



ST. ANDREW'S
AUTISM CENTRE

Donor Impact Report

2023



Enable persons with autism to lead dignified and meaningful lives.



ST. ANDREW'S AUTISM CENTRE

04.

Thank You

06.

About Us

07.

Our Services

08.

Impact of Your Donation

12.

2023 in Numbers

13.

Our Year in Highlights

14.

Hear from our Donors & Partners

18.

Meet Our Heroes

22.

Foster a Lifetime of Growth
& Fulfilment

28.

Supporting Our Work

31.

Donation Methods



Your kindness and support allow us to continue this vital work and truly impact the lives of those we serve.

This report is a testament to your impact, and showcases the difference you've enabled us to make.

Thank you.



At St. Andrew's Autism Centre (SAAC), we believe that every person with autism deserves the highest quality of life possible. Our vision is to enable persons with autism to lead dignified and meaningful lives. It is a vision that we take very seriously, and one that we are deeply committed to.

Dear Friend,

In 2023, we saw the unwavering support of our donors, partners and supporters behind each and every story of impact. We hope that you feel a sense of joy in supporting our beneficiaries to lead dignified and meaningful lives.

We were able to raise \$3.16 million to support essential programmes and services, and impact more than 450 beneficiaries.

We wish to thank all of you for stepping forward and providing us with the peace of mind to focus on helping our beneficiaries. You have enabled us to continue providing quality education, training and care to individuals with autism.

We are also grateful for your trust and commitment. With you alongside us, no one with autism ever needs to journey alone.

Read on to find out how your generosity has made a difference.

ABOUT US



St. Andrew's Autism Centre (SAAC) was established in 2005 to meet a growing need to serve individuals on the autism spectrum. Our vision is to enable persons with autism to lead dignified and meaningful lives.

We achieve this by enriching their lives and that of their families through quality education, training and care, distinguished by Christian love and compassion. Today, we serve 470 persons with autism across the lifespan through our special education school, day activity centres, and Singapore's first residential home for persons with autism.

At SAAC, we hold our values of love, integrity, growth, honour, and teamwork very close to our hearts. We believe that everyone deserves to live a life filled with purpose and meaning, and we strive to make that a reality for our beneficiaries and their families.

SAAC is a service of St. Andrew's Mission Hospital, which is recognised for its transparency and dedication through the Charity Transparency Award 2023.



OUR SERVICES

The common narrative in Singapore about autism tends to reflect those on the high-functioning end of the spectrum. This would refer to individuals with mild autism who can be employed and are capable of independent living.

Those with moderate to severe autism often are generally not capable of paid employment because of the severity of their disability, and they will need a lifetime of support.

SAAC is the only Social Service Agency in Singapore that offers lifespan support for persons with autism aged from 7 to 55 and beyond, through our Special Education School, Day Activity Centres, and Adult Home.

7 - 18 years old



18 years old and above



**Special Education School
(Siglap)**

**Day Activity Centres
(Siglap & Sengkang)**

**Adult Home
(Sengkang)**

Occupational /
Speech /
Behavioural
Therapy

Psychological
Services

Case
Management

Parent
Support
Group

Autism
Advocacy

IMPACT OF YOUR DONATION

STAFF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Enhancing Service Quality Through Staff Training

To improve service quality, SAAC requires staff to be properly and sufficiently trained in key autism-specific strategies across St. Andrew's Autism School (SAAS), Day Activity Centres (DACs) and St. Andrew's Adult Home (SAAH). In 2023, we stepped up training in Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) and Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC).

Positive Behaviour Support

PBS aims to help persons with autism learn new behaviours. It does this by removing triggers of challenging behaviours and encouraging socially appropriate and adaptive behaviours. It is an evidence-based and proactive approach that supports persons with autism towards an improved quality of life. With PBS, teachers, coaches and care staff could develop tailored strategies to effectively support emotional and behavioural regulation of students, clients and residents.

