



ST. ANDREW'S  
AUTISM CENTRE

# FRIENDSHIP REPORT



# 2024

# LETTER FROM THE CEO

Dear Friends of SAAC,

At SAAC, we believe that our vision of enabling persons with autism to lead dignified and meaningful lives cannot happen without the love and support of our friends. And 2024 for us was a year of much friendship, growth, and love from all of you.

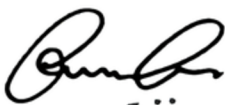
Your generous support helped us to raise \$3.21 million to support our programmes and services, benefiting more than 470 beneficiaries and allowing us to push forward with new initiatives to better serve persons with autism. We had more volunteers than ever at 625, and our volunteers spent a record 9,525 hours of time with our beneficiaries, in increasingly significant and strategic roles.

I also want to highlight those of you who have spoken up for persons with autism, be it in your private or public capacities, big or small - your voice matters to all of us here at SAAC, and especially to all persons with autism residing in Singapore.

The work we do here at SAAC would not be possible without your continued support, and your friendship is one that we deeply appreciate. Thank you for walking with us through thick and thin, and look forward to again journeying with you this year.

Let us continue to work together in enabling persons with autism to lead dignified and meaningful lives.

With **love**,



**Bernard Chew**

Chief Executive Officer

St. Andrew's Autism Centre





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# 2024 IN FIGURES



**\$3.21 million  
raised**



**625  
Volunteers**



**In 2024, we have touched the lives of 471  
SAAC beneficiaries and their families.**



**316**

Special Education  
School Students



**121**

Day Activity Centre  
Clients



**34**

Adult Home  
Residents



**215**

Beneficiaries trained  
in vocational skills



**471**

Beneficiaries served to  
experience dignity and  
meaning in life



**74**

Beneficiaries on  
financial assistance

# YOUR GIFT MATTERS

## St. Andrew's Autism School (SAAS)

There were 316 total students in SAAS, with 185 staff in place.

100% of our students were trained in daily living skills, while 59.2% were trained in vocational skills in 2024.

48 students were on financial assistance.

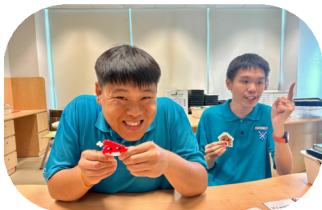


## St. Andrew's Day Activity Centres (DAC)

There were 121 total clients in the DAC across both Siglap and Sengkang locations, with 45 staff in place.

100% of our students were trained in daily living skills, while 24.8% were trained in vocational skills in 2024.

9 clients were on financial assistance.



## St. Andrew's Adult Home (SAAH)

There were 34 total residents in SAAH, with 45 staff in place.

100% of our residents were trained in daily living skills and vocational skills in 2024.

17 residents were on financial assistance.

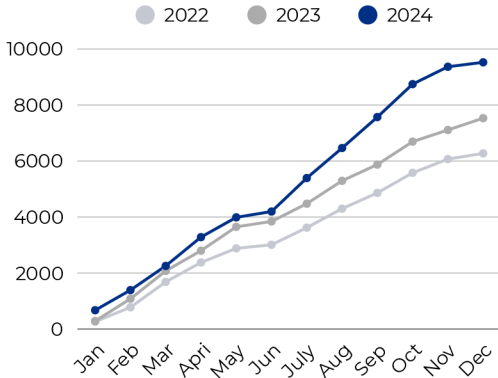


**Your giving has helped us in our journey to enable persons with autism to lead dignified and meaningful lives.**



# KEY VOLUNTEER STATISTICS

## Volunteering Hours



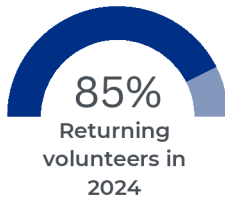
\*Data does not include ad-hoc volunteers and volunteering hours

In 2024, a total of 625 friends - made up of individual and group volunteers - generously dedicated their time, talent, treasure, ties and testimony to our mission. Together, they contributed a remarkable 9,525 volunteering hours across various programmes and initiatives.

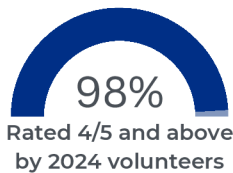
Volunteering hours have been on a constant upward trend since 2022, and we attribute this success to our incredible volunteers, whose contributions of time, talent, treasure, and ties have made a lasting impact on the lives we serve.

## 2024 Targets and Results

To have returning volunteers make up 50% of the total volunteers



95% rate their satisfaction level as 4 and above based on their volunteering experience.



100% leave for reasons not related to any negative volunteering experience.

