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NEWSLETTER

Official Newsletter of ChangeAbility
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Keeping warm this winter!

CINDY WIGGETT-BARNARD, CEO

Thank you for reading our fifth newsletter, the third one for 2025! We love sharing our news with you as we keep warm this winter.

We envision a world where people see the potential and abilities in others, and where they embrace it in themselves. Our name, ChangeAbility, reflects why we do what we do. We do it because we love people and we dream of a world where all people are recognised for their abilities. We believe our programmes can change communities by improving the lives of people with disabilities.

Thank you for reading!



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Success Story

ALLEN DAVIDS, MACASSAR

Allen Davids grew up in the Helderberg area and now calls Macassar home. His journey with ChangeAbility began when our peer supporter, Wendell, met him on the street and recognised that he needed help. What followed was a collaborative effort to support Allen on his road to recovery and a more stable life.

In 2023, Allen suffered a life-changing stroke that left him with significant physical and cognitive challenges. His feet and knees became stiff, and he now relies on a wheelchair to move around. Before his stroke, Allen had spent time living outdoors, which caused further damage to his feet. His family helped during our interview, as Allen also experiences ongoing speech and processing difficulties. Yet, through continued physiotherapy, he has seen improvement in his speech and hands. "I am now very healthy," he says with pride.



Allen's recovery journey has not been without its obstacles. After spending extended periods in hospital, he returned home to find that his wheelchair had gone missing. Our social worker stepped in and worked closely with the local clinic physiotherapist to secure a temporary replacement. Unfortunately, that wheelchair was later damaged by a dog, but Allen now has another one that suits his needs.

A turning point in Allen's recovery came when his family helped him move to a new home. He previously lived in extremely difficult conditions in a small room with extended family, but he is now in a much more caring and supportive environment. "My life is now a lot better," Allen shares, visibly comfortable and settled.

"My life is
now a lot
better."

ALLEN DAVIDS





Success Story

ALLEN DAVIDS, MACASSAR (CONT.)

Part of Allen's week now includes attending the Macassar disability group, where he takes part in regular exercises. The group not only supports his physical health but provides much-needed social connection and community. "It is very nice at the group and I enjoy the exercises," he says.

Our team also played a key role in helping Allen access financial support. We assisted him in applying for his SASSA disability grant and Grants in Aid for his caregiver. Initially, due to his poor health, he was issued a temporary grant, but this has since been converted to a permanent disability grant, along with continued support for his care needs.



Although there are still administrative hurdles, such as the ongoing effort to resolve a backpay issue with SASSA, Allen now has the basic financial and health support he needs to live with dignity. Our social workers continue to assist his family in navigating the system and advocating on his behalf.

Allen's story is one of resilience and renewed hope. With the right support, safe housing, and access to healthcare and social services, he has regained both stability and purpose. We are proud to walk this road with him and look forward to seeing him continue to thrive as part of our Macassar family.

If you are in the Macassar area and would like to join our exercise group, like Allen did, you can find us at the new Civic Centre every Tuesday from 09:30.

"It is very nice at the group and I enjoy the exercises."

ALLEN DAVIDS



Volunteer Spotlight

MARCIA LYNER-CLEOPHAS, MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE SECRETARY

Marcia Lyner-Cleophas, Secretary of ChangeAbility's Management Committee, has long been a passionate advocate for disability inclusion. Her personal connection to disability started early. She grew up in a family of eight children, including a sister with cerebral palsy. Rather than institutionalising her, the family chose to care for her at home, an experience that profoundly shaped Marcia's view of inclusion and dignity. "Disability is therefore a golden thread that runs through my life," she says.

Marcia began her professional journey as a teacher in the 1980s after completing her studies at the University of the Western Cape. She later trained as an educational psychologist at Stellenbosch University, working at Noluthando School for Deaf Children in Khayelitsha before joining Stellenbosch University's Centre for Student Counselling and Development. There, she became the founding manager of the Disability Unit in 2007, a role that brought her personal and professional passions together in service of student inclusion and support.



