

# VIA NOVA CURRICULUM NEWS

Quarterly Newsletter

Compiled by Miss C Siebert



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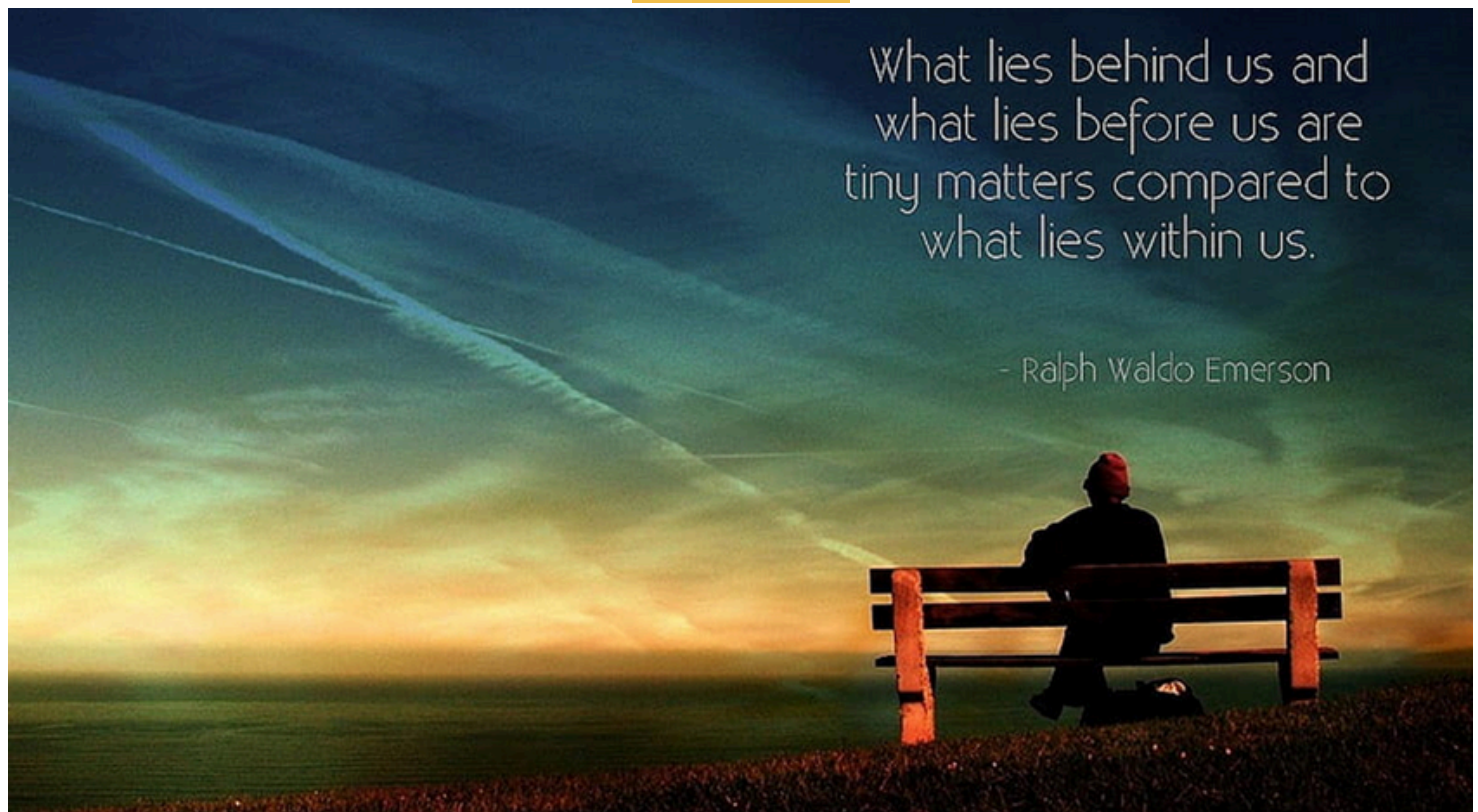
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What lies behind us and  
what lies before us are  
tiny matters compared to  
what lies within us.

- Ralph Waldo Emerson



## AUTISM AWARENESS FUN DAY

by By Carline Nkuna, Talitha Wentzel, Welile Ntshangase

On 8 May, Via Nova School came alive with colour, laughter, and excitement as learners and staff celebrated our annual Autism Awareness Fun Day.

