

A Year of Growth and Possibility

“The only limit to our realization of tomorrow is our doubts of today.” – Franklin D. Roosevelt

At Innovation for the Blind, we believe true empowerment comes from **unlocking potential—seeing beyond limitations and embracing possibilities**. Our theme for 2025 is not just about creating opportunities; it's about **challenging perceptions and proving that ability knows no bounds**.

Trailblazers like Joseph Matheatau, South Africa's first blind barista, and Terelga Bald, a skilled massage therapist with a visual impairment, are redefining what's possible—not only as masters of their craft but as mentors training the next generation. One of our most exciting milestones this past year was the launch of **Refresh: Wellness and Barista Hub**. Here, Joseph and Terelga's students with visual impairments refine their skills, serve **exceptional coffee**, and provide **relaxing massages** in a space where talent is nurtured, barriers are broken, and confidence is built. More than just a hub, Refresh stands as a symbol of resilience, learning, and opportunity.

Among our success stories is **Arthur Breedt**, who arrived at the **Barista Training Centre** unsure of his abilities. At first, he hesitated to engage with customers and lacked confidence in his skills. But through training, encouragement, and perseverance, Arthur transformed. Today, as a permanent Barista intern at Refresh, he serves customers with pride, holds meaningful conversations, and has found his own rhythm in the world of coffee. His journey is a testament to the power of gaining independence and true inclusion—a reminder that unlocking potential is about far more than acquiring skills; it's about gaining confidence and finding one's place in society.

Arthur's journey is just one of many. Across Innovation for the Blind, individuals like **Leslie-Ann, Angus, Flippie and Marthinus** have found opportunities to grow and thrive—whether in Refresh, our

laundry service, the gardening team, or the metal production unit. Each of these departments is more than just a workplace; each one is a launching pad for independence, dignity, and purpose. As we continue to expand, from growing our laundry department to introducing new sustainability initiatives, our mission remains the same: to create meaningful opportunities where people can flourish and build a future filled with possibility.

None of this would be possible without you—**our community, partners, and friends**. Your support fuels our vision, helping us build a future where ability is celebrated, potential is limitless, and no dream is out of reach.

Together, let's make 2025 a year of possibility, transformation, and empowerment.

Stephne Botha
Chief Executive Officer

Phenomenal Women

Innovation for the Blind is proud that our CEO, Stephné Botha, was the runner-up in the Phenomenal Women in **Management category**, and our staff member Terelga Bald was the runner-up in the Phenomenal Women with a **Disability category** at the **Cape Winelands Municipality's Phenomenal Women Awards** ceremony.

Congratulations to them and all the winners!



Terelga, Stephné and all the winners of the Phenomenal Women Awards

Innovation visits various congregations

Innovation for the Blind's (IFTB) Church performance group (CPG) visited several congregations, including the Dutch Reformed Church in Laaiplek, Piketberg and Worcester (Moedergemeente).

Our group of residents had an unforgettable weekend in Laaiplek on 24 and 25 August. During the event we had the privilege of sharing our talents with the congregation of the **Dutch Reformed Church in Laaiplek**, while at the same time exploring the beautiful surroundings – for some of our residents it was a first introduction to the West Coast's enchanting scenery. We express our sincere thanks and appreciation to the Dutch Reformed Church in Laaiplek for their warm hospitality, as well as to **Dwarskersbos Campsite** for the provision of accommodation. A special word of thanks to **Rev. Charl van Rensburg** and his team for the delicious braai and breakfast – a true feast!

On 6 October, we had the privilege of visiting the **Dutch Reformed Church in Piketberg**. With great appreciation, we thank them for the warm welcome, their time and care we experienced there. It was a special honour for us to share the message of love and compassion through our singing and testimony.

IFTB had the privilege of making our annual visit to the **Dutch Reformed Church in Worcester (Moedergemeente)** on 19 October. It was a joy for us to be able to share in the love, gratitude and care for each other with fellow believers. We express our sincere gratitude to **Rev. Jurie Wessels** and the church council for their warm welcome and the love with which our residents are welcomed each time we visit the congregation. Their hospitality and care mean so much to us.



Innovation's CPG visit the Dutch Reformed Church in Laaiplek



Innovation's CPG visit the Dutch Reformed Church in Piketberg



Innovation's CPG visit the Dutch Reformed Church in Worcester (Moedergemeente)

Note:

If you would like to visit us or invite us to your church, institution or retreat, please contact us at 023 347 2745 or send an email to reception@innovationfortheblind.org

Visitors from all over

Several guests visited IFTB. We thank each guest for their interest in our organisation.