Her decision to join ChangeAbility as a volunteer felt like a natural extension of her lifelong exposure to disability, both at home and in her career. She reflects that while she didn't grow up surrounded by visibly disabled peers, she now recognises how many people around her were living with less visible conditions, such as mental health challenges. ChangeAbility offered a community-rooted platform where she could continue advocating for inclusion in practical, local ways.

As secretary of the Management Committee, Marcia records meeting minutes and contributes to strategic discussions. She first joined as a member without a portfolio, before formally taking on the secretary role last year. Balancing volunteer work with a demanding professional and personal life can be challenging, especially as she travels from Cape Town to attend meetings in Stellenbosch. "There are clashes at times and I often have to make choices and compromises," she notes.

Volunteer Spotlight

MARCIA LYNER-CLEOPHAS, MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE SECRETARY (CONT.)

One of the most impactful initiatives during her time at ChangeAbility has been the three-year disability awareness training partnership with Stellenbosch Municipality, which included policy revision and systemic change. She also finds deep meaning in the peer supporter programme, particularly the leadership shown by individuals like Ricardo Lodewyk, whom she describes as “an absolute role model in his community and a stalwart too.”

For Marcia, the most rewarding aspect of volunteering with ChangeAbility is seeing the real difference the organisation makes in the lives of people with disabilities. The peer supporters, she says, don’t just offer assistance, they inspire change. Their presence in the community brings visibility, empowerment, and hope to those who might otherwise be isolated or underserved.



Looking ahead, Marcia hopes that ChangeAbility can secure sustainable funding to grow and deepen its services. She believes that the organisation fills critical gaps that government alone cannot meet. “The fact that there is an established ChangeAbility is great,” she says, “as the strides made can be leveraged and harnessed for further development and entrenchment in the communities being served.”

She calls on individuals and businesses to support the organisation, especially through corporate social responsibility initiatives. “ChangeAbility is taking a huge responsibility from government,” she explains. “It therefore needs to get the financial backing in a much stronger way than is currently the case.”

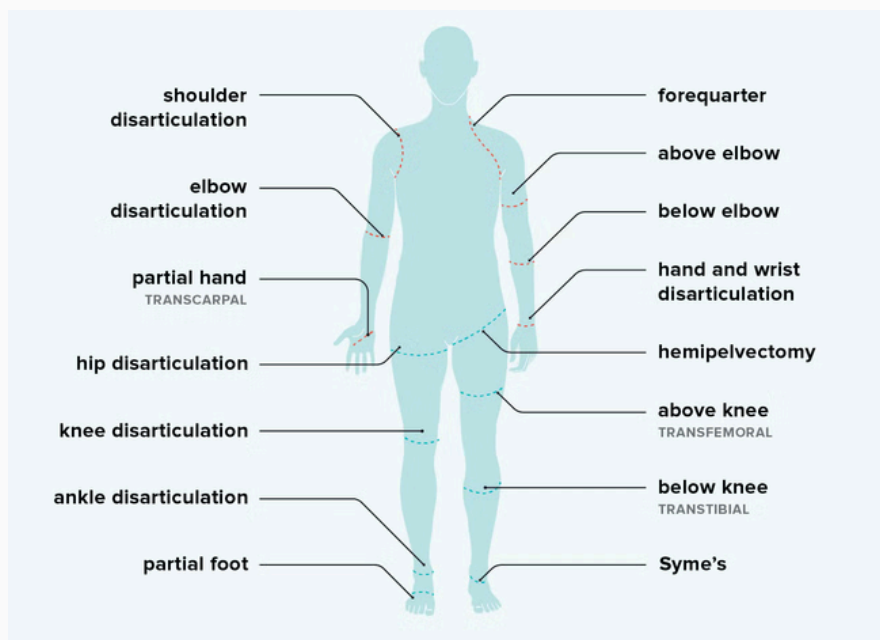


Educational Content

UNDERSTANDING AMPUTATIONS

Amputation refers to the removal of a limb or part of a limb, often as a result of injury, illness or medical necessity. While the experience of limb loss is deeply personal and life-changing, it is also a broader public health concern that affects thousands of South Africans every year. From rural clinics to urban hospitals, amputations reflect the intersection of healthcare access, chronic disease management and disability support services.