At SAAH, in particular, implementing PBS helped to significantly reduce challenging behaviours by 80.72% from 2022 to 2023. It also contributed to improvements in residents' independence, autonomy, and engagement in community activities.



With increased emotional and behavioural regulation, our students, clients and residents are able to partake in community activities. Doing so helps improve their quality of life.

IMPACT OF YOUR DONATION

STAFF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Alternative and Augmentative Communication

Persons with autism are mostly visual learners hence it is important to use their strength in visuals to build communication skills. AAC is instrumental in boosting functional communication with non-verbal and pre-verbal students. It allows teachers and caregivers to impart and model communicative functions such as requesting, greeting, commenting, protesting, asking/answering questions, and describing emotions.

AAC, which refers to the use of different communications methods other than speech, usually encompass both unaided - such as gestures and facial expressions - and aided modes of communication - such as communication boards. Every AAC communication board is customised to the user, as every individual with autism has his/her own communication needs and challenges.

On 3 and 4 November 2023, teacher Amanda Poon and speech and language therapist Caleb Lai represented SAAS at the SPED Learning Festival to share how SPED schools can support the development of functional communication and language of students with special needs.



IMPACT OF YOUR DONATION

IMPROVING QUALITY OF LIFE FOR BENEFICIARIES WITH NEW PROGRAMMES

To meet evolving needs and challenges of students, clients and residents, we made effort to refine our programmes. SAAS revamped its curriculum to bolster learning in Daily Living Skills and Physical Education, with a focus on developing quality of life for students and enabling to maximise their potential. SAAH and DACs, meanwhile, increased access for residents and clients respectively to the community through more frequent outings to public spaces like cinemas and parks. Enabling our beneficiaries to actively participate in our community can help to build a more inclusive society where they feel accepted. A sense of belonging can empower persons with autism towards becoming active contributors in our community. For example, at DAC (Sengkang), clients learnt new recipes during domestic science sessions, and donated these dishes to people in need.



DAC clients enjoyed a movie at EagleWings Cinematics.



Senior SAAS students pick up practical skills during class.



DAC clients attended a learning journey at Victoria Junior College .

IMPACT OF YOUR DONATION

ENRICHING STUDENTS' AND CLIENT'S DEVELOPMENT THROUGH DIVERSE COLLABORATIONS

SAAC continued to foster development of beneficiaries as active community participants and valuable contributors. By establishing strategic collaborations with various community partners, we helped to expand their exposure to diverse vocational/non-vocational activities.

Among these initiatives was our Dignity of Work partnership with BlueAcres Pte Ltd. A tailored horticulture programme designed with necessary task accommodation and modification allows students and clients to engage actively and independently, and helps to equip them with practical skills in urban farming.

We also embarked on a partnership with social enterprise bakery, Crunchy Teeth, where 2 students were successfully integrated into its training programme. In December, our beneficiaries also helped to pack more than 7,800 cookies for St. Andrew's Cathedral's Christmas Packs - these were distributed to low-income families.



2023 IN NUMBERS

469

Children and adults with autism served.



St. Andrew's Autism School 317 Students



Day Activity Centres 121 Clients



St. Andrew's Adult Home 31 Residents



\$3.16 million raised

81% of donations goes towards programmes that directly serve our beneficiaries.

Your generosity enabled us to deliver quality programmes that enhance the quality of life for our beneficiaries.

190 Number of beneficiaries trained in vocational skills.



Number of beneficiaries equipped with daily living skills.

360

67 Number of beneficiaries who benefited from Positive Behaviour Support.



Number of beneficiary families on financial assistance.

91

4,190 Community engagement hours by our beneficiaries.



Training hours clocked by our allied professionals.

7,228

OUR YEAR IN HIGHLIGHTS

KEY ENGAGEMENTS WITH DONORS

GALA DINNER

The "Celebration of a Life Well Lived" Gala Dinner and Auction, held on 7 January 2023, raised over \$1.6 million for SAAC in honour of the late Dr. NK Yong (1927-2021). It was organised by his wife, Melina Yong. We are thankful to Mrs Yong and the 138 donors who attended this event and gave generously to our work.



DONOR APPRECIATION BRUNCH

On 16 April 2023, we hosted our annual Donor Appreciation Brunch to thank generous donors who had chosen SAAC as their charitable partner. Through this brunch, our donors had the opportunity to understand more deeply the work of SAAC in bringing greater dignity and meaning to the lives of our beneficiaries. We thank all donors who attended the brunch for this opportunity to connect with you.

WALK OF A LIFETIME 2023

To commemorate SAAC's 18th anniversary, our inaugural Walk of a Lifetime (WOAL) was held on 14 October 2023. Graced by Dr. Maliki Osman, Second Minister for Education, it drew more than 1,000 participants who gave \$500,000 that went toward programmes at DACs and SAAH. We are thankful that so many of our donors turned up to support us. We hope the fringe activities have helped you learn more about autism.





A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL OUR DONORS & PARTNERS

Here's a sampling of your thoughts on giving to SAAC

“WE MUST BUILD A MORE SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR THEM”

Corporate Donor | King Living Pte. Ltd.

Supporting individuals with autism is part of King Living’s commitment to social responsibility, especially causes revolving around children and animals.

“It aligns with our core values to actively participate in initiatives that create a positive impact on communities, advocating for inclusivity and support for persons with diverse needs,” explains Ili Ibrahim, King Living’s regional retail manager for Southeast Asia.

Persons with autism, she adds, possess unique abilities and perspectives. Hence “it’s crucial to recognise their diverse strengths and understand that they contribute in profound ways to our society. For them to do that, we must build a more supportive environment.”

King Living doesn’t just give financially; Ili and her colleagues also gave their time by participating in Walk for a Lifetime 2023. “Witnessing the camaraderie and unity in advocating for autism awareness was a poignant moment for us. It highlighted the power of collective effort in championing a cause,” Ili says.



“WE HOPE TO BE AN ENCOURAGEMENT TO THEM”

Community Partner | Red Dot Penguins Pte. Ltd.

Red Dot Penguins is a social enterprise founded by a team who have chosen to use their exceptional coaching skills to impact lives and transform society. They have fostered a unique partnership with SAAC through a bespoke swimming programme tailored to the needs of learners with moderate to severe autism.

“We hope to be the support to the school. We hope to be an encouragement to them. To keep up the great work they are doing, the love and sacrifice that they are having with the clients here, it should not go unnoticed,” said Mr. Nathanael Wee, its CEO (pictured on the bottom left with Bernard Chew, CEO of SAAC).

His team also participated in Walk of a Lifetime 2023 - it was the event's largest contingent. Such remarkable display of solidarity demonstrated their unwavering support for the autism community.



"I FEEL SATISFIED KNOWING I'VE MADE A POSITIVE IMPACT"

Individual Donor | Kavitha, DAC Coach

Kavitha has been working as a coach at DAC since October 2022. She describes it as "a great experience working with adults with autism."

"Every day, I feel satisfied knowing I've made a positive impact on someone's life," she adds. "I also learn valuable life lessons from the parents and colleagues I work with."

DAC is integral to improving quality of life for clients we serve, Kavitha asserts. "It provides a safe space for them to develop daily living skills, manage emotions and behaviours, and build community skills. All this can help foster independence."

Kavitha also commits to monthly donations to support the school fees of her client Matthew. Her decision was motivated by her own struggles with financial hardship as a student.

"I didn't come from a financially well-off family so I faced many setbacks when I was younger. I promised myself that, one day when I'm financially able to, I'd help another student," she says. "I feel honoured to support Matthew and witness his daily growth."





MEET OUR HEROES

As a donor, your contribution enables us to recruit individuals who are passionate about serving persons with autism. Your support ensures that we provide our beneficiaries with the highest quality service, enabling them to live lives filled with dignity and meaning.

In the following pages, get to know the dedicated staff members who are making a world of difference for our beneficiaries.

MEET OUR HEROES

The dedicated staff members who are making a world of difference for our beneficiaries.

**Siti Nor Aisyah
Binte Sarip**
Lead Teacher, SAAS



Siti Nor Aisyah Binte Sarip joined SAAC as one of our pioneer staff in 2005. Through the years, her commitment towards serving persons with autism and her passion for learning have made an impression on many caregivers and colleagues.

Now a lead teacher at our Special Education school, Siti continues to dedicate herself to enriching the curriculum and enhancing student engagement. She was instrumental in introducing class collaborations into the curriculum, where students of different abilities and interests are grouped together for an activity. It allows them to model and learn from one another.

“To plan, design and implement effective programmes and activities for people with autism, we must take into consideration their learning profile, such as their strengths, weaknesses and interests,” she says. “All this will indicate what quality of life is to the student and his/her family, and allows us to support them in this journey.”

MEET OUR HEROES

The dedicated staff members who are making a world of difference for our beneficiaries.

A photograph of Caleb Lai, a Speech & Language Therapist at SAAC. He is a young man with short dark hair, wearing a dark blue polo shirt with a logo on the chest and a blue lanyard with an ID badge. He is standing in a room with a whiteboard in the background, gesturing with his hands as if speaking. The image is partially obscured by a blurred foreground object on the left.

Caleb Lai
Speech & Language Therapist,
SAAC

"I chose to specialise in speech and language therapy because it allows me to serve people who have children with autism. I love kids and have always enjoyed helping to take care of them," says Caleb Lai, who has been working as a speech and language therapist with SAAC's Allied Professionals team for 2 years.

"What I do here - if I were to describe in one sentence - is to give a voice to the voiceless. Which I find very meaningful," he adds.

There's more to communication than words, Caleb points out. Pictures and symbols are crucial too. Many children he works with are non-verbal; even some who possess limited verbal ability usually struggle with expressing themselves.

"Our students are taught to use the AAC (Augmentative and Alternative Communication) comms board in class," he says. "These charts show pictures and words customised to each child's needs and abilities. So some may have a larger comms board with several pages than others.

He works closely with parents and caregivers, to encourage them to use the comms board at home to communicate with their child. He organises training sessions for them too. "Parents and caregivers have their own goals for the child so our strategies must align with these too," he shares. "My advice is to keep your eyes on the goal and don't give up."

MEET OUR HEROES

The dedicated staff members who are making a world of difference for our beneficiaries.



Serene Chen
Senior Psychologist, SAAH



Serene Chen is a senior psychologist with SAAH. Singapore's first purpose-built facility for persons with autism, it provides them long-term residential care services. SAAH has 31 residents, all between 18 and 55 years old.

Here, she handles intake assessment, case work, intervention, consultation, and training. These require her to work with residents, parents/caregivers, teachers/coaches/care staff, volunteers, medical professionals, community partners, among others.

Serene describes her role as a "voice for people with autism, their advocate, interpreter, and most

importantly their friend". As she points out, "ASD traits are usually not understood - or adequately enough - by many." Hence, she spends time developing strategies to support student/clients and their caregivers, building rapport with them. By doing this, Serene helps the caregivers see the the world through the lens of someone with autism.

All this calls for a tricky balance of social ethics, her personal values, and others' perspectives. "When I feel lost, I always go back to the question: what is best for this person at this point in time? That usually helps me stay focused on the student/client," she says.

FOSTER A LIFETIME OF GROWTH AND FULFILMENT

The Autism Lifespan Support Enhancement Programme

Autism lasts a lifetime. No one should take that journey alone.

The Autism Lifespan Support Enhancement Programme addresses critical aspects of our mission to provide lifelong support to persons with autism. Your support will ensure that they are never alone in this journey as they progress from childhood to adulthood.

