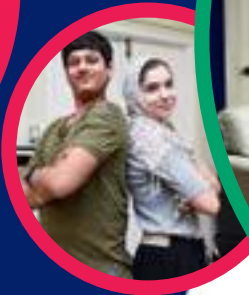


BUILDING • TOMORROW • TOGETHER



ANNUAL REPORT

2018

# Geetha Moorthy FOUNDER & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



It seems as if every year brings new challenges and accomplishments to the SAAAC Autism Centre, but 2018 was truly a year of rapid change and growth. With the support of the city of Toronto and Councillor Glenn De Baeremaeker, our Centre relocated to a spacious 11,000 sq. ft facility at 705 Progress Avenue in the heart of Scarborough. The Centre now has the capacity to serve 400 families annually, and the new home provides us the opportunity to deliver more critical autism programming to families who truly need them. With the new space has come the opportunity to reexamine who we were and where we were going as an organization. What began as a grassroots initiative to support South Asian families impacted by autism had grown to become a valuable community service helping diverse newcomer communities. We wanted to reflect this growth and diversity, and so- with our board of directors and creative professionals Sady Mahendran and Keith Jones- we began the journey to rebrand the organization. Through multiple stakeholder meetings with our families, staff, donors, and volunteers, we came to create a visual identity that articulated our strengthened organization. It is my firm belief that the SAAAC Autism Centre will continue to excel in its work of helping under resourced communities access vital autism services and information. I know the critical changes we have made this year will go very far in helping us make autism services equitable for all Canadians.

## NEW BEGINNINGS



# CELEBRATING 10 YEARS

As part of the Centre's 10-year celebration, the SAAAC Autism Centre organized three major events to commemorate a milestone: a conference, a musical, and our annual Radiant Night Gala. The events were held over two days - March 2 & 3. The Culture Counts Autism Conference brought together a range of perspectives from individuals and organizations that have been tackling issues facing marginalized families living with autism and other developmental disabilities. The Silver Linings Musical was the story of how a young man with autism worked hard to reach his dreams of being a recognized musician. The weekend was capped off with the Radiant Night Gala – our largest fundraising event of the year. The event attracts 1200 guests annually and is a major social event that brings together some of Toronto's best and brightest.



# THE NEW SAAAC AUTISM CENTRE

My name is Sady Magendran.

I've been fortunate enough to be a volunteer at the SAAAC Autism Centre, for about the past two years or so.

My background is in creative, marketing and branding. I was fortunate enough to work with Keith Jones of & good company to help build the new brand for SAAAC Autism Centre. When we started, we focused on a few things:

What's Our Story? Why are we here? Why SAAAC? Lots of big questions. So what's our story? Well, it's still the same thing 11 years ago, as it is today. It's about family; it's about community; it's about building a better tomorrow together.

But we have evolved. We've evolved in many ways. We are proud We are confident. We are humble. We are relentless. We've also grown up! And with that, we have a new look.

We realized that we needed an identity that symbolized what we stood for - and also aligned us in a crowded marketplace. When you look at our A - it stands for our house. That's the roof we have built to nurture our community.

SAAAC used to stand for South Asian Autism Awareness Centre. Today it's just the SAAAC Autism Centre. As we have grown, we realized the need to support those also outside of our own community..

We built our new identity based on the values that built us, and it's now set us up for a strong foundation for the next 10+ years.

Welcome to our new brand.





## SAAAC's New Home: Our Journey

For two years, the SAAAC Autism Centre was looking for a new home that could support the many families that desperately needed assistance and access to critical autism services. Along with the help of loyal community members and influential leaders, SAAAC landed our dream facility!

An abandoned factory warehouse that had not been in use for over a decade was now SAAAC's new 11,000 square foot facility. SAAAC was humbled and thankful when the City agreed to foot the bill of \$1.3 million dollars in renovation costs for a building that was owned by the city of Toronto and the Toronto District School Board.

Now proudly located at 705 Progress Avenue in Scarborough, the Centre officially opened its doors on July 15, 2018 and serves over 350 families.

For the opening ceremony, we had the honour of hosting Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, along with other influential community leaders like Gary Anandasangaree, Mike Lake, Mitzie Hunter, Paul Ainslie and of course Councillor Glenn De Baeremaeker who was influential in seeing our project to completion.