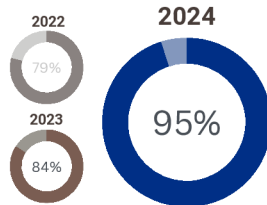




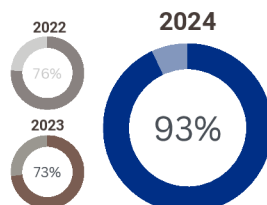
# WHAT OUR FRIENDS SAY ABOUT US



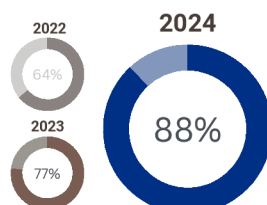
**95% of volunteers said their expectations were exceeded.** Many valued making a difference, giving back, and gaining new skills.



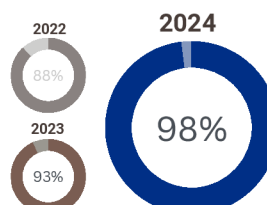
**93% of our volunteers intend to continue supporting us in 2025.**



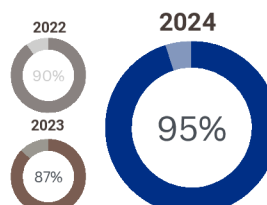
**88% of our volunteers felt a strong sense of belonging at SAAC,** marking a steady increase since 2022.



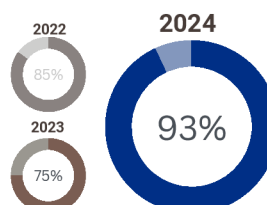
**98% rated 4 or higher in terms of overall satisfaction,** which was an increase from 93% in 2023.



**Over 95% of volunteers rated our staff 4-5 for supporting and appreciating their efforts.** We're here for you!



**93% rated us 4-5 for quality of volunteer orientation.** We look toward providing more effective training.





# 2024 INITIATIVES



The second instalment of SAAC's signature annual event continued its journey of advocacy for persons with autism on 21 September 2024, with **1,199 participants and more than \$610,000 raised.**

Minister Edwin Tong graced the event and spoke for better inclusion of persons with autism, as members of the public learned more about autism spectrum disorder through experiential activities; educational booths on communicating with persons with autism and sensory challenges faced by persons with autism to name a few.

**92%**

of participants indicated a better understanding of autism post-event

**237**

corporate participants from 9 corporates

**149**

volunteer sign ups

**Walk of a Lifetime 2025 is set to happen on 1 Nov 2025. Mark your calendars!**



# BLUE HEART GARDEN



In conjunction with World Autism Awareness Month in April, the Blue Heart Garden Project was launched with the goal of cultivating understanding and acceptance. The blue heart advocates for autism awareness, symbolising empathy, understanding and a shared vision of an inclusive community.

10 large hearts and 9 small hearts were successfully adopted during the event, with each one becoming a lasting reminder of the commitment to understanding, acceptance, and love for those on the autism spectrum. Each heart was lovingly painted and decorated by our SAAS students.

Adopt a Blue Heart in April 2025. Email us at [giving@saac.org.sg](mailto:giving@saac.org.sg) to find out how.



## #ACCEPTANCEMATTERS

This campaign was a collaboration between SAAC, Mastercard, HSBC SG, Frasers Property SG and Hidden Disabilities Sunflower (HDS), and aimed to lend insights to the inner-world of a person with autism. It also aimed to educate the public on the facts of autism, and appeals for action which first begins with acceptance.

3 videos were produced about SAAC beneficiaries, to help members of the public to understand their lived experiences better. Special filmic effects and sound design were applied to the videos to further contextualise the viewer's experience, embodying the heightened sensorial world which persons with autism may experience. These ads were placed in OOH at MRT stations and at high traffic areas in Singapore, as well as extensive digital ads.

**45.7m**  
Impressions

**20m**  
Reach

**7.9m**  
Video Views



Watch the videos on our Youtube Channel: <https://bit.ly/acceptancemattersyt>

# ADVOCACY & PUBLIC EDUCATION



With funding from the RAO Family Foundation, we are consolidating our efforts in Advocacy and Public Education to promote greater awareness, understanding, and acceptance of persons with autism (PWA), advocate for more PWA-friendly policies and programmes, and foster a more inclusive environment for individuals with autism.

Corporates and organisations are increasingly wanting to learn more about autism, presenting valuable opportunities to advance autism awareness and further our mission. These organisations seek to not only enhance their knowledge and skills in engaging with and supporting PWAs, but also to receive guidance on creating more inclusive environments. This includes setting up calm rooms, providing sensory kits, and implementing other initiatives to support PWAs.



## DONOR MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

SAAC has embarked on the journey of implementing the Donor Management System (DMS) to enhance workflow efficiency, foster better donor relationships, and promote a more transparent and accountable operation.

The system aims to streamline the management of donor data, ensuring accurate tracking of contributions and engagement history. By automating key processes, it reduces manual effort and minimises the risk of errors, allowing staff to focus on more strategic tasks.

With its robust reporting and analytics capabilities, the DMS has also empowered SAAC to make data-driven decisions and optimise donor outreach efforts.

Looking ahead, future improvements will concentrate on further refining the user experience and continuously improving the system's features to maximise its overall impact.



# VOLUNTEER LEADER

**Grooming & formation of Volunteer Leaders (VLs) from existing pool of regular volunteers began in 2024.**

Our volunteer leaders played a crucial role in helping to organise and engage our volunteer friends.



## Empowering Volunteerism

VLs are a strategic resource in helping the Volunteer Management team to empower other volunteers through mentoring and guiding new SAAC volunteers.



## Advocacy & Awareness

VLs are strong advocates through the sharing of their experiences during trainings, and their testimonies via social media help to raise awareness.



## Community Integration

VLs help promote the integration of volunteers within the SAAC community, creating a supportive and inclusive environment with a sense of belonging.

## VOLUNTEER LEADER ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2024

Our VLs organised and led a total of 4 sessions across all 3 SAAC services to celebrate Racial Harmony Day with our students, clients and residents.

VLs were also deployed at 5 strategic outreach events:

- **JC65**
- **PAYM love red @ Sengkang GRC**
- **MSF Volunteer Festival**
- **Walk Of A Lifetime**
- **Queensway Secondary School**

Their presence supplemented SAAC's participation in these community advocacy events and aid us greatly in our advocacy journey!

# BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

In 2024 we broadened the scope of services for regular volunteers to create more meaningful engagements, extending their involvement beyond the classroom, and advancing SAAC's mission together.



This led to significantly deeper engagement with our volunteers; volunteers felt more connected and invested in SAAC's mission by contributing to a wider range of activities. This fostered a sense of purpose and satisfaction, encouraging volunteers to stay long-term.



# TRAINING AND EQUIPPING

We produced volunteer training videos which serve as a training aid to supplement trainers in imparting concepts and skills needed to help volunteers better engage and support our beneficiaries. Topics ranged from Positive Behaviour Support, Communications, Sensory Challenges, Prompting Techniques, and Preparing for Outings.

We have successfully concluded a full cycle of training with the new materials, encompassing all five topics in the programme. The next cycle is scheduled to commence in 2025.





# FRIENDSHIP JOURNEYS



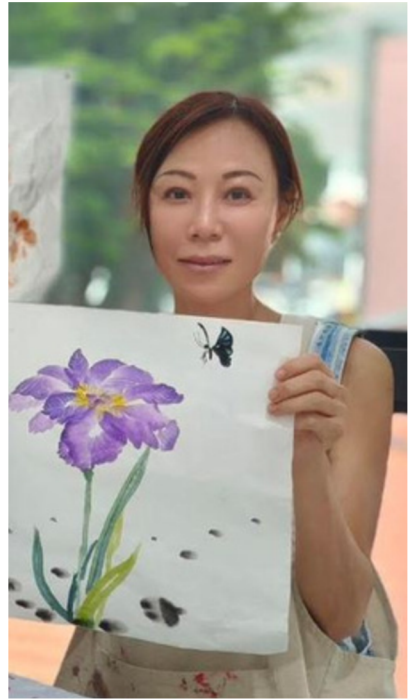
# MARISA CHUA - SAAC DONOR

After more than two decades in the corporate world, Marisa made the decision to step away from her career and dedicate her time to causes close to her heart: supporting persons with disabilities and under-privileged children. This transition marked the beginning of a transformative journey, one fueled by a desire to impart essential life skills to those who needed them most.

Her yoga instructor, who had been volunteering at SAAC, shared stories that ignited Marisa's interest.

In December 2023, she launched LoveBites, a home business with a charitable mission, dedicating 5% of her sales to SAAC.

In February 2024, she set up a one-year online fundraising campaign, inviting friends and customers to contribute towards SAAC's services. She has raised over \$15,000 for SAAC to date.



## What inspired you to set up a one-year fundraising campaign?

Transitioning from corporate to home baking allowed me to channel my passion into something more impactful and this fundraising campaign was a way to give back while sharing my love for baking.

Lunar New Year is a season for blessing others, and I decided to start a campaign to share the work that SAAC does and for others to also find out more and support a cause close to my heart.

## What do you hope to achieve?

To continue raising awareness and funds for SAAC while building a supportive community of customers, friends, and family. To see LoveBites grow, not just as a business, but as a platform for social good and community building.

Ultimately, I hope to leave a legacy where kindness, generosity, and giving are at the heart of everything we do, and we create lasting change together.



## PARKWAY EAST HOSPITAL SAAC DONOR & PARTNER

Parkway East Hospital (PEH) has demonstrated its commitment to community health and well-being by partnering SAAC for Walk of a Lifetime 2024. As the official medical partner, PEH was crucial to the event's success.

PEH showed great community spirit, sending an impressive contingent of 53 participants - the largest team at the Walk. PEH also launched a fundraising campaign for SAAC over Christmas, raising more than \$6,000. They also volunteered extensively with SAAS and DAC.

Since 2023, they have supported Fu Dai & Hari Raya care pack distributions. PEH also supports our hydroponics farm and some of the produce are sold in PEH canteen. There is no doubt in our minds that PEH is a community leader dedicated to making a positive impact.



## MALKEITH SINGH SAAC STAFF & DONOR

Malkeith Singh is a dedicated staff member with over 12 years of service at SAAC. He currently serves as the Head of Adult Services at the Day Activity Centres.

Malkeith's unwavering commitment to the care and well-being of our beneficiaries drives his daily life and work at SAAC.

Understanding the importance of funding for the clients, he also donates annually to support those in need.

"Unlike in a typical educational institution, our beneficiaries don't have a graduation day to look forward to. Many of them have been with our Day Activity Centres for years, and they will continue to be here for the foreseeable future. Instead of waiting for traditional milestones, every bit of improvement in a beneficiary is a reason to celebrate. I've been with SAAC for over 12 years, and throughout that time, there have been many highs and lows. Watching the beneficiaries progress and seeing caregivers express their gratitude for the improvements in their children's lives has been my greatest reward. It's a privilege to help people with autism lead more independent and fulfilling lives."





## EUGENE CHEONG

**VOLUNTEER LEADER**

"As a father to a son with autism, I have always wanted to volunteer with an organisation which supports persons with autism – first because it would help me understand individuals with autism more, and second because I feel a certain closeness and empathy with these individuals... SAAH's mission and service mindset attracted me right away.

Since I am also working and living alone in Singapore, while my family are in our home country Malaysia, my volunteering at SAAH filled my free time with a sense of purpose.

There is a great sense of mission amongst the staff, with a well-organised volunteer management team. There was a true sense of camaraderie amongst volunteers. Seeing our efforts, however insignificant, become relevant and making an impact on the routine lives of the beneficiaries is very fulfilling.

I readily welcomed the role as a volunteer leader. I could help with guiding and perhaps mentoring newer volunteers and playing a beneficial role alongside volunteer management."

## CHRISTINA LOW

**VOLUNTEER LEADER**

"I've been volunteering at SAAS since 2022, and in 2024 I decided to get involved further by becoming a volunteer leader. This role allows me to support the volunteer community through training, mentoring, and advocating.. It's a role that has deepened my sense of purpose and connection with this meaningful work.

Volunteering at SAAS has become a source of immense joy and fulfillment for me. It's not just about giving my time—it's about being part of a community that uplifts one another. Seeing the children achieve small but meaningful milestones, like completing a task or trying something new, fills my heart with pride. The joy in their eyes remind me why this work matters so much.

This journey has enriched my life in ways I never expected. It has taught me the value of patience, the importance of understanding, and the beauty of celebrating every little step forward. I hope that more people will take the time to explore this world, to open their hearts and minds, and to step forward as volunteers."

# MAKING FRIENDSHIPS LAST WAYS TO SUPPORT SAAC



## DONATE

Your donation can change lives. With just a small contribution, you can help improve the quality of life of individuals with autism across all our services. Every donation to SAAC helps us provide essential programmes and services to those who need them most.

Your donations are eligible for 250% tax deduction.  
Give at [bit.ly/friendshipdonate](https://bit.ly/friendshipdonate)



## ADVOCATE

While there is increased awareness of autism in the public sphere, many stereotypes of persons with autism still exist, and acceptance of persons with autism in public spaces are still far from ideal.

We would appreciate it if you could speak more for persons with autism in your private and professional capacities, or even perhaps just mention SAAC and the work we do at your next dinner with family and friends.



## VOLUNTEER

If you wish to touch a life by giving your time or sharing your skills, we would love for you to be part of our community.

Join us in enabling our children, youths and adults on the autism spectrum to lead dignified and meaningful lives.

Sign up to be a SAAC volunteer at [bit.ly/friendshipvol](https://bit.ly/friendshipvol) and start making an impact for persons with autism!





ST. ANDREW'S  
AUTISM CENTRE

**THANK YOU FOR  
YOUR FRIENDSHIP!**