We seek your consideration in partnering and coming alongside through funding the various initiatives under this programme. Should any of these interest you, please feel free to get in touch with our Fundraising Team.

FOSTER A LIFETIME OF GROWTH AND FULFILMENT

The Autism Lifespan Support Enhancement Programme

FIRST MILE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE (TRANSPORT)

The First Mile Financial Assistance is a transport subsidy scheme to alleviate the financial burden of low-income families of SAAS students and DAC clients by absorbing most of their payable bus fees. We seek to ensure that no child is unable to access our services due to the lack of financial means.

School/centre bus services are absolutely necessary to safely transport SAAS students and DAC clients to and from our campuses. Persons with moderate to severe autism are often not independent travellers, and hence are unable to attend school/DAC without the bus service.

With inflation driving up fuel prices, market conditions resulting in a shortage of drivers, and regulations necessitating additional safety features within buses, bus fees have risen very significantly. This affects SAAS students and DAC clients from low-income families in particular, as the fees take up a significant portion of their limited disposable income.



FOSTER A LIFETIME OF GROWTH AND FULFILMENT

The Autism Lifespan Support Enhancement Programme

INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS FOR VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Our senior SAAS students are offered vocational skill development in order that they are equipped with independent living skills and can look forward to opportunities for future employment. Our school offers training in Food and Beverage (F&B), emphasising life skills, sensory integration, communication, and numeracy. Due to wear and tear over 12 years, three kitchens require refurbishment, including appliance replacement and installation of necessary equipment.

This \$250,000 project, a one-time cost to refurbish all three kitchens, aims to enhance safety and learning experiences for nearly 400 students and clients at our Siglap campus.



FOSTER A LIFETIME OF GROWTH AND FULFILMENT

The Autism Lifespan Support Enhancement Programme

DIGNITY OF WORK

This is a Supported Employment Programme to give Dignity of Work to those who cannot access open employment.

Persons with moderate autism usually face difficulties getting accepted into sheltered workshops as providers do not always have the expertise to work with individuals with slightly more complex challenges.

Our Dignity of Work programme addresses this gap by offering a curated and supportive work environment for these individuals to gain vocational experience, grow in independence, and to experience meaningful engagement at work.

SAAC is looking to partner CrunchyTeeth, a local social enterprise, to run a bakery . This is expected to provide 210 man-hours of supported employment to 12 trainees with moderate autism each week.

Funding is needed to underwrite the first year's operational cost of the envisioned partnership with CrunchyTeeth. It will cost \$250,000 to run this programme each year.



