



THE TORCH

Celebrating Women's Contributions to Society

Women play a vital role in society across various spheres, including family, community, economics, and leadership, contributing significantly to the development and well-being of communities through roles as caregivers, educators, entrepreneurs, activists, and decision-makers, while also actively participating in fields like science, politics, and the arts; however, they often face challenges related to gender inequality and discrimination in accessing opportunities fully.



August is Women's Month

Key roles of women in the world:

Caregivers and Nurturers:

Women are often primary caregivers for children, providing emotional support and nurturing within families, impacting early childhood development significantly.

Economic Contributors:

Women contribute to the economy through paid work in various sectors, including agriculture, business, healthcare, and education, while also often managing household finances.

Community Builders:

Women actively participate in community development initiatives, leading social projects and advocating for the needs of vulnerable populations.

Educators and Mentors:

Women play a crucial role in education, shaping young minds as teachers, professors, and role models.

Political Leaders:

Women are increasingly taking on leadership roles in politics, advocating for gender equality and social justice.

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 After a lifetime of military service and an international career with the United Nations, retirement has given me something that was often in short supply—time. Time to reflect on the people and organisations that have shaped my family's journey.
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 Accessing libraries for the visually impaired in South Africa is largely free, primarily facilitated through state-funded institutions and local public libraries.
- Procrastination and Anxiety: How Self-Compassion Helps Break the Cycle**
 Procrastination and anxiety often fuel one another, which can make it very difficult to complete tasks, as the combination of both can exacerbate delay. However, learning to practise self-compassion can help us to break the cycle.

Entrepreneurs and Innovators:

Women are starting businesses and contributing to economic growth through innovative ideas and entrepreneurial ventures.

Health Advocates:

Women are often at the forefront of promoting health awareness, especially related to maternal and child health.

Environmental Stewards:

Women are often at the forefront of promoting health awareness, especially related to maternal and child health.

Agents of Change:

Women are actively working to challenge gender inequalities and promote social progress through activism and advocacy

Source: [Brainly](#).

A Tribute to St Dunstan's

After a lifetime of military service and an international career with the United Nations, retirement has given me something that was often in short supply—time. Time to reflect on the people and organisations that have shaped my family's journey. Among them, one stands above all others: St Dunstan's.

Our relationship with St Dunstan's began after my husband, Kobus, lost his sight. During a time of uncertainty, the organisation became far more than a source of support—it became our family. We found understanding, encouragement, friendship, and hope, helping us navigate life's challenges with confidence and dignity.



Magriet Strydom

Over more than four decades, countless staff members, volunteers, and fellow members have touched our lives with their compassion, professionalism, and unwavering commitment. To each of you, thank you. Your kindness, guidance, and friendship have strengthened not only our family but so many others within the St Dunstan's community.

I also wish to acknowledge the families of St Dunstan's members, whose love, patience, and sacrifices often go unseen. Your support enables your loved ones to live with dignity, independence, and purpose.

Throughout my career, I witnessed both the best and worst of humanity, yet one of life's greatest lessons came through this remarkable community. St Dunstan's has shown me that true courage, leadership, and service are not defined by titles or recognition, but by compassion, resilience, and the willingness to walk alongside others.

As we celebrate every achievement—big or small—within our community, let us remember that blindness never defines a person's potential. My family and I remain deeply grateful for the friendships, guidance, and love we have received. It has been one of the greatest privileges of our lives to be part of the St Dunstan's family.

-Magriet Strydom

Celebrating our student Mothers

Among this year's students are three remarkable women who embody resilience, determination, and unwavering commitment. As mothers, they have embraced one of life's most demanding roles while simultaneously pursuing their academic ambitions. Their journey has required countless sacrifices, careful planning, and the ability to balance family responsibilities, studies, work, and personal commitments.

Their perseverance is a powerful reminder that determination can overcome even the greatest challenges. Through late nights, busy schedules, and the daily demands of motherhood, they have continued to invest in their futures without losing sight of the families who depend on them. Their dedication is not only an inspiration to their fellow students but also a testament to the strength and courage of women who refuse to let circumstances define their potential.

We are incredibly proud of these exceptional women and the example they set through their resilience, discipline, and commitment to lifelong learning. We wish them every success as they continue their studies and know that their hard work today is laying a strong foundation for an even brighter future for themselves and their families.

Our Inspiring Student Mothers



Elizabeth - Hon Business, Stadio



Samantha - MPhil Disability Studies, UCT



Maria - BEd Hon, Unisa

To these inspiring mothers, we extend our heartfelt congratulations and our very best wishes for the remainder of your studies. May you continue to find strength in every challenge, confidence in every achievement, and pride in knowing that your perseverance is creating a legacy of hope and opportunity for those who look up to you.

Procrastination and Anxiety: How Self-Compassion Helps Break the Cycle

Procrastination and anxiety often fuel one another, which can make it very difficult to complete tasks, as the combination of both can exacerbate delay. However, learning to practise self-compassion can help us to break the cycle



Unable to do anything

When we procrastinate, we have trouble regulating negative emotions associated with doing a task, for a variety of reasons. Perhaps we find the task tedious, or we don't know how to complete it. We can also feel like we aren't able to do the task "perfectly", and therefore hold back on working on it, which can fuel even more anxiety about getting it done.

Why does anxiety make procrastination worse?

As we've explored in previous blog posts, such as [The Psychology Behind Why We Procrastinate](#), procrastination is not about laziness or poor time management. It's an emotional regulation issue. Therefore, when we procrastinate, we put off a task we know we need or want to do, but we struggle to manage the negative emotions that come up around it.

One of these negative emotions can be anxiety. Anxiety is chronic stress, or worry about what is going to happen in the future. In relation to procrastination, this could be anxiety about the consequences of not completing a task or not meeting the standard you believe is expected. For example, self-inflicted worries such as not doing a job perfectly can fuel a vicious cycle of delaying and then feeling more anxious because of the delay, known as a "shame spiral".

Therefore, anxiety makes procrastination worse because it exacerbates an already fraught emotional regulation issue. When we are procrastinating, we are already feeling negative emotions. When we add anxiety to this, we can spiral even further and find it even more difficult to focus and find more reasons to seek temporary relief through avoidance.

How do I manage my inner critic?

We all have experienced our own inner critic, that inner voice that tells us we are not doing things well enough. When we experience procrastination and anxiety, it can be challenging to calm our inner critic, as we delay tasks and then feel more anxious about doing them, which can wreak havoc on our mental and physical health.

Many factors can influence the development of the inner critic, including our upbringing, our sense of support in our lives, and our self-concept. While getting a true understanding of why we behave the way we do can be helpful, and we can spend a lot of time analysing this, realising that everyone has an inner critic can help us avoid unnecessary self-criticism.

Research shows that [hormonal fluctuations affect procrastination](#). With insights like these, we can see that multiple factors affect our productivity. Once we develop this kind of awareness, we can become less harsh with our self-talk and find gentler, more constructive ways to deal with overwhelm.

How can self-compassion help?

[Dr Tiffany Leung](#)'s research sees the relationship between procrastination and anxiety as related to three factors, which include the following:

- Evaluation threat (fear of being judged)
- Standards threat ([fear of failure](#))
- Uncertainty threat (not sure how to proceed)

In her view, there can be many reasons for procrastination; however, the solution lies in identifying the core drivers of this behaviour. Leung's approach also aligns with Dr Fuschia Sirois' research, in that self-compassion is key to better emotional regulation and physical health. In other words, self-compassion can be a tool for managing negative emotions, which, in turn, can help us better manage procrastination and anxiety.

In other words, when we are compassionate with ourselves, we can learn to calm the inner critic and our nervous system by activating our parasympathetic "soothe" response, which promotes emotional regulation. When we foster kindness and acceptance towards ourselves, we also reduce the guilt, shame and self-criticism that drives avoidance behaviour.

To demonstrate the value of self-compassion, research on procrastination in academic environments shows that self-compassion training is not just a good idea in theory, but effective in practice. In this context, doomscrolling, bedtime procrastination, and career uncertainty were among the behaviours contributing to procrastination.

Emotional regulation tools: mindfulness and acceptance

Mindfulness is a valuable tool for emotional regulation, helping manage procrastination and anxiety. There are many approaches to mindfulness, but, in simple terms, by being present with our emotional states and building self-awareness, we can identify when procrastination and anxious thoughts take over and find more constructive ways to manage overwhelm.

The role of self-compassion is also critical in this process. When we constantly beat ourselves up for not performing, we procrastinate more and can become more anxious. If we are kinder to ourselves from the start and acknowledge our overwhelm, we can take small steps. Often, this is all that it takes to make initial progress on a task. Once we have made even fractional progress, it's often easy to keep going.

When do I seek help?

Everyone struggles with procrastination and anxiety from time to time. When a big deadline looms, we often behave differently than we do when approaching simple daily tasks. However, if procrastination and anxiety are becoming debilitating, it's essential to seek help.

Talking to a trained mental health professional or counsellor can assist in finding more constructive ways to manage procrastination and anxiety, and resolve underlying emotional difficulties that could be fuelling this behaviour. If anxiety is affecting your physical health, it's also critical to seek support.

Source: SACAP

The 2026 Long Cane Fun Walk — 24 October 2026

With 2026 Long Cane Fun Walk, just around the corner, the excitement is building, and preparations are in full swing! Behind the scenes, our team is hard at work planning an unforgettable day that celebrates independence, friendship, and the remarkable achievements of our blind and visually impaired community.

The Long Cane Fun Walk has become much more than an annual event—it is a joyful celebration of resilience, confidence, and the life-changing impact of Orientation and Mobility training. Each year, participants, their families, Orientation and Mobility Practitioners, volunteers, and supporters come together to share in a day filled with encouragement, laughter, and a shared commitment to inclusion.

As we count down the weeks, we look forward to welcoming familiar faces and meeting new participants who will join us in celebrating the freedom that comes with confidence and independent mobility. Every aspect of the day is being carefully prepared to ensure a memorable and enjoyable experience for everyone involved.

The Long Cane Fun Walk is a powerful reminder that blindness does not limit

The End

Beneficiary News Birthday Wishes



Otile Ruiendo

We extend our warmest congratulations to our widow beneficiary Otile Ruiendo, who celebrated a very special birthday in July.

May the days ahead be filled with joy, laughter and abundant health.

Upcoming Events

A promotional graphic for the Long Cane Fun Walk. It features a blue background with yellow and red circular accents. At the top, there are three circular inset photos: the first shows four people in green shirts holding white bags; the second shows a group of people in black shirts; the third shows a person in a green shirt walking a dog. The text 'S' DUNSTANS' is in a small red box. Below that, 'LONG CANE FUN WALK' is written in large red letters. Underneath, 'Freedom in Motion: The Power of Independence and OM Excellence' is written in white. The date '24 October 2026' is shown with a calendar icon, '9am' with a clock icon, and 'Sea Point' with a location pin icon. At the bottom, there are icons for a phone, Facebook, Instagram, and a globe, followed by the contact information: '021 531 2028', '@stdunstans', and 'stdunstans.org.za'.