Each learner contributed R100 to take part in a range of exciting activities. Stations were set up across the school, each costing R5 per turn.

Highlights included:

- Fishing Game (ASD Foundation Phase 2): Learners used hooks to “catch” colourful fish, winning prizes like sensory toys, snacks, sweets, and water gel beads based on the colour caught. This activity promoted motor skills, focus, patience, and social interaction.
- Cupcake Decorating (ASD Foundation Phase 1): Learners got creative with icing, sprinkles, and toppings, enjoying both the process and the tasty results.
- Spin and Win (ADL Phase): A spinning wheel of surprises offered instant prizes and excitement.
- Balloon Pop (PID Phase): A sensory-rich activity filled with sound, colour, and laughter.
- Sensory Stations (Occupational Therapist): Activities designed to stimulate and regulate, supporting sensory exploration and integration.
- Bubble Blow (Speech Therapists): Bubbles brought smiles and encouraged breath control, focus, and communication.
- Outdoor Games (Intermediate Phase): Learners competed in egg-and-spoon races, bean bag toss, and parachute games—boosting teamwork and coordination.
- Inflatables (Senior Phase): The jumping castles kept energy high.
- Face Painting (Senior Skills Phase): Transformations into superheroes, animals, and rainbows lit up many happy faces.
- Tuck Shop (Exit Phase): Managed by the Exit phase, the tuck shop offered tasty treats and drinks.

The music, dancing, and shared joy made the day feel like a true celebration. Learners and teachers ended the event dancing together, reinforcing the sense of connection and inclusion that defines our school community.

Fun Day was a sweet success - a powerful reminder of the value of play, creativity, and celebrating every learner for who they are.





# AUTISM AWARENESS FUN DAY





## ENTREPRENEURS DAY HIGHLIGHTS

Foundation Phase Entrepreneurs Day – 22 May 2025:

Written by Talitha Wentzel

The ASD Foundation Phase hosted a vibrant Entrepreneurs Day filled with creativity, teamwork, and delicious treats. The team set up a popular stall selling boerewors rolls, Coke, and muffins. The sizzling sounds of the grill and the sweet aroma of freshly baked goods attracted many hungry staff and learners. The boerewors rolls were a hit, served hot and juicy, while the ice-cold Coke provided the perfect refreshment. The event was a success, thanks to the enthusiastic support of everyone involved.



Intermediate Phase Entrepreneurs Day – 6 June 2025:

Written by Elize Scheepers

The Autism Intermediate Phase proudly showcased their creativity and business skills during their Entrepreneurs Day. The day was filled with excitement, laughter, and successful sales. Teachers led the way, selling refreshing cooldrinks, tasty popcorn, and sweet fizzers. A fun new activity, box photos, was introduced, allowing learners and teachers to snap pictures with amusing props and take-home printed copies as keepsakes. The event was a fantastic experience, and heartfelt thanks were extended to everyone who supported and contributed to its success.





**ADL Phase Entrepreneurs Day – 11 April 2025:**  
**Written by Malusi Nyawose**

The Activities of Daily Living (ADL) phase held their Entrepreneurs Day, selling various items such as chocolates, juice, chips, peanuts, sweets, and fruits. Learners and staff members came in large numbers to support the event. Everything went as planned, and all items were sold, allowing the phase to raise funds. The day was successful, and the phase made more profit than expected.





## EXIT PHASE LEARNERS TAKE CHARGE OF FRIDAY FOOD

*Written by Liné Nieuwoudt*

Every Friday, the school is filled with the delicious smells of snacks and meals made by our Exit Phase learners. As part of their life skills programme, they run the weekly tuckshop - planning menus, budgeting, preparing food, and handling sales.

Items like vetkoek, hotdogs, cupcakes, popcorn, and more are sold, with recent additions like burgers, chicken à la king, pizza, and chips. On average, they handle 60-70 orders each week.

This hands-on project helps learners build important skills such as teamwork, time management, communication, and financial literacy. With guidance from teacher Liné and assistant Virginia, learners gain confidence and independence.

*"The best part is seeing our learners take pride in their work,"* said one teacher.

Funds raised support future activities, class projects and ingredients, making the initiative both practical and sustainable. More than just a tuckshop, this project is helping learners prepare for the future.





## VIA NOVA SCHOOL HOSTS SUCCESSFUL 2025 GOLF DAY

*Written by Emily Thokozile Nkambule*

On 8 May 2025, Via Nova School hosted its first-ever Golf Day at Mooipoort Golf Course – a memorable event dedicated to raising funds in support of the school's ongoing development.

