



2017

ANNUAL
REPORT

10
Year Celebration

-STAFF, VOLUNTEERS & FAMILY
MEMBERS ARE THE HEART OF SAAAC-

OUR FOUNDATION





01

DEFEAT IGNORANCE
EMBRACE DIFFERENCE
CONQUER STIGMAS

DREAM

“why we do
what we do”

ABOUT US

The SAAAC Autism Centre began in 2008 as a response to the culture of shame, stigma and silence associated with ASD in the South Asian community in Toronto. In subsequent years, SAAAC expanded its scope and services to support all communities that experienced challenges accessing autism services and information due to language barriers, low incomes, cultural stigmas, and lack of support networks.

Today, SAAAC inspires families in need of access to ASD services, with a special focus on culturally and linguistically diverse families who often do not benefit from resource awareness or engagement. Our organization looks to create positive change through:

- Encouraging lifelong development of the children, youth, and adults we serve through diverse therapies and programs
- Empowering parents through education, training, and peer support networks
- Engaging racially and ethnically diverse communities through meaningful volunteer experiences and fostering greater understanding and acceptance of ASD
- Providing access for all through community engagement and knowledge sharing


GEETHA MOORTHY
- FOUNDER & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR -



"Leadership is the capacity to
translate vision into reality"

- Warren Bennis

OUR VISION



Imagine this – you are brought up in a culture that does not have a discourse or infrastructure to support individuals and families living with developmental health challenges. These challenges are hidden and the realities of countless families are not even acknowledged. Can you see the hopelessness such situations can breed? It was this hopelessness we tried to overcome when we began the SAAAC Autism Centre. For over a decade, our mission has been to increase the dialogue, awareness, and support for newcomer families living with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

Our work began as a small grassroots organization supporting just a few families in 2008, offering dance programming and periodic workshops. Many of these activities took place out of the basement of my home with only close friends and families helping. Ten years later, we have grown to serve over 250 families with the support of 200 volunteers. In 2017, we built strong partnerships with Ontario's leading autism agencies; received funding support from all levels of government; and continued to develop our tradition of strong, innovative programming. In May 2018, with the help from the City of Toronto and Councillor Glenn De Baeremaeker, SAAAC will be moving into a new 11,000 square foot facility – a stark contrast from our early days in my basement.

None of these incredible achievements could have been possible with the support of our volunteers, sponsors, donors, parents, staff, and Board of Directors. With your commitment to reducing the stigma surrounding ASD, we have been able to provide innovative, evidence-based approaches to those in real need. SAAAC currently consists of 200 Volunteers, 12 Full-time staff, and 6 part-time staff, all working together to offer 11 types of programs focused on supporting the development of our students and their families.

I will never be able to fully articulate the gratitude I feel for all those who have helped SAAAC grow over the past 10 years. What our journey has taught me is that with hope, passion, and determination, nothing can stop us from making the kinds of changes that our society needs. Even when a situation seems hopeless, when we band together we are unstoppable. I cannot imagine what the next 10 years has in store, and I look forward to continuing to work with our partners and community members to continue to push through with innovative, evidence-based practices that will work to help the families we serve.

**Message from the
Executive Director**



250
FAMILIES
SERVED IN
2017

OUR POTENTIAL

-OUR FAMILIES & OUR PROGRAMS-



SAAAC's programming is geared towards helping our students and families reach their potential. The Centre provides 11 programs and services that support individuals with ASD across their lifespan: from developing vital communication and social skills for children in our ABA and Speech Therapy programs to providing employment training for young adults, SAAAC provides a full range of support services that foster skill development and encourage independence. In 2017, SAAAC programming served 250 families. For a full list of programs, please see our website: www.saaac.org

**OUR PROGRAMS
ARE DESIGNED TO
MEET THE NEEDS
OF FAMILIES FROM
DIAGNOSIS TO
EMPLOYMENT**

PROGRAMS INCLUDE:

Speech-Language Program
Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA)
Assessment. Development. Empowerment
(ADE) Parent Support Program
SAAAC CARES Caregiver Counselling Program

Learn 2 Play Fitness Program
Living'N'Learning Adult Day Program
Artistic Minds Painting Program
Sound of Music Program
Dance Program
Employment Training Program
Summer Camp & March Break Camp





OUR PULSE

-OUR VOLUNTEERS-

SAAAC volunteers help the Centre in various capacities including;

- o Work with children & youth with ASD
- o Help run parent workshops
- o Provide administrative support
- o Lead marketing campaigns
- o And support fundraising activities

