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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Atlantic Eye Foundation Restores Sight to Sidney Miller Through Pro Bono Cataract Surgery**

*Supervised surgery under AEF's Registrar Readiness programme restores 20/20 vision to the Cape Town man whose storm rescue by influencer Chad Nathan captured national attention*

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**CAPE TOWN, South Africa — 9 September 2026 —** The Atlantic Eye Foundation (AEF) has restored the sight of Sidney Miller, the Cape Town man whose has stolen the hearts of South Africans, through a pro bono cataract surgery performed in partnership with CURE Day Hospital. The procedure was carried out under AEF's Registrar Readiness programme, which pairs supervised surgical training for medical officers with pro bono surgery.

Sidney, a double amputee who relies on a wheelchair, had lived on the streets of Cape Town for most of his life. He became a symbol of hope and human connection earlier this year when influencer Chad Nathan found him on the promenade during torrential downpour, grabbed his wheelchair, and pushed him to shelter. The moment, captured on video, went viral — sparking an outpouring of public support that raised half a million rand for Sidney and cemented an ongoing friendship between the two men.

Following the video's success, AEF reached out to offer Sidney something the initial wave of public support could not: specialised eye care. Given his age and the disproportionate burden of eye disease among people of colour in South Africa, AEF suspected Sidney was a likely candidate for cataract surgery — cataracts being the leading cause of reversible blindness worldwide, and a condition for which thousands of South African patients remain on public-sector waiting lists for years amid a deepening shortage of trained ophthalmologists.

The assessment proved correct. Prof Hamzah Mustak, AEF Chairperson, took on Sidney's case pro bono under the Registrar Readiness programme, with the supervised surgery performed by Dr Raeesah Suleman, Medical Officer under Prof Mustak. Sidney's vision improved dramatically and has reported no pain or discomfort at his post-operative appointments at Atlantic Eye Specialist Centre.

The procedure was made possible through the generosity of AEF's partners: CURE Day Hospital, which donated pro bono theatre time; Envision, which provided the theatre

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packs; and Alcon, whose ongoing partnership with AEF supports access to lenses for patients who would otherwise be unable to afford them.

Chad Nathan, who witnessed the procedure firsthand, described the experience to his followers:

*"About 30 minutes of surgery, working on one of the most delicate parts of the human body, with almost zero room for error... It was honestly incredible to witness."*

He thanked Prof Mustak and Dr Suleman, who together bring more than 30 years of combined experience, for "generously donating their time and expertise."

AEF plans to build on cases like Sidney's by expanding training opportunities for medical officers and registrars across South Africa, growing surgical outreach capacity, and working to rebuild a sustainable pipeline of highly skilled ophthalmologists equipped to serve future generations.



(Photos: Chad Nathan, CURE Day Hospital Foreshore, Cape Town, 18 August 2026)

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