On 21 July, a group of motorcyclists visited us and brought gifts for our residents. Many thanks to **Clinton Pienaar** from the **Moto Bike Shed** and every participating rider. Your generosity made a big difference.

The **Sanlam Boland Kavaliers** rugby players thoroughly enjoyed their visit to IFTB. They participated in various activities – all blindfolded – to experience what it is like to be blind. The players walked with long canes, played darts and chess, learned how to identify money, pour a glass of water,



Moto Bike Shed's generosity



Sanlam Boland Kavaliers learns more about IFTB

practiced sign language and opened a lock.

We thank **Hilde O'Niel** for the donation of her children's book "Reis na die Suiderland" in Braille. The book was read to the therapy group and is also available to residents who can read Braille.

On 27 August, we received 6 members of the **Reformed Church of Japan** and their interpreter, Rev. Stèphan van der Watt. The group visited us to learn more about compassionate work in South Africa. It was a particularly inspiring occasion.

On 12 September, IFTB welcomed four people who attended the **Ubuntu 2024 Conference** at Stellenbosch University, for an introduction to our activities. It was a privilege and an opportunity for people from other countries to learn more about our organisation.

On 2 October, **20 German guests** visited IFTB and did various activities blindfolded. It was a special experience, and we thank the **Cape Winelands District Municipality** for making it possible.



The Sanlam Boland Cavaliers team with Corrie Malan and Stephné Botha



Hilde O'Niel's visit



The Reformed Church of Japan



The Ubuntu Conference's visit to learn more about IFTB



The 20 German guests

Thank you to all our visitors



The Parliamentary Portfolio Committee of the department of Social Development

On 24 October, the **Parliamentary Portfolio Committee of the department of Social Development** visited IFTB to inspect our assisted living units. Our CEO, Stephné Botha, gave an informative presentation on IFTB and our housing program. Christina Mntuyedwa (visually impaired), shared her positive experiences and explained how subsidies have improved her life. The committee commended the quality of our services and facilities. We appreciate their visit and thank them for their interest and support.



Mss. Griesel, Botha, Mr. Scheffler, Mr. Pool and Krenkel, Prof Schwella

On 4 November, German guests, **Mr. Scheffler and Krenkel**, visited IFTB to explore development opportunities. They explored our Deafblind Training Centre and the metal department. The visit was part of a broader initiative to visit local projects, introduce their technology and learn more about IFTB's work. They were accompanied by **Prof. Schwella, Mr. Pool and Ms. Griesel**. IFTB is grateful for their interest and looks forward to possible future collaborations.



Jan Kriel Foundation visits IFTB

On 6 November, representatives from the **Jan Kriel Foundation** visited IFTB to learn more about our work. Our CEO, Stephné Botha, took them on a tour, including a visit to our DeafBlind Training Centre and other departments. We sincerely appreciate their visit and interest.

On 21 November, we welcomed the wonderful **Anna Bergholtz** and her partner, **Martin Hromada**, from Sweden. We showcased our projects and learned about their inspiring work. Anna is a visually impaired journalist who focuses on diversity, inclusion, human rights and health. She is a campaigner for a more inclusive world and we are grateful for their visit and hope to see them again.



Anna Bergholtz and Martin Hromada visited IFTB

The Hollywood Foundation's care

The **Hollywood Foundation** blessed us with a very valuable donation of urns and blood pressure monitors. We would like to say a big thank you for this great donation.



Hollywood foundation's care



St Dunstan's Long Cane Rally gifts

Long Cane Rally

On 5 October, 43 of our residents and chaperones had the privilege of participating in the **Long Cane Rally**, hosted by St Dunstan's. We would like to thank **Cape Winelands Municipality** for the beautiful goodie bags for our participants and **Piet van Blerk** for the contents of these bags. We would also like to thank **St Dunstan's** for the opportunity to participate and for donating brand new sneakers for each participant.

A visit from the "Angels"

We had the privilege of welcoming five "angels" from **Angels in Action** on 29 October to learn more about our organisation. They had the opportunity to experience what it means to live with blindness or visual impairment and how our residents overcome the challenges of everyday life. At the end of the visit, they blessed our residents with bags full of love and care in the form of toiletries. We appreciate it!



The Angels in Action blessings

"Breiwilligheid" project helps premature babies



International Prem Day give back at Tygerberg Hospital's Neonatal Intensive care Ward

Our "**Breiwilligheid**" project delivered a total of 100 crocheted octopus and beanie packages to **Tygerberg Hospital's Neonatal Intensive care Ward**. We would like to thank every person who donated wool to the project. Your donations make it possible for us to share the warmth of love with others again.