- In 2008, SAAAC had just six volunteers. In 2017, more than 200 volunteers supported SAAAC programming and operations
- SAAAC contributed more than 30,000 volunteer hours in 2017
- Over 600 community members have volunteered with SAAAC over the last 10 years

THANK YOU SAAAC VOLUNTEERS
WE COULDN'T DO IT WITHOUT YOU
- YOU ELEVATE US-



The next
generation
of socially
conscious
leaders

WE'RE CREATING CHANGE

The story of SAAAC is a story of the power of collective action. Over the last decade, hundreds of generous volunteers have donated their time, energy, and talent to help children, youth, and adults living with ASD. Their incredible work has helped SAAAC grow and provide countless families much needed support. We are truly grateful for all the individuals who have come through our doors to help strengthen their community.

-OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS-

OUR LEADERS



For nearly a decade, SAAAC's Board of Directors have guided, monitored, and supported the delivery of quality services to individuals with ASD, their families, and the surrounding community. These individuals bring a wealth of knowledge, experience, and leadership to executing SAAAC's mission of supporting culturally and linguistically diverse families living with ASD.



Our vision for the future of ASD

“Congratulations to SAAAC on its 10th Anniversary! SAAAC has created a culture of caring and connectedness in which to offer quality, affordable and accessible programs and services to families living with autism. SAAAC has emerged as a collaborative leader of diversity and inclusive practices. Thank you to all the volunteers, staff, families, partners, funders, and donors whose talents and efforts continue to support the engagement, learning, and achievement of all our children, youth, and adults on the spectrum.”

Dr. Lindy Zaretsky
Member since 2014

“In the near future, I envision a community where ignorance of autism has been defeated, and Autistic identity is embraced. My parents always wanted children with Autism to have a feeling of acceptance and belonging. I hope to follow in their footsteps and work towards making SAAAC’s vision a reality. Together we can “defeat Ignorance, embrace difference, and conquer stigma.”

Tony Balasingham
Member since 2008

“As a parent I know that raising a child with autism cannot be done alone. It requires the help of a village. SAAAC was my village and I hope that SAAAC will continue to be a village for all future families that come to us for help.”

Erashia Kobikrishna
Member since 2017

Dr. Lindy Zaretsky
President

Dr. Shivajan Sivapalan
Vice President

Mr. Michael Cheung
Treasurer

Mr. Tony Balasingham
Director

Dr. Mohammad Zubairi
Director

Dilani Gunarajah
Secretary

Mr. Suresh Tharmaratnam
Director

Mr. Nishan Duraiappah
Director

Erashia Kobikrishna
Director

Ontario will INVEST \$530,000 IN SAAAC over two years

In Oct 2017, Minister of Children and Youth Services Michael Coteau announced that Ontario will invest \$530,000 in SAAAC over two years in programs aimed at supporting parents of children and youth with ASD. The investment will support two programs:

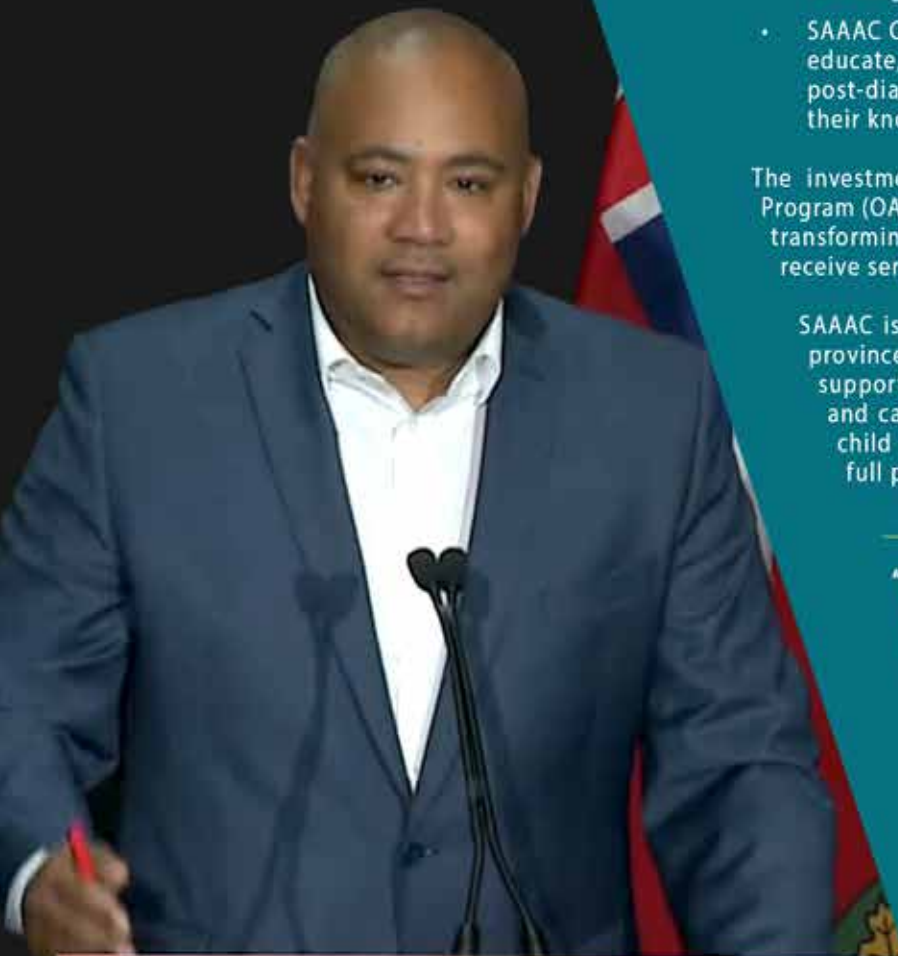
- Assessment, Development, Empowerment (ADE) – a program dedicated to arming parents and caregivers with information to navigate autism-related services, build a strong network of support, and learn basic behavioural and communication teaching strategies.
- SAAAC CARES Parental Mental Health Program – a program to educate, empower and support caregivers who require post-diagnosis emotional support and counselling as they build their knowledge.

The investment was part of the province's new Ontario Autism Program (OAP), which began to be implemented in June 2017 and is transforming how children and youth with ASD and their families receive services and supports.

SAAAC is incredibly proud and committed to working with the province of Ontario to deliver quality services aimed at supporting the family as a whole. Our aim is to help parents and caregivers develop the skills they need to support their child or youth with ASD to help them thrive and reach their full potential.

"I applaud the South Asian Autism Awareness Centre's grassroots efforts to support parents navigate and cope with their Autism Spectrum Disorder diagnosis and its ensuing effects. Parents and caregivers have a tremendous role to play in helping their child or youth with ASD, and, as a parent myself, I know how vital community services can be. Thank you to SAAAC for your hard work, and I look forward to continuing to hear your success stories."

---Michael Coteau,
Minister of Children and
Youth Services



**EMPOWERING PARENTS &
HELPING YOUNG PEOPLE WITH AUTISM**

**DONNER DES MOYENS AUX PARENTS ET
AIDER LES JEUNES ATTEINTS D'AUTISME**





OUR JOURNEY

-SUPPORT FROM ALL THREE LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT-

It all started when Glenn De Baeremaeker, a Toronto city councillor, knocked on the door of Erasiah Kobikrishna. Councillor De Baeremaeker was canvassing neighbourhoods when the two came across each other. Kobikrishna asked the councillor what he was doing for the autism charity located in his ward. Kobikrishna spoke of his 20 year-old son living with autism who was in need of extreme support and other families who were experiencing similar difficulties - all of whom were being supported by SAAAC. The encounter left a lasting impression on Councillor De Baeremaeker, who set off to work on helping families like Kobikrishna's.

During 2017, Councillor De Baeremaeker worked with city officials to help SAAAC move to a larger building near Scarborough Town Centre, one that's sat unoccupied for at least a decade. The larger space would allow the organization to serve more families and host a variety of programming.

Ultimately, Councillor De Baeremaeker was able to work with the City of Toronto to contribute \$940,000 to transform an abandoned 11,000 sq ft space into a functional state-of-the-art autism centre, which would serve nearly 400 families living with ASD annually.

"It's still a "scruffy, musty place" sitting "in the back end of nowhere," but renovations are about to start, and it will shine," said Councillor De Baeremaeker.

"We need champions like Glenn and other city councillors who made this all possible," says Kobikrishna. "Parents like myself need a community to support us in order to provide a good quality of life for children who need a lot of help. I am proud of Councillor De Baeremaeker for stepping up after our first encounter and being a passionate, committed advocate for his community." SAAAC's new home is slated to open in the early summer of 2018.



OUR EMPOWERMENT

-EMPLOYMENT AND LIFESKILLS PROGRAMS-

According to a 2013 Ontario study, Canadians with autism are under-employed: 13.9% work full-time, with an additional 6.1% working only part-time. With the help of Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), SAAAC is looking to put a dent in those stats by helping 50 young adults with varying abilities to find meaningful employment in their communities.

Employment Partners

Costco
Custom Eyes
JC's Banquet Hall
NS Dental
Modern Furniture
Park Inn Hotel
Radisson Hotel
Saravanabhavan
Southern Aroma
Sugshe Trading



\$298,000 TO HELP 50 INDIVIDUALS FIND MEANINGFUL EMPLOYMENT

"What we want employers to know is that this isn't a scary or hard thing to do," says Geetha Moorthy, Executive Director of SAAAC. "Our students and many individuals with autism and other individuals of varying abilities are capable of doing good and meaningful work and can add value to any organization. With the right supports in place, we can help employers integrate these great individuals into their organization."

The program has attracted local community businesses like Saravanaa Bhavan Restaurant that has provided six part-time positions to SAAAC students. In addition, businesses like CustomEyes, Park Inn Hotel, JC Banquet Hall, NS Dental, Southern Aroma all have joined us as employment partners, providing employment opportunities to young adults with autism.

"When we heard of SAAAC's Employment Program, we knew it fit in with our social responsibility mandate," said Dr. Bream of CustomEyes – a leading eye care clinic in Toronto. The clinic provided a part-time position to Joshua, a bright, humorous young man. "To us the program is not charity, but a meaningful way to incorporate individuals with autism into community life. Joshua is extremely kind and hard working, and we want to empower him and encourage him to lead a more independent life. We at CustomEyes are proud to be part of that journey."

The Employment Training Program is made possible by Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) which has provided \$298,000 to help 50 individuals find meaningful employment in line with their skills.

YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT IS OUR LIFELINE AND YOUR LEGACY.

-FINANCIAL OVERVIEW FOR 2017-

OUR LIFELINE

Revenue



- Received donations \$109,586 (14%)
- Non-receipted donations \$205,953 (26%)
- Gifts from other charities \$69,990 (9%)
- Government funding \$74,377 (9%)
- All other revenue \$328,084 (42%)

Total revenue: \$787,990

Expenses



- Charitable program \$748,735 (91%)
- Fundraising \$73,417 (9%)
- Other \$3,366 (0%)

Total expenses: \$825,518

Through a commitment to accountability and transparency, we look to uphold the trust you have placed in us.

All figures are compiled from our fiscal period April 1, 2016 to March 31, 2017.
All figures consolidated for SAAAC were audited by Truster Zweig LLP Chartered Accountants.
Our financial overview can be found on the Canada Revenue Agency charitable organization's website

Minister of Science and Minister of Sport
and Persons with Disabilities



Ministre des Sciences et ministre des Sports et des
Personnes handicapées

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0M5



As Minister of Sport and Persons with Disabilities, I am delighted to extend greetings to everyone attending the 2018 Radiant Night Autism Charity Gala at the South Asian Autism Awareness Centre (SAAAC). Through its work to empower children and adults with disabilities related to Autism Spectrum Disorders to lead more independent lives, and by encouraging community participation, the SAAAC is helping to ensure equal opportunities for everyone to reach their full potential.

Just like you, the Government is committed to helping all Canadians participate and contribute fully in our communities and workplaces.

In 2014 and 2015, through the Opportunities Fund for Persons with Disabilities, we invested in your “En” ability and Training to Employ Adult Minds, or TEAM, projects.

In addition, our government is investing a total of \$300,000 in your Ready, Set, Work project, initiated last year. This project, also supported through the Opportunities Fund, is helping 50 people in the Toronto area with disabilities related to Autism Spectrum Disorders overcome barriers to employment.

Since 2006, the Opportunities Fund has helped 55,382 Canadians with disabilities gain the skills and experience they need to find, secure, and keep jobs.

Through these investments and many others like them, our government is demonstrating the importance of helping all Canadians looking to join the workforce. Everyone benefits when we all have the chance to be included and to earn a living.

But to really succeed, we need the time, effort, and dedication of people like you, so thank you. I commend you for the work you have done and continue to do.

Congratulations on what I’m sure will be another successful gala.

The Honourable Kirsty Duncan, P.C., M.P.

Canada

WITHOUT A SENSE OF
CARING, THERE CAN
BE NO SENSE OF
COMMUNITY.

- ANTHONY J. D'ANGELO

COMMUNITY & YOU

-SEE THE POTENTIAL-

Our work with our community is not possible without you. In 2017, we received unprecedented support from community members, small businesses, various government agencies, and corporate partners. We are grateful for your generosity and empowered by your partnership.



THANK YOU TO OUR AMAZING COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Radiant Night Summit Partners



Canada's Investment Company



Champions

Comutek College
Dr. Baheeratan Thurairajah
Law Office of Luxmi Vasan
Rouge Valley Mitsubishi
Saravanaa Bhavan Restaurant
The Cablesoppe Inc
The Perfect Setting Inc.

Leaders

Asian Cash N Carry
CustomEyes
Dr. Manivannan Selvanathan
Dr. V.Vijayaratnam
Law Office of Dilani Gunarajah
RE/ON Homes Reality Inc
University Of Toronto - Scarborough Campus
Students' Union

Table Sponsors

Ajantha Ganeshalingam
Canadian Tamil Medical Association
Dr. Kan Chandra
Dr. Lindy Zaretsky
Halton Regional Police Service
Nava Wilson LLP
Thushanth Sivaanathan- Arrow Professional

IF THE WORLD HAD MORE
PEOPLE LIKE YOU IT WOULD BE A
BETTER PLACE. YOU DO MAKE A
DIFFERENCE. YOUR THOUGHTFULNESS
WILL ALWAYS BE REMEMBERED

THANK YOU

WORDS CANNOT EXPRESS
MY FEELINGS, NOR MY THANKS FOR
JUST TRYING TO



**TO ALL OUR SPONSORS,
SUPPORTORS & COMMUNITY
PARTNERS**



Who's Better
than the

South Asian
Autism
Awareness
Centre?

NOOOBODY!



Proud Supporters of the
South Asian Autism Awareness Centre





CANADA'S INVESTMENT COMPANY

CI Investments is one of Canada's largest independent investment companies, managing \$114 billion* in assets. With an outstanding lineup of portfolio management teams, we offer investment solutions to meet the individual needs of Canadian investors, including a comprehensive range of mutual funds, managed solutions and private wealth services.

Speak with your financial advisor to learn more.



*As at December 31, 2017

©CI Investments, the CI Investments design, are trademarks of CI Investments Inc. Commissions, trailing commissions, management fees and expenses all may be associated with mutual fund investments. Please read the prospectus before investing. Mutual funds are not guaranteed, their values change frequently and past performance may not be repeated.

CONGRATULATIONS ON 10 YEARS



PROUD SUPPORTER OF SAAAC AUTISM CENTRE

Grantors

Autism Speaks Canada
Canadian Tire Jump Start Foundation
Els for Autism
Employment and Social Development Canada – Canada Summer Jobs
Employment and Social Development Canada – Opportunities Funds
Ministry of Child and Youth Services (MCYS)

Schools and Organizations

Albert Campbell C.I.
Kings of the North (Basketball Tournament)
Raindrop Foundation – Ottawa
SAAACTIVE (Volleyball Tournament)
University of Ottawa
University of Waterloo

Media/Design

Asian Television Network
Behind The Line
Brinthan Bala
Canadian Multicultural Radio (CMR)
Canadian Tamil Radio (CTR)
East FM Radio
Kolan Shan
Ninaivukal - Moments of Events
Nvmikaa Photography
Red Lotus Films
Sady Magendran
Supendra Chandrakumar
Tamil Culture – Online Tamil Lifestyle Magazine
Tamil Mirror
Uthayan News Paper

Culture Counts Conference Partners

Autism Ontario
Autism Speaks Canada
Canadian Tamil Medical Association
Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration
SickKids Foundation

“We make a living by what we get,
but we make a life by what we give”

~Winston Churchill

OUR SUPPORTERS

One-Time Donors

Ajantha Ganesalingam
Anushaya Srijevanathan
Aparna Yogaselvam
Cambridge Group of Clubs
Dr. Vijayakala
Dr. Umesh Rayar
El-Kateb Medium Professional
Hector Joseph
K. Easan
Kajan Thevarajah
Kobikrishna Family
Kokila Vengadaraman
Kowsalya Sivakumar
Malini Sellathurai
Manchu Gogul
Manoharan Kandaiya
Maya Boutique Inc.
Narmatha Balachandra
Navaratnam Chandrapalan
Nivethika Athesivan
Optimart
Pharmore Pharmacy
Pratheepan P.
Rajkumar Rasiah
Rex Albert
Reynold Passangha
RSM Enterprise Inc.
S & B Pallets
Samira Kanji
Sanka Wijeratne
Sathasivam Viveganathan
Shan Uthayashankar
Sindujah Kanesanathan
Suren Alphonse
Sutharsan Anansarajah
Sutharshan Anandanadarajah
Thiviