



in TOUCH Quarterly Newsletter

July to September 2025



Stay Connected and Informed with 'In Touch,' Autism Connect's Quarterly Newsletter Bringing You the Latest Updates, Insights, and Stories from the Autism Community.



Thank you for joining us on this journey of connection, awareness, and empowerment within the autism community.

Director's Note

Nicolette Ripepi

Purpose in Progress

As we look back on July through September, one theme stands out - momentum with meaning. Each month brought its own rhythm: July tested our resilience, August strengthened our foundations, and September reignited our collective vision for what's ahead.

This quarter reminded us that leadership isn't just about direction - it's about connection. The conversations we've had, the partnerships we've built, and the small wins along the way all point to one thing: Autism Connect is growing not just in reach, but in depth and impact.

What inspires me most is the unwavering commitment of our team and community. Your dedication keeps our mission alive - to build spaces of inclusion, dignity, and opportunity for every autistic individual and their families.

As we step into the final stretch of the year, may we continue to lead with purpose, collaborate with courage, and dream boldly for the future we're creating together. ✨

With appreciation,
Nicky



A Season of Stretch, Strength, and Spark

Moeneeb Gilbert
Programme Manager

If July to September had a theme, it would be growth in motion.

From new partnerships to community-led initiatives, this quarter reminded us that progress isn't always loud - sometimes it's the quiet, consistent steps that move us the furthest.

July stretched us - challenging our systems and inspiring creative solutions.

August strengthened us - deepening our collaborations and sharpening our focus on impact.

And September? It sparked us - reigniting purpose as we head into the final quarter with renewed energy and vision.

Every project, every story, and every connection has been a reminder that Autism Connect's strength lies in its people - the passionate teams, families, and partners who show up, speak up, and lift up.

Here's to ending the year not just strong, but significant. Let's keep building, connecting, and creating spaces where everyone belongs.

Welcome Back!

July at Autism Connect was a month of growth, connection, and purpose. Our centres flourished - not only with events, but in the relationships we continue to build with our learners, young adults, families, staff, and the wider community. The month was filled with learning opportunities, moments of collaboration, and meaningful celebrations. Both the Early Learning Centre and the Skills & Coaching Centre engaged in activities that enriched our programmes, highlighted achievements, and reinforced the value of our shared mission: to create inclusive, supportive spaces where autistic individuals can thrive. We officially marked a new chapter for Autism Connect with our groundbreaking ceremony, celebrating growth, expansion, and the exciting journey ahead.



Strengthening Partnerships Through Purposeful Engagement

The Autism Connect Early Learning Centre had the privilege of hosting **Ms. Noxolo Jiya**, Social Work Policy Developer from the Department of Social Development, as part of the department's Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) procedure.

Her visit provided an invaluable opportunity to reflect on our progress, share insights, and align our work with national priorities in early childhood development and inclusive education. Through open dialogue and collaboration, we were able to highlight the centre's ongoing impact - from nurturing the potential of young autistic learners to strengthening family support structures within our community.



Ms. Jiya's engagement reaffirmed the importance of partnerships between government and organizations like Autism Connect in shaping sustainable, inclusive services. The feedback and encouragement received during this visit not only validated our efforts but also inspired our team to continue driving innovation and best practice in autism-focused education. Together, we move forward with renewed purpose - building a future where every child is seen, supported, and celebrated.

Connect2Care Community Outreach Food Drive



Our Connect2Care Community Outreach Food Drive was a heartwarming initiative dedicated to supporting families and individuals within the autism community who needed a helping hand. The drive not only provided essential supplies but also reminded us of the power of community - when we come together, care multiplies.



Official Transport Handover Brings New Possibilities

A Journey Made Easier

The official transport handover from the **Department of Transport and Mobility** marks a milestone moment for Autism Connect - one that has already begun transforming the daily lives of our learners and families.

Since receiving the new vehicle, we've been overwhelmed by the difference it's made. What was once a major challenge - getting our early learning and skills centre recipients safely to and from our programs - has now become a seamless part of their routine. For many, this isn't just about transport; it's about access, inclusion, and independence.

