ANNUAL REPORT 2024/2025

MDFSA, Gauteng Branch

(Gauteng, Limpopo, North West, Mpumalanga & Free State)

April 2025 – March 2026

Organizational Details

www.mdsa.org.za

Office Address: 12 Botes Street, Florida Park, 1709

Office Tel: 011-472-9824

Mission Statement

To support people affected by Muscular Dystrophy and Neuromuscular disorders and endeavor to improve the quality of life of its members with evidence-based research.

Board Members:

- Anri Human – Chairperson
- Rudy Petersen – Vice Chairperson
- Karan Singh – Treasurer
- Izelle Smuts – Secretary
- Gertie Du Plessis – Board Member
- Thato Mokgabudi – Board Member

Our board members consist of volunteers. They do not get any compensation for this task. Their main purpose is to ensure that the Foundation stays relevant and executes its mandate in a correct and sound manner.

Gauteng Chairperson Message

Message from Gauteng Chairperson, Prof. Anri Human

It is my absolute pleasure and privilege to welcome you to the 2026 Annual General Meeting of the Muscular Dystrophy Foundation, Gauteng Branch.

Having assumed the role of Chairperson from Andrew Miller at our 2025 AGM, I have found this past year a deeply meaningful journey for me, both personally and professionally. Stepping into this position has afforded me the invaluable opportunity to engage more closely with the heartbeat of our branch and witness first-hand the profound dedication that fuels our daily operations.

Our Annual General Meeting is a vital cornerstone of our organisation. Beyond fulfilling our formal governance and accountability responsibilities, today gives us pause to reflect on our collective journey over the past twelve months, celebrating our achievements, examining the challenges we have navigated, and mapping out the strategic opportunities ahead.

At the heart of everything we do remain the individuals and families living with Muscular Dystrophy and related neuromuscular conditions. Every support service rendered, every family assisted, every awareness campaign launched, and every fundraising initiative undertaken directly contributes to enhancing the health-related quality of life, dignity, and independence of those we serve.

An impact of this scale is never achieved in isolation, therefore I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to:

- Staff and Volunteers: Thank you for your tireless commitment, passion, and hands-on dedication to our beneficiaries.

- Board Members: I extend my heartfelt thanks for your strategic leadership, wisdom, and steadfast governance.
- Donors, Sponsors, and Partners: Your generous financial contributions, resources, and trust form the vital foundation that allows our work to continue and expand.

The year ahead will undoubtedly present new challenges, but I remain entirely confident in our collective strength. By maintaining robust governance, fostering strong collaborative partnerships, and keeping our beneficiaries' needs at the absolute centre of our decisions, we will continue to build a strong, resilient, and sustainable Gauteng Branch.

Thank you to everyone who has played a part in our journey over the past year. I look forward to working alongside you as we continue to move forward with purpose, compassion, and hope.

I would like to conclude with the following words of wisdom from Desmond Tutu:

"Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness."

Social Services

During the reporting period, the social work services have provided direct psychosocial, emotional and practical support to approximately 400 members and their families living with Muscular Dystrophy and related neuromuscular conditions.

Support was provided according to the individual needs of each member and their family. This included individual psychosocial support, wellbeing checks, family support, advocacy, referrals and practical assistance. Members and families were also assisted with social grant matters, equipment applications, referrals to healthcare professionals and accessing other relevant services and resources.

An important part of the year has been maintaining regular contact with members and being available when their needs change. The social worker has attended Muscle Clinics at hospitals on a monthly basis, providing an opportunity to meet with members and families in person, offer support, identify concerns and provide information or referrals where needed. These visits have also helped strengthen relationships between the Foundation, healthcare professionals, members and their families.

School-based support has continued throughout the year, with therapeutic group sessions provided to children and young people living with Muscular Dystrophy and related neuromuscular conditions. These sessions give learners a safe space to talk about their feelings and experiences while developing coping skills, communication, self-esteem, resilience and healthy relationships.

Activities were adapted to suit the different ages, abilities and needs of the learners. The focus has been on making the sessions engaging and practical, while giving learners an opportunity to express themselves and connect with others who may face similar challenges.

Raising awareness of Muscular Dystrophy and related neuromuscular conditions has also been an important part of the social work services this year.