FOSTER A LIFETIME OF GROWTH AND FULFILMENT

The Autism Lifespan Support Enhancement Programme

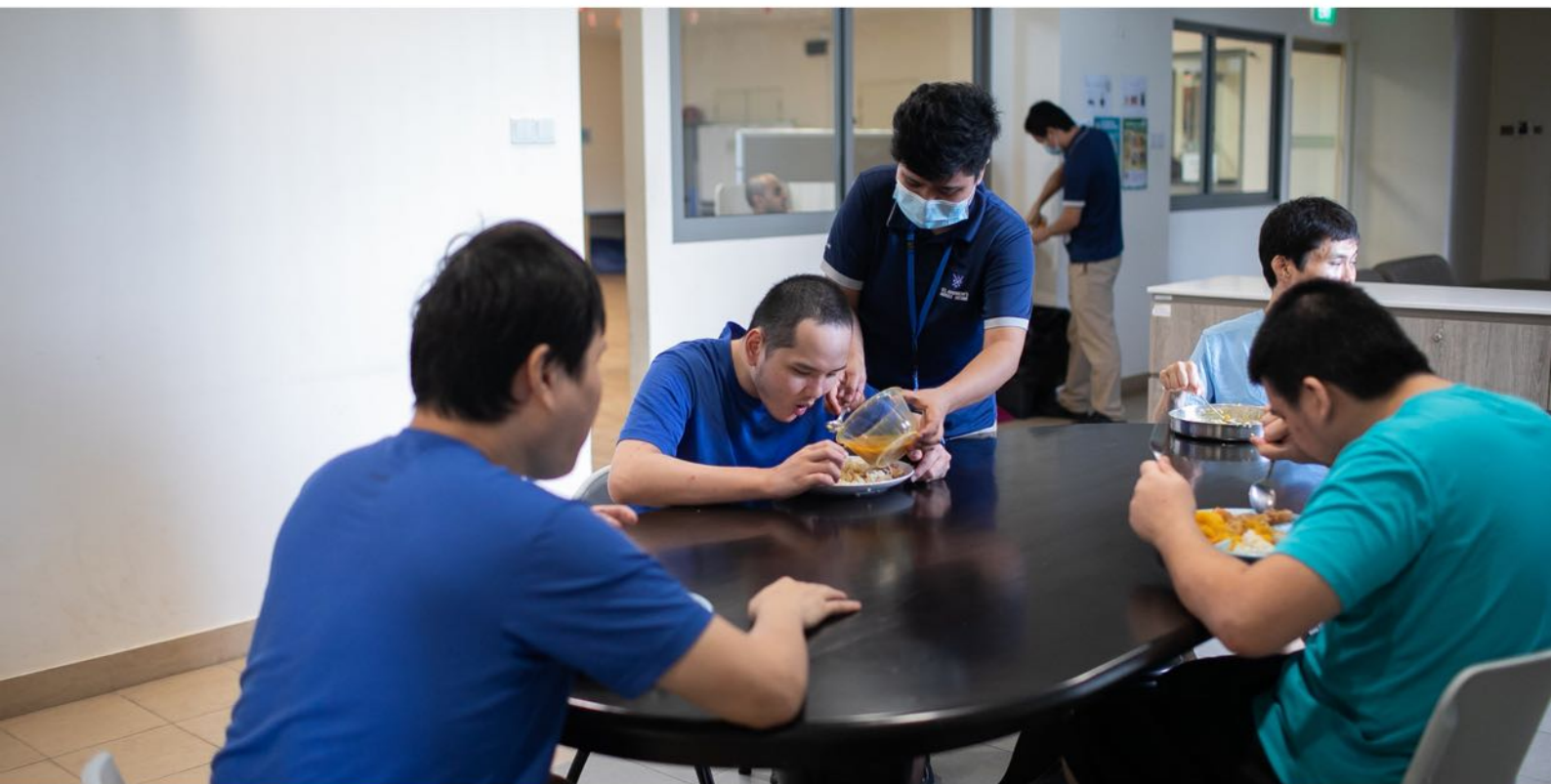
SAAH ACCESSIBILITY FUND

This fund aims to make residential services for persons with autism accessible to low-income families.

St. Andrew's Autism Home (SAAH) is Singapore's first residential facility specially built to help persons with moderate to severe autism live dignified and meaningful lives. Before SAAH, individuals on this spectrum had to be housed in other adult disability homes (many of whom were not able to cope with their care needs), or unfortunately, institutionalised at IMH.

Individual and corporate donations ensure that SAAH can continue to provide safe, dignified services to persons with moderate to severe autism, even if the families have lower incomes.

To provide financial assistance to families in need from March-December 2024 requires \$209,000. Your support will ensure that persons with moderate to severe autism receive the best possible care and live a dignified and meaningful life.



FOSTER A LIFETIME OF GROWTH AND FULFILMENT

The Autism Lifespan Support Enhancement Programme

WALK OF A LIFETIME

Walk of a Lifetime (WOAL) is our annual charity walk in support of persons with autism.

Open to all members of the public, WOAL aims to bring autism into the community and provides others with important insights into the world of autism. In doing so, we desire to foster greater public understanding of autism, increase public acceptance of persons with autism and their caregivers, and encourage potential partners to embrace this cause.