Types of Amputation



Causes:

The most common causes of amputations include complications from diabetes, severe infections, traumatic injuries (such as motor vehicle accidents), and vascular diseases that affect blood flow. In some cases, cancers or congenital conditions may require surgical removal of a limb. Delayed access to medical care often contributes to the need for amputation, especially in under-resourced communities.

“When you amputate, you know that you are changing that person’s life forever. It’s always a very tough decision to take.”

STELLA VIG
VASCULAR/GENERAL SURGEON





Educational Content

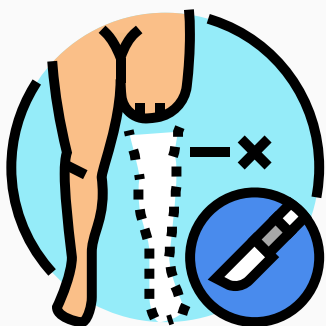
UNDERSTANDING AMPUTATION (CONT.)

Prevention is often Possible

Many amputations are preventable with early intervention and appropriate medical management. Regular foot care for people living with diabetes, treatment of infections, managing high blood pressure and reducing tobacco use all play a crucial role in prevention. Health education and routine screenings in local communities can also help reduce the incidence of limb loss. However, it is important to acknowledge that not all amputations can be prevented. In some cases, despite the best efforts, medical, genetic or trauma-related factors may still lead to amputation.

Understanding the Risk Factors

Risk factors include chronic conditions such as diabetes, hypertension and peripheral arterial disease. Older adults, individuals with limited access to healthcare and those with poor nutrition or lifestyle-related illnesses are also at greater risk. Environmental and workplace hazards may further increase the likelihood of traumatic injury leading to amputation.



Living with Amputation

Living with an amputation involves physical, emotional, and social adaptation. Prosthetics, physiotherapy and peer support can make a significant difference in recovery and reintegration into daily life. However, accessibility barriers, stigma and limited service availability can hinder full participation in community life for amputees.

How ChangeAbility Supports Amputees

At ChangeAbility, we are committed to supporting individuals who have undergone amputations. Through our peer support programme, accessible exercise groups, and community-based rehabilitation, we work to ensure amputees are empowered to live full and active lives. We believe in seeing the ability beyond the disability and in creating inclusive spaces where every person is valued and supported.

“Limb loss
changed and
disrupted my
life, but it didn’t
ruin it.”

IAN COLQUHOUN
DOUBLE AMPUTEE



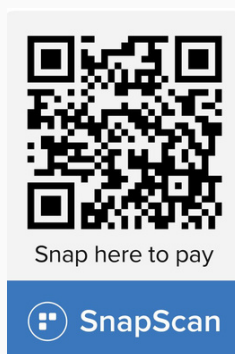


Upcoming Events

14 August	Disability Networks meeting	Helderberg Hospice
19-22 August	WCAPD Social Worker Indaba	Hartenbos
5 September	Casual Day	Nationally
16 September	Annual General Meeting	NHK Church

Supporting Us

☀️ You have the power to help us make a difference! 💪 Support our cause by donating to fund programmes for people in the Cape Winelands. 🍇 Use SnapScan or our direct deposit details below for easy donations. Or visit our GivenGain profile (<https://www.givengain.com/cause/changeability-8713>) for more options. As a tax exempt organisation, we can issue an 18A tax rebate certificate for donations received. Thank you for your support! 🙏 #DonateNow #SupportOurCause ☀️



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