Two teams participated in the event: the Via Nova Teachers Golf Team and the Kameeldrift Golf Team, each playing in four-ball format. The day began with welcoming snacks, and the event ran smoothly thanks to the support of the SGB members, teachers, and admin staff who helped with coordination and logistics.

While the teams played from 11:00 to 17:00, some of the staff and the school principal had the opportunity to explore the sport of golf themselves – learning, trying, and enjoying a game that was new to many.

The day wouldn't have been possible without the generous support of our sponsors:

- ENGIGO Security Co. - sponsored two tees
- Sable Hills Spar - sponsored one tee
- Mr Thiye - sponsored one tee
- Vouchers and prizes - Kloppers, Pro Golf, Build it, Crystal Paints, Zaan Smit Personal Training, Fairy Wings, and Derdepark Centrum

A special thank you also goes to Mr Pieter van Staden, owner of Mooipoort Golf Course, for his dedicated support and promotion of the event in the lead-up.

The day concluded with a gala dinner and prize-giving ceremony, where Mr W. Kelly (SGB Chairperson) and Ms E.J. Sarpong (Principal) thanked all participants, sponsors, and supporters who helped make the day a resounding success.

The Via Nova Golf Day 2025 was more than just a fundraiser – it was a celebration of teamwork, community, and new experiences. We extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who contributed to making the event such a success!





# teams

*Via Nova Golf Team*



*Kameeldrift Golf Team*



*Welcoming Snack*



*The SGB and staff members*





# *Gala Dinner and Prize Giving*



*Mr Kelly and Ms Sarpong  
Opening, welcoming and words of  
appreciation*

## *Prize Handover*



*First prize winners  
– Kameeldrift Team*



# *Sponsors*

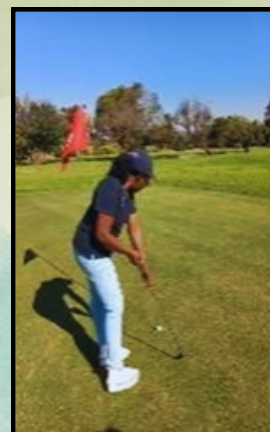
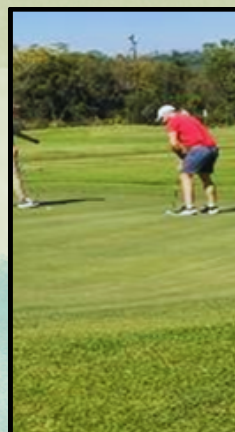
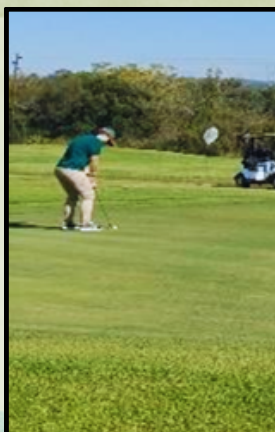
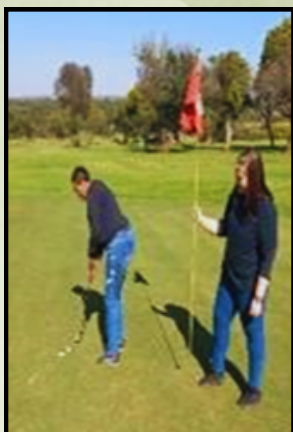
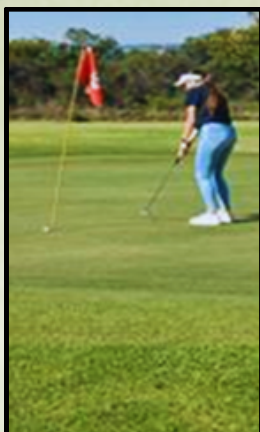
*ENGIGO Security Co*



*Derdepark Centrum*



## *Players and staff in action*





## IPADS BRING NEW OPPORTUNITIES TO VIA NOVA SCHOOL

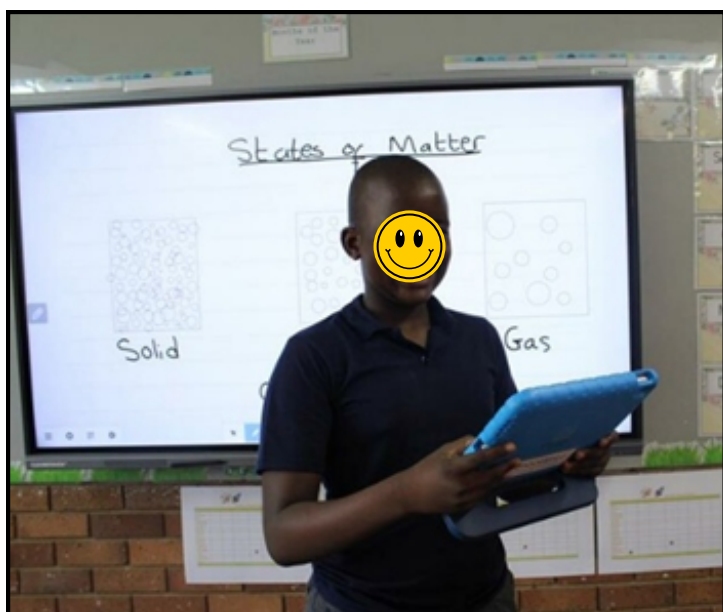
*Written by Su-Mari Kriel*

Via Nova School is proud to announce the exciting arrival of 20 iPads, generously donated by the iAfrica Foundation through their iSchoolAfrica programme. These devices are specially equipped to support learners with autism and other special educational needs, offering a range of assistive apps that promote communication, learning, and independence.

The official handover of the iPads took place on 11 April 2025, marking a special moment for the school community. Following this, on 11 May, a group of teachers and therapists attended a hands-on training session to explore the educational apps and features on the devices. The training focused on integrating the iPads into classroom routines and therapy sessions to support learner engagement, communication, and progress.

We are also proud to announce that Mrs Lezanri Snyders and Mr Hebrone Mokheseng have been selected as the iSchoolAfrica Tablet Champs for Via Nova School. In this role, they will guide the implementation of the programme, assist fellow staff members, and ensure the technology is used effectively to support each learner's individual needs.

This initiative marks a meaningful step forward in creating a more inclusive, tech-savvy learning environment at Via Nova. We are deeply thankful to iAfrica for empowering our learners with tools that open doors to new possibilities.





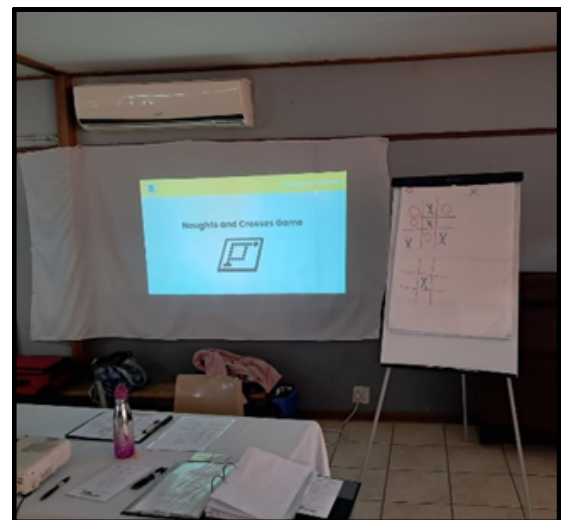
## MAKATON LEVEL 2 TRAINING

*Written by Elize Scheepers*

On 24 May 2025, an engaging and interactive Makaton Level 2 training session, welcoming educators and therapists, was conducted. Makaton serves as a powerful communication tool, enabling educators, therapists, and parents to effectively support learners who struggle with spoken language.

This enriching session provided practical learning opportunities, enhancing participants' comprehension of Makaton. While Level 1 concentrates on the learner's immediate environment, Level 2 delves into broader concepts beyond their direct surroundings. Integrating Makaton into classrooms and therapy sessions proves highly beneficial, as its signs closely correspond with spoken words and actions, fostering clearer and more meaningful communication.

On 21 June 2025, a Makaton Level 1 training was conducted to educators, therapists, parents, and carers seeking to develop more effective communication skills.





# MEDICATION MANAGEMENT FOR AUTISM

*Written by Patience Nonjiko*

On April 12th, 2025, Via Nova School parents welcomed Dr. Johan Erasmus, a developmental pediatrician specializing in medication management for Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorders (ADHD). Dr. Erasmus thoroughly explained that managing these diagnoses requires a comprehensive approach. While medication can be a valuable tool in alleviating symptoms, it is crucial to understand its specific role within the broader scope of treatment.