During MD Awareness Month (September 2025), awareness talks were presented at 2 local schools, reaching approximately 1,500 individuals. These talks provided an opportunity to explain more about Muscular Dystrophy, create greater understanding around disability and encourage inclusion and empathy.

Through these different activities, the social work services have been able to support members directly while also reaching schools, healthcare professionals, other organisations and the wider community. The focus throughout the year has been on ensuring that members and their families have someone they can turn to for support, guidance, practical assistance and advocacy.

Equipment

Access to appropriate equipment continues to be one of the biggest practical needs among our members. For people living with Muscular Dystrophy and related neuromuscular conditions, the right equipment can make a major difference to their independence, mobility, safety and quality of life.

During the reporting period, the Branch assisted numerous members with specialised equipment such as motorised wheelchairs.

The Branch assisted members and their families throughout the application process. This included gathering the required documentation, obtaining supporting medical information, assisting families with the application process and ensuring that applications could be considered by the Equipment Committee.

For the members who received motorised wheelchairs, the equipment provides much more than simply a means of getting around. It can provide greater independence, allow members to participate more fully in their homes and communities, and make everyday activities more accessible.

The Branch is extremely grateful to the donors and funding partners who make this assistance possible. Every piece of equipment provided has a direct impact on a member and their family and helps them to live with greater independence, dignity and quality of life.

The need for specialised equipment remains high, and the Branch will continue to work with members, families, healthcare professionals and funding partners to assist as many members as possible.

Fundraising

The Gauteng Branch of the Muscular Dystrophy Foundation of South Africa (MDFSA) enjoyed another productive year of fundraising and community engagement during the reporting period. Despite the ongoing financial challenges faced by charitable organisations, we continued to receive valuable support from donors, sponsors, volunteers, businesses, government partners, families, and members of the public.

We are deeply grateful to the following organisations, foundations, businesses, families, and individuals for their support during the year:

- National Lotteries Commission of South Africa (NLCSA)
- Cool Tech
- Fuchs Foundation
- Bradfield Foundation
- CKR Consulting
- Gauteng Department of Social Development
- Advanced Assessments and Training
- Akasia Athletics Club
- Muscle Runners

- Kings School
- Asset Control
- Derek Anderson
- Wheelchairs on the Run
- Fillrite Paints
- Langenhoven Family
- Kirkness Family Trust
- Michelle Van Aswegen
- Angela Broom

Our fundraising activities during the year included several successful initiatives that not only generated much-needed funds, but also helped to raise awareness of Muscular Dystrophy and the work of the Gauteng Branch.

Our Muscle Runners event at Westrand School was a particular highlight of the year. The event was very well received and brought together runners, supporters, families, and members of the school in support of MDFSA. We are extremely grateful to everyone who participated, assisted with the event, and helped make it such a success.

Muscle Riders once again represented MDFSA at the 947 Ride Joburg, providing an excellent platform to raise funds and awareness for people living with Muscular Dystrophy. We extend our sincere appreciation to every rider, supporter, and fundraiser who contributed to this campaign and helped carry the MDFSA name onto the road.

We would also like to express our sincere gratitude to the Gauteng Department of Social Development for their continued support of the Branch. Their funding and partnership play an important role in enabling us to provide services and practical support to individuals and families affected by Muscular Dystrophy and related neuromuscular conditions.

Casual Day continued to be an important awareness and fundraising initiative. We thank everyone who purchased stickers, promoted the campaign, participated in the activities, or otherwise contributed to making Casual Day a success. The participation and generosity of our supporters helped us to raise awareness of our cause while generating valuable funds for our work.

We also recognise the many smaller donations and the countless individuals, families, businesses, organisations, and volunteers who supported us throughout the year. Support came in many forms, including financial contributions, sponsorships, donations of goods and services, fundraising efforts, and the gift of time. Every act of generosity makes a difference.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to every person and organisation who supported the Gauteng Branch during the year. Your generosity enables us to continue providing support, counselling, information, referrals, awareness, and practical assistance to people living with Muscular Dystrophy and their families. We look forward to building on these successes and expanding our fundraising and awareness efforts in the year ahead.

Your support means Hope