December sparks care

We would like to say a big thank you from the bottom of our hearts to every person, congregation and business that enriched the lives of our residents during the Christmas season.

A big thank you to the following donor friends: the **Merweville Dutch Reformed Church** for the



Merweville Dutch Reformed Church's donation

The Spencer family's gifts

donation of toiletries, the **Spencer family** for the specially wrapped gifts for our families' children, to **APL Cartons** for two large boxes full of groceries and then also to **Audensberg Dutch Reformed Church** for boxes filled with groceries, toiletries and gifts for families living at our assisted living apartments.

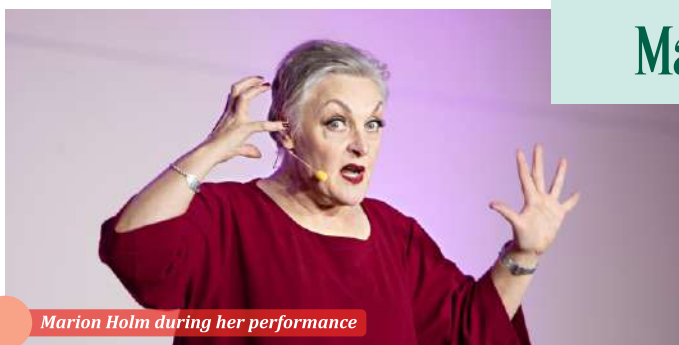
Your donations made the festive season special for all the families in our care.



APL Cartons' donation

Audensberg Dutch Reformed Church's care packages

Marion Holm brings laughter



Marion Holm during her performance

We once again had the privilege of celebrating our annual **Out of Office** event on 4 September. This year, the beloved **Marion Holm** entertained us and made sure that the laugh muscles got a proper workout!

We would like to say a big thank you to Marion, as well as to **every guest** who supported us and was part of this special event. A special word of thanks to **our sponsors** – without you this day would not have been possible.

Thank you for an unforgettable day full of laughter, togetherness and appreciation!



Our waiters (all with visual impairments) with Marion Holm



Stephné Botha chats with Sarel, one of our residents

Thank you to all our sponsors:



National Wills Week

National Wills Week, an annual initiative of the Law Society of South Africa (LSSA), encourages South Africans to have a valid will. Participating attorneys then draft basic wills free of charge.

Jean-Jacques Naudé and **Emile Windvogel** of **J Naudé Attorneys Inc** Worcester assisted our residents and staff with their wills. We would like to thank them for their time and willingness to come out and support our residents and staff every year. You are truly appreciated.



Emile Windvogel and Jean-Jacques Naudé from J Naudé Attorneys Inc

Innovation walks through Eye Care Awareness Month

National Eye Care Month is an annual highlight on our calendar. From 21 September to 18 October 2024, we undertook various projects to raise awareness about the importance of eye care and the prevention of blindness.

We started early by **walking through Worcester** on 13 September as a group of staff (blindfolded and with canes) and residents to raise awareness.

On 11 October, we were at the **Worcester Mountain Mill Shopping Centre** where ten of our residents visited various stores. At the same time, we invited members of the public to walk blindfolded with guidance through the shopping centre to experience what it feels like to find your way around without sight.

We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who spent the day with us and walked alongside us. A special thank you also to the **various shops and restaurants** that participated and made the day special.

In addition, we shared weekly tips on our social media. **Various optometrists** offered free screening tests throughout the month: Many thanks to Van Eeden & Le Roux Oogkundiges, Rejeanne Dippenaar Optometrists and Torga Optical.



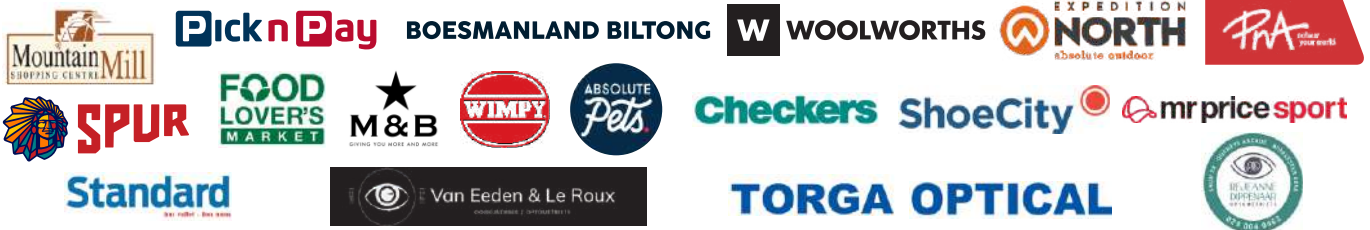
IFTB staff walk blindfolded through Worcester central



Participants of the Mall Walk in Worcester Mountain Mill Shopping Centre



Thank you to everyone who participated:



IFTB Board of Control with Morné, Stephné and Belinda



CEOs Cobus (NID), Stephné (IFTB), Basie (Basie)

Annual General Meeting

On 26 September, we hosted our Annual General Meeting at the **Hein Wagner Academy** in Worcester. It was also streamed live via social media. Stephné Botha, Innovation for the Blind's CEO, gave a brief overview of our projects and activities in the financial year, from 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024. We would like to thank every person and organisation who spent the evening with us, as well as everyone who tuned in to our broadcast. The Annual Report and the broadcast are available on our website: www.innovationfortheblind.org.

Innovative cooking!

Morné van der Merwe, a resident and employee of Innovation for the Blind, emerged as the first place **Jury Award winner** of the **International Golden Eye Chef** competition for the visually impaired. We are incredibly proud of him!

A special thank you to **Tharina Marais** from **Pure Boland Market** for their generous donation of fresh, locally sourced ingredients for his dish. We truly appreciate it! They provided homemade pasta, basil, flavourful pesto, parmesan cheese, fresh tomatoes, and olive oil – all of the highest quality.

Morné cooked with passion and precision to prepare a delicious pasta with basil and tomato, which perfectly matched this year's competition theme: light, easy and healthy.



Stephné, Morné and Tharina celebrating this achievement

Innovation on air

On 6 December, residents of Innovation for the Blind gathered to listen to **Wysie oor die Water**, a powerful radio drama written by **Albert Short**. The drama, which aired on **RSG** on 5 December, is truly unique because every member of the production team and actors are visually impaired. To celebrate this incredible achievement, we hosted a gala event on 6 December, where our CEO, **Stephné Botha** interviewed the production team about their journey in creating the radio drama.

Hearing their stories and dedication was an absolute privilege. Their hard work and talent is truly inspiring. Congratulations to **Sanna Antonie**, **FC Smit**, **Sarel van der Westhuizen**, **Morné van der Merwe** and **Gavin Grundlingh** on this incredible achievement. We are all very proud of you! The podcast of the radio drama is available on our website: www.innovationfortheblind.org



Gavin (sound technician) and Sarel (director)



Morné (musician), Sanna (female voice) en FC (male voice)



The radio theater team being interviewed by Stephné at the gala event

Elderly adventures

In celebration of **International Day of Older Persons** (1 October), **Huis Brevis** held a week-long celebration. Activities included a visit from our orientation and mobility practitioner, a prayer session, exercises, creative activities, a visit to the Worcester Fire Department and a Disney-theme lunch. A huge thank you to everyone who made the week possible. Special thanks to **Rev. Jurie Wessels**, **Ann de Jager**, the **Worcester Fire Department**, **Feedem**, as well as the **amazing staff and volunteers**. We truly appreciate you.



Ann de Jager helps loosen some joints

Some elderly residents visit the Worcester Fire Department

Innovation glides for Disability Awareness

On 19 November, our CEO, Stephné Botha, and Joseph Matheatau, our blind barista, joined **Provincial Minister Jaco Londt** on the longest zipline in the world at **K3-SA Forest Adventures** near Caledon. It was an incredible experience and we thank Jaco, K3-Sa Forest Adventures - Caledon and everyone who made this possible for Joseph. We truly appreciate you.



Stephné and Joseph with Provincial Minister Jaco Londt at K3



Elton Harding and Bev Peetz from Crossbow Marketing visit IFTB

Treat yourself to a new diary

We were delighted to welcome our partners **Crossbow Marketing** for their annual visit. We shared new projects and they were proud of our residents' achievements and innovative developments at IFTB.

Buy an Executive Trend diary or wall calendar via Crossbow Marketing and support our organisation. (021) 700 6500 <https://kindhearted.co.za/product-category/iftb/>

SAVE THESE DATES:

- 16 May Golf Day in Aid of the Blind
- 15 June Day of Prayer for the Blind
- 15 June Innovation turns 144
- 18 July Mandela Day
- 3 September Out of Office event

You can make a difference!

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- Cellphone Number • Email Address • Address

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- EFT • Bequest • SnapScan • Debit Order • List us as the beneficiary for MySchool MyVillage MyPlanet card

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