## Understanding ASD and ADHD:

ASD: A neurodevelopmental disorder affecting social interaction, communication, and behavior.

ADHD: A neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsiveness.

## Medication Management:

- Individualized treatment: Medication plans are customized to meet the unique needs of each patient.
- Symptom management: Medications are used to address specific symptoms, such as hyperactivity or anxiety.
- Monitoring and adjustments: Regular evaluations are conducted to ensure the effectiveness of the medication while minimizing side effects.

## Medications Commonly Prescribed:

ASD: Medications such as Risperdal or Abilify are often used to manage symptoms like irritability, aggression, or anxiety.

ADHD: Stimulants like Ritalin and Adderall, or non-stimulants like Strattera, are effective in improving attention and impulse control.

## Considerations:

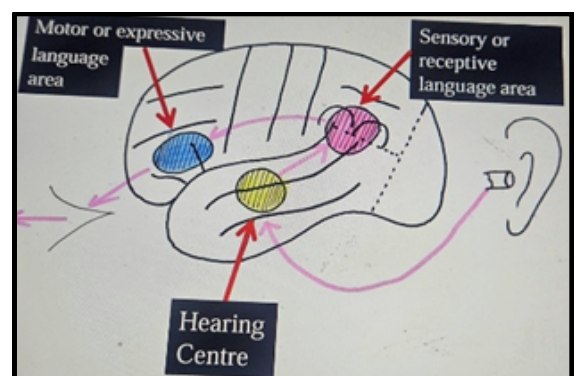
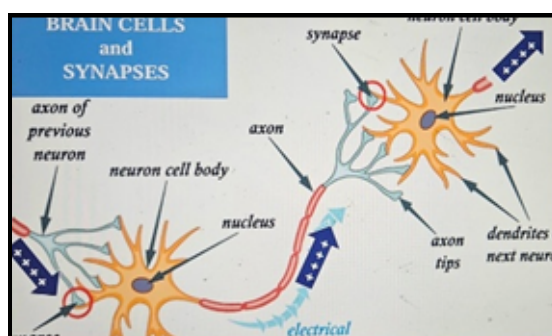
- Dosage and titration: Careful adjustments should be made to achieve optimal benefits.
- Side effects: Monitoring for potential side effects, such as weight gain or sleep disturbances, is essential.
- Comorbidities: Managing co-occurring conditions, such as anxiety or depression, is crucial for comprehensive care.

## Collaborative Care:

Multidisciplinary teams: Collaboration with therapists, educators, and families.

Family support: Educating families on medication management and treatment plans.

Effective medication management for ASD and ADHD requires a nuanced approach tailored to individual needs. By fostering collaboration among healthcare professionals, patients, and families, comprehensive and effective treatment plans can be developed.





## WELCOME TO OUR NEW TEAM MEMBERS!

*Written by Haseena Joosub*

We are excited to welcome three outstanding professionals to the Via Nova School team.



Ms Phindile Nothando Mabena, our new psychologist, joins us in the position previously held by Ms Elmarie Le Grange, who retired in March 2025. As a dedicated and compassionate psychologist, Phindile brings a wealth of experience and expertise in supporting our learners with diverse needs. We are excited to have her join our team and contribute to providing comprehensive and inclusive services that foster the social, emotional, and academic growth of our learners.

Ms Poppy Nozipho Sindane, our new occupational therapist, will support learners in both the ADL and Senior ASD phases. With her expertise in developing daily living and functional skills, she will help learners participate more fully in educational and everyday activities, fostering greater independence and confidence.



Ms Ramona van der Spuy, our new social worker, that is a kind-hearted, passionate, and committed social worker, brings new knowledge, skills, and expertise for the benefit of our learners, the team, and families. Her commitment to empowering individuals and fostering strong relationships will undoubtedly enhance our school's mission to provide holistic and inclusive support.





## PRINCIPAL'S BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

*Written by Masego Makumbila*

Our school joyfully celebrated the birthday of our beloved Principal on the 19th of May in the school hall, following her actual birthday on the 18th of May. The celebration was filled with warmth, appreciation, and festive cheer.

Learners and staff gathered to honour the Principal, who has been a guiding light and source of inspiration for the entire school community. Everyone gathered in the school hall to sing for the principal and dance with her. A slide show video of her great memories created at the school was played and it was a beautiful moving tribute to the school's head. Mrs Karen Davel, the Acting Deputy Principal Admin, gave a beautiful speech, expressing gratitude for the Principal's dedication and leadership.