The Centre offers a variety of free and subsidized services including Speech and Language Therapy, ABA therapy, Occupational therapy, recreational programs (sports, fitness, dance),

The Centre offers a variety of free and subsidized services including Speech and Language Therapy, ABA therapy, Occupational therapy, recreational programs (sports, fitness, dance), visual arts, March break and summer camps, family support programming, adult day programming, and employment skills training.

**11,000 SQUARE FOOT FACILITY**

**350 FAMILIES SERVED**

**10 PROGRAMMING STREAMS**



# LIVING 'N' LEARNING

DEFEAT IGNORANCE  
EMBRACE DIFFERENCE  
CONQUER STIGMAS



The years after high school are bleak for young adults with ASD. Caregivers liken it to “falling off a cliff” - SAAAC’s Living’N’Learning looks to change that by presenting new opportunities for growth and development.

## Rethinking Adult Day Programming: Living’N’Learning

In response, the SAAAC Autism Centre, with its partners, looked to develop a program that would support the continued growth and development of young adults. Program developers knew they wanted to create a pathway to an active, healthy personal and community life for individuals in the program. A big part of Living’N’Learning was creating simulated work and community environments. Activities such as a SAAAC Café provided opportunities for students to prepare basic meals, process payments by customers, and exercise customer service skills. These simulated activities prepared students for large, community-based events such as the Holiday Market where students developed and executed all aspects of the event. The Holiday Market was a platform that helped students practise their job readiness skills in a real-world setting and provide them an opportunity to engage

and connect with their community. The program also emphasized community outings to restaurants, malls, and some of the city’s more notable attractions. These outings reinforced the skills that were being taught in the Centre – from learning how to greet others, waiting appropriately for one’s turn, to understanding community signs (stop signs, traffic lights, etc.). The program also incorporated leisure activities such as yoga, sports/fitness, and painting. Overall the program supported 10 adults, 15 volunteers, and 2 staff members. Future prospects for the program include incorporating a greater use of technology to enhance skill sets and the development of a social enterprise business to provide meaningful job training opportunities.



## Community Helping Community

It takes a huge heart to dedicate time out of your day to volunteer. At the SAAAC Autism Centre, our volunteers are passionate about helping support innovative programs for children, youth and young adults with autism.

The SAAAC Autism Centre commits to providing our volunteers with the appropriate orientation, training, and program assignments. We make every effort to offer a rewarding and educational experience for every one of our over 150 volunteers. We can proudly say that in 2018 our volunteers provided over 85,000 hours, which translates into \$1,196,160 worth of service.

The SAAAC Autism Centre has maintained rewarding relationships with over 12 post-secondary educational institutes, namely Centennial College, Seneca College, and the University of Toronto – Scarborough Campus.

The Balasingham Foundation honours volunteers who have achieved exemplary success throughout their volunteer term at the SAAAC Autism Centre. Every year a select number of volunteers are chosen as the recipients of the Balasingham Award and are provided with a monetary gift as a token of our appreciation of their hard work and dedication. This year's winners are: Prashanth Sritharan, Aranya Thambipillai, Nishani Raguwaran, Keerthana Gnanasegaram, and Umayanga Yogalingam.

**85,000** VOLUNTEER HOURS

**150** VOLUNTEERS

**8** COLLEGES



**VOLUNTEERS  
ARE THE  
HEART  
OF SAAAC**



**87,000**  
HOURS

In 2018, over 120 volunteers donated 87,000 hours of their time to support SAAAC programming.



**\$250,000**  
OF FREE SERVICES



The SAAAC Autism Centre offered \$250,000 worth of free services to families who were in need of support. Free services include our family support, case management, and arts-based services.



**300**  
FAMILIES  
SUPPORTED



The SAAAC Autism Centre was able to provide services for 300 families.



**11**  
PROGRAMMING  
STREAMS

The Centre offered a variety of evidence-based art, and recreational services to over 300 families this year.



**11,000**  
SQ. FEET  
OF SPACE

We moved into a wonderful 11,000 sq. ft facility that will have the capacity to serve 400 families annually



**1**  
CONFERENCE



SAAAC hosted its first ever conference – the goal of the conference was to build relationships among researchers, community-based clinicians, community organizations to facilitate collaboration and better provide ASD support to under-served communities.



# REVENUE



Total Revenue: \$1,279,362.00

- Received donations (12.46%) ● Non-receipted donations (16.27%)
- Gifts from other registered charities (1.71%)
- Government funding (40.89%) ● All other revenue (40.89%)

# EXPENSES



Total Expenses: \$1,279,362.00

- Charitable programs (86.13%) ● Fundraising (13.87%)

# CONTACT

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