates with disabilities.

At the 2021 disability sports day, in a township often overlooked in formal sporting structures, Coach Sam recognised an opportunity to build something meaningful. Poort began to take shape.

The club’s first recruits were Neil Hofmeester and Deon Torris, both community leaders who would go on to become Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of the club. They are now regarded as foundational figures, who helped turn an idea into a functioning team.

Shortly after, Lesandra Arries became the club’s first female player. Her involvement helped broaden participation and brought new energy to the group. She played a key role in recruiting Roman Cameron, one of the club’s most talented athletes, who would later earn selection into the Wheelchair Rugby Fives preliminary national squad just two years after joining the sport.

Poort represents the next chapter in Coach Sam’s journey. It is a continuation of his work and a new frontier. He remains a dedicated volunteer, deeply committed to growing the sport.

He is actively pursuing coaching and officiating development through programmes run by World Wheelchair Rugby and has ambitions to establish at least two additional township-based clubs in the near future.



GROWING TEAM WITH EMERGING TALENT

Today, Poort Wheelchair Rugby Club has approximately 11 active players. It is a small squad by national standards, but one rich in character and potential.

Among its rising stars is Thato Jiyane, the youngest player in the entire South African Wheelchair Rugby League at just 13 years old (in 2026). The club continues to grow its female participation with Victoria Mgiba recently joining as another promising young athlete. The Royal's reach extends beyond Eersterust with players such as Tshepo Moakamela and Martins Thibela, based in Ga-Rankuwa and Soshanguve, joining despite logistical challenges.

Despite its recent formation, Poort has already made its mark in competition. The club has secured three bronze medals within its first four years, a strong return for a young team still building depth and experience.

BUILDING IN A CHALLENGING ENVIRONMENT

Eersterust is a community with deep social challenges such as unemployment, substance abuse and limited access to structured opportunities. Within this context, disability often carries an additional burden. There remains a cultural perception in some parts of the community that people with disabilities should be hidden from public life.

Poort Wheelchair Rugby Club exists in direct opposition to that idea. The club is built on a simple, powerful mission: To promote disability awareness through sport while improving the mental wellbeing of individuals with disabilities.



MAIN AND TOP: The Poort Wheelchair Rugby Club, known as The Royals, from Eersterust in Pretoria.

CENTER LEFT: Coach Samuel "Sam" Ramatladi started the Poort Wheelchair Rugby Club in 2022.

CENTER RIGHT: Lesandra Arries was the first female player to join the Poort Wheelchair Rugby Club.

ABOVE: (From the left) Thato Jiyane is the youngest player in the entire South African Wheelchair Rugby League at just 13. Next to him is Deon Torris one of the first recruits, who helped make the team a reality.

WHEELCHAIR RUGBY

Its vision is equally clear: To help athletes reach their full potential while creating opportunities for growth, confidence and empowerment.

As one of the first disability sport initiatives in Eersterust, the club is actively working to shift how disability is understood within the community. It challenges stigma, creates visibility and builds confidence among athletes who might otherwise remain excluded. Through unity, determination and consistent engagement, Poort is helping to reshape perceptions and inspire a new generation.

DEVELOPMENT BEYOND THE COURT

Poort Wheelchair Rugby Club is not only focused on league competition. Its broader impact lies in community development. The club hosts an annual disability sports day in Eersterust, which reaches neighbouring communities such as Mamelodi, Refilwe (Cullinan) and Atteridgeville.

It introduces participants to a range of adaptive sports, including wheelchair racing, dancing, volleyball and hockey. Wheelchair rugby sits at the centre of this offering, but the broader aim is inclusion and participation.

Poort also invests in team cohesion and wellbeing. The club organises at least two outings per year, including trips to the movies or recreational venues. These are rare opportunities for players to leave their immediate environment. In 2025, the team travelled to Bloemfontein for a joint development day with the Mustangs Wheelchair Rugby Club. For some players, it was their first time travelling outside of Pretoria.

The club is preparing to undertake a tour of Tshwane district health facilities in collaboration with therapeutic departments to promote wheelchair rugby and other adaptive sports. There are also plans to grow the annual



TOP: Neil Hofmeester is the Poort Wheelchair Rugby Club captain and one of the first recruits for the Club.


ABOVE: The Poort Wheelchair Rugby Club placed third at the 2024 Wheelchair Rugby Fives League.

disability sports day into a regional and eventually national event with participation from across Gauteng and beyond.

CALL FOR SUPPORT

The progress of Poort has not come easily. The club continues to face significant constraints such as a lack of a dedicated training venue, limited access to transport and ongoing funding challenges. These barriers affect everything from training consistency to player recruitment and competition participation.

To sustain and expand its impact, Poort Wheelchair Rugby Club requires financial support and sponsorship to support athlete development, transport, equipment and access to training facilities.

If you would like to support the club or learn more, reach out on e-mail at sramatladi3@gmail.com or phone 062 658 2369. Follow along with their journey on [Facebook](#) at [@poortwcrugby](#). 



South Africa Wheelchair Rugby (SAWCR) is the official administrator of the wheelchair rugby in South Africa. The association is involved in all aspects from development and local club support to game officials and managing the national wheelchair rugby league. For more information, please contact admin@sawcr.co.za or visit the official Facebook page at [@SAWheelchairRugby](#).

Get in touch: admin@sawcr.co.za





Redefining identity through exploration

Sexual identity changes after an injury and requires some personal exploration to redefine how you see yourself

After a spinal cord injury (SCI), many questions arise about the future. Some are practical like “How will I move, work, or live day to day?”. Others are more personal and often harder to put into words. One of the most common, yet least talked about, is: “Am I still the same person sexually?”

Sexuality is not only about what we do physically. It is also about how we see ourselves, as a man or a woman, as a partner, and whether we consider ourselves desirable or as someone capable of giving and receiving intimacy.

When an SCI changes the way your body functions, it can also challenge this sense of identity.

“

Sexuality is not only about what we do physically. It is also about how we see ourselves.

Before your injury, your sexual identity may have felt stable and predictable. You knew what you enjoyed, how your body responded and how you related to a partner. After an SCI, this familiarity can be disrupted.

Changes in sensation, arousal or physical ability may create uncertainty. It is easy to

start questioning your attractiveness or your role in a sexual relationship.

It is important to remember that this does not mean you have “lost” your sexuality. Rather, your sexual identity is going through a process of change, much like other areas of your life after an injury. The difficulty is that identity is deeply personal, and unlike physical rehabilitation, there is no clear step-by-step guide to follow.

A common trap is to compare yourself to who you were before the injury. While this is understandable, it can also be limiting. When your focus stays on what you have lost or what is no longer possible, it becomes difficult to look for what is still available to you.



Sexuality is not fixed. It evolves over time, even without an injury.

Sexuality is not fixed. It evolves over time, even without an injury. An SCI simply accelerates the need to explore and redefine it.

Another challenge is how you believe others see you. Many people with SCI worry that they are no longer attractive or that potential partners will only see the disability. These thoughts can lead to withdrawal from dating or intimacy, which in turn reinforces the belief that you are undesirable.

In reality, attraction is influenced by far more than physical function. Confidence, emotional connection, humour and authenticity all play a significant role in how we experience each other sexually.

Rebuilding your sexual identity starts with self-exploration. This includes understanding how your body responds now, what you enjoy and what intimacy means to you at this stage of your life. It may feel unfamiliar at first, but with time and curiosity, new patterns of pleasure and connection can develop.

Communication is equally important. Sharing your thoughts, fears and preferences with a partner creates space for mutual understanding and support. It also allows both of you to move away from assumptions and towards a shared experience of intimacy.

Lastly, be patient with yourself. Identity does not change overnight. Just as physical recovery takes time, so does the process of feeling comfortable and confident in your sexuality again.

You are still the same person at your core. Your sexuality has not disappeared. It is simply evolving. With openness, exploration and support, it can become just as meaningful and fulfilling as before, even if it looks different. **R**

Charis is a psychology practice that specialises in the physical rehabilitation field.



We have numerous practices across Gauteng and are here to help.

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Dr **Danie Breedt** is a passionate scholar-practitioner in the field of psychology. He divides his time between training, research and clinical practice. Danie works from an integrative interactional approach in psychotherapy, dealing with a wide range of emotional difficulties and sexual rehabilitation for patients with disabilities. He is the co-owner of Charis Psychological Services, a psychology practice that specialises in physical rehabilitation across South Africa.

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World Run raises millions for spinal cord injury research

The 2026 Wings for Life World Run saw an astounding 346 527 participants from 173 countries who collectively raised €9,2 million (R177 million) for research into a cure for spinal cord injuries.

The event is truly for people of all ages and abilities as you can run, walk or roll. Participants included 100-year-old Paula Attwenger from Austria.

Jo Fukuda took the global title with 78,9 km. Mikky Keetels was the overall winner in the women's category with 62,2 km. Locally, Siphon Godwin Mqati took the crown with 41,55 km. Nicky Booyens was the top female runner with 31,39 km.

Congratulations to all the winners and to everyone who participated in the event to raise funds for spinal cord injury research. 

2026 Events Calendar

WHEELCHAIR RUGBY CHAMPIONSHIP 23 May to 1 June 2026

The South African Wheelchair Rugby team will be competing in the European Division B Championship taking place in Zaragoza, Spain, with the aim of advancing further and qualifying for the Paralympic Games.

ADAPTIVE 4X4ING 13 June 2026

The Adaptive Sports Fund will be trying out Adaptive 4x4ing on 13 June 2026. Visit their [Facebook page](#) for more information or contact them at info@adaptivesportsfund.org.

ADAPTIVE SNOW-SKIING 23-26 July 2026

The Adaptive Sports Fund will be trying out Adaptive Snow-Skiing on 23 to 26 July 2026. Visit their [Facebook page](#) for more information or contact them at info@adaptivesportsfund.org.


ADAPTIVE PADEL 8 August 2026

The Adaptive Sports Fund will be trying out Adaptive Padel on 8 August 2026. Visit their [Facebook page](#) for more information or contact them at info@adaptivesportsfund.org.


ADAPTIVE GOLF 12 September 2026

The Adaptive Sports Fund will be trying out Adaptive Golf on 12 September 2026. Visit their [Facebook page](#) for more information or contact them at info@adaptivesportsfund.org.

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