The celebration included the presentation of handmade cards and gifts made and prepared by different phases.

It was a memorable event that showed how deeply the school values and respects the Principal.

We wish her continued success, happiness, and good health in the years to come.





## TRAINING - EARLY IDENTIFICATION OF BARRIERS TO LEARNING & CURRICULUM DIFFIRENTIATION

*Written by Happy Masondo*

On 17 May 2025, Via Nova School hosted a professional development training on “Barriers to Learning and Differentiated Teaching”. The session equipped educators with essential strategies to support the diverse needs of all learners. The training brought together teachers and therapists from both mainstream and special needs schools. Key topics included:

### 1. Types of Barriers to Learning:

- Extrinsic: poverty, trauma, abuse, lack of transport or nutrition
- Systemic: language of learning and teaching (LoLT), overcrowded classes, limited teacher training

### 2. Teacher's Role in SIAS:

- Early identification, classroom-based support, and documentation using Individual Support Plans (ISP)

### 3. Emotional and Behavioral Difficulties:

- Techniques to manage challenging behaviors and create a positive classroom climate.

### 4. Differentiated Teaching:

A major focus was Differentiated Teaching, which tailors instruction to each learner's strengths and needs. As Ms. Annerie Krause explained, “Every child learns differently, and it's our responsibility to adapt our teaching so every learner can succeed.” Through interactive engagements and practical demonstrations, educators learned the following regarding differentiated teaching and learning:

- Goals of differentiated instruction, key elements of differentiated process and key aspects.
- Assessing individual learners' strength and areas for growth.
- Varying methods, materials, and using tools like task boxes effectively

Via Nova School remains committed to continuous professional development and ensuring all learners receive the highest quality education. This training reaffirmed the school's dedication to equity and accessibility in every classroom.





## SPORTS HIGHLIGHTS

*Written by Liné Nieuwoudt and Talitha Wentzel*

Term 2 was full of excitement as learners took part in soccer, netball, cross country, parkrun and horse riding.

### Soccer

Our teams improved greatly, with the senior team proudly representing the school in friendly matches, showing commitment and excellent teamwork.



### Netball

Learners trained hard, and the senior girls' team impressed with their skill and resilience. Enthusiastic support from the school community kept spirits high.



### Cross Country

Learners joined both internal and interschool races, showing perseverance and pride. Every runner gave their best.

### Parkrun

ASD learners participated with enthusiasm in these inclusive community events, gaining confidence, fitness, and social skills





### Equestrian (horse riding)

This term marked the launch of our very first horse riding programme - and it's been a fantastic success! Beyond riding skills, learners developed responsibility, empathy, and confidence, making it a much-loved highlight of the term.



### Upcoming games:

- Metro Selection: 17 May
- Provincial Championships: 14 June
- National LSEN Championships: 6 - 10 October in Paarl

We are proud of all our athletes and grateful to the coaches, teachers, and supporters who made this term a success!



## VIA NOVA SCHOOL HOSTS SUCCESSFUL AUTISM EXPO

*Written by Caryn Fraser*

Via Nova School recently held a highly successful Autism Expo, drawing in members of the public, parents, and professionals committed to supporting learners on the autism spectrum. The open day aimed to raise awareness about autism, highlight educational and therapeutic resources, and explore life beyond the classroom for individuals on the spectrum.

The event featured a series of informative seminars presented by leading organizations in the field. These included Autism South Africa, Makaton SA, Bellavista, Edit Micro Systems, and Via Nova School itself. Topics covered a wide range of interests, from communication strategies and inclusive education to assistive technologies and transition planning for adulthood.

In addition to the seminars, attendees were able to interact with a variety of service providers exhibiting at the Expo. The Gauteng Department of Education was present, offering insights into inclusive policy and support. Other key exhibitors included the Eerstrus Care Centre, Inclusive Solutions, and Edit Micro Systems, who showcased cutting-edge communication devices for non-verbal learners. Lethabo Le Khutso, a residential care facility, also took part, highlighting post-school living options for individuals with autism.

The Expo provided a valuable platform for networking, sharing resources, and fostering community support. For many parents and professionals, it was an opportunity to engage with experts, explore services, and connect with others facing similar challenges and opportunities.

The day was warmly received and deemed a great success by all who attended, reinforcing Via Nova School's commitment to inclusive education and lifelong support for individuals on the autism spectrum.





# Enjoy the Holiday