All proceeds go towards funding the various programmes and services that support our beneficiaries and their families.

We are targeting to have 1,000 persons with autism and their caregivers to participate in the walk.

SAAC aims to raise \$600,000 through WOAL in 2024. We are seeking a sponsor to underwrite the cost of organising the event.





SUPPORTING OUR WORK

SUPPORTING OUR WORK

Here are some ways you may support our work. Please feel free to get in touch with us if you would like to find out more.

CORPORATE ENGAGEMENT

As a business, you can profoundly impact the lives of our beneficiaries, creating a tangible difference in their well-being.

Here's how your business can engage:

- 1 Forge strategic partnerships to effectively fulfil your corporate social responsibility objectives.
- 2 Extend support through corporate donations, whether as a one-time contribution or recurring support.
- 3 Nominate SAAC as your designated charity for the year, aligning your philanthropic efforts with our cause.
- 4 Consider providing matching funds for our fundraising campaigns, doubling the impact of your contribution.
- 5 Facilitate connections with local businesses interested in supporting SAAC or individuals with autism, expanding our network of support and resources.



PERSONAL DONATIONS

Regardless of size, your donation can make a real difference to the lives of our beneficiaries. Here's how you can support our cause:

- 1 Make a one-time or monthly donation conveniently through our website.
- 2 Consider a personal major gift, offering substantial support to further our mission.
- 3 Include us in your will, ensuring your legacy continues to empower those we serve.
- 4 Honour the memory of a loved one by making a donation in their name, a heartfelt gesture that leaves a lasting impact.

Your generosity fuels our efforts and transforms lives.

SUPPORTING OUR WORK

Here are some ways you may support our work. Please feel free to get in touch with us if you would like to find out more.

FUNDRAISE

Join us in raising funds to enhance the lives of individuals with autism.

- 1 Host a fundraising event in support of SAAC or participate in a sponsored activity on behalf of our charity.
- 2 Organise a fundraising event at your workplace and engage your colleagues. It not only contributes to our cause, but can also great for team-building too!



FAMILY OFFICE, TRUSTS AND FOUNDATIONS

These contributions play a vital role in sustaining our mission and offering enduring support. If you're a trustee or have ties to a family office, trust, or foundation, we welcome your involvement. If our objectives align with your charitable giving priorities, we invite you to consider supporting SAAC. Together, we can embark on a journey to positively impact the lives of individuals with autism.

We eagerly await the opportunity to collaborate with you.

VOLUNTEER

At the heart of volunteering at SAAC is getting to know a person who is wired differently from the rest of us. Embark on a journey to befriend people who have autism and see life through their eyes. Your gift of time can change their lives (and yours).



DONATION METHODS

If you'd like to continue donating towards our cause, these are the various ways you may do so.

01 by PayNow

- Scan the QR code with your preferred banking app.



02 by Cheque

- Write your cheque to **"St. Andrew's Autism Centre"**
- For tax deduction purposes, please include your full name, NRIC/FIN/UEN and contact details at the back of the cheque.
- Mail it to **1 Elliot Road, S458686**

03 by Bank Transfer

- Name of Bank : The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited
- Name of Account Holder : **St. Andrew's Mission Hospital**
- Account Number : 142-159664-007
- Bank Code : 7232
- Swift Code : HSBCSGSGXXX

04 via our website

- Visit www.saac.org.sg/donate-now
- Or, scan QR code



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report was possible because of what you have enabled us to do. It is through your giving that we are able to continue providing good quality care to persons with autism. This ensures that each and every person with autism who comes through our doors is given the love and support they need and deserve.

We are honoured to have you as our partners in this journey, and we want you to know that your contribution has made a real difference in the lives of the people we serve. Your generosity has given us the means to create positive change and transform lives - for that, we are truly grateful.

Concept: Development Team
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