This handover represents more than a practical resource - it's a testament to what collaboration between government and community organizations can achieve. The relief and joy shared by our families remind us why we do this work: to remove barriers and open doors to opportunity.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the Department of Transport and Mobility for recognizing the importance of accessible transport within the autism community. Their support has empowered us to reach more learners, provide consistent attendance, and ensure that no child or young adult is left behind due to logistical constraints. As we move forward, this milestone fuels our mission even more - to build a connected, inclusive world where every journey is possible. ❤️



Breaking New Ground

New Chapter Begins for Autism Connect 🚀

On this memorable day, Autism Connect officially marked a new chapter in our journey of growth and impact with a groundbreaking ceremony that symbolized expansion, hope, and progress.

The event brought together board members, partners, families, and community supporters - all united by one vision: to build spaces where every autistic individual can learn, grow, and belong. The atmosphere was electric with anticipation as the first shovel hit the ground, representing not just construction, but the foundation of new possibilities.

This milestone stands as a testament to how far we've come - and how far we're determined to go. From humble beginnings to a thriving movement, Autism Connect continues to evolve, ensuring that our programs, services, and reach expand the needs of our community.

As we embark on this exciting journey ahead, we remain guided by our core values of compassion, inclusion, and innovation. The groundbreaking marks more than the start of a building - it's the beginning of a bold new chapter for Autism Connect and the families we serve. ❤️

Here's to building the future - together.

Sod-turning ceremony marks start of work on new autism centre in Westridge

The facility, launched by Autism Connect, will offer specialised education, therapy, and life skills programmes tailored to the needs of individuals on the autism spectrum.

Autism

Mitchells Plain

CoCT



City of Cape Town officials and Autism Connect officials at the

Sanlam dontaion kickstarts our Thrift Store

Sanlam Donation Kickstarts Autism Connect Skills & Coaching Centre Thrift Store Initiative 🧥❤️

We're thrilled to share that Sanlam has generously donated clothing to help kick off the launch of the Autism Connect Thrift Store - an exciting new social initiative that blends sustainability, empowerment, and community impact.

This donation marks more than just the start of a store - it represents a movement toward self-sustainability and opportunity within the autism community. The thrift store will not only provide affordable, quality items for families but also create meaningful learning and skills-development opportunities for our program participants.

We extend heartfelt thanks to Sanlam for their kindness and partnership. Their contribution has helped us turn an idea into action - and we're just getting started!

Together, we're transforming generosity into growth, one item at a time.



Reflections from Our Annual Board Strategy Meeting ✨

This week, Autism Connect held its Annual Board Strategy Meeting - a pivotal moment to reflect, realign, and reimagine our path forward. The session reinforced our shared commitment to compassion, inclusivity, and evidence-informed practice, while challenging us to think boldly about growth and long-term impact.

The energy and diversity of thought around the table reminded us that Autism Connect is more than an organization - it's a movement driven by community, empathy, and progress.

With renewed clarity and purpose, we're excited for the next chapter of meaningful impact. ❤️

Be part of this journey - your support helps us continue building an inclusive future.



September Wrap-Up: Spring into Fun!

What a wonderful month we've had at our Early Learning Centre! Our theme of Spring brought with it a buzz of excitement, and our little learners had a blast exploring all things insects.

From crawling caterpillars to buzzing bees, our classes dove into the world of insects with enthusiasm and curiosity. The children engaged in various activities, including arts and crafts, storytelling, and sensory play, all designed to foster their creativity and learning.

The children had a wonderful time getting their hands dirty and exploring the sights, sounds, and textures of the garden.

We're so proud of our little learners and all they've accomplished this month. Thank you to our dedicated educators and The Tulip class for creating such a nurturing and engaging environment for our children to grow and thrive.

Here's to October, another month of fun and learning!



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To all our donors - Thank you for journeying with Autism Connect. Together, we're building bridges of understanding and inclusion.

Find out more:



autismconnect.org.za



admin@autismconnect.org.za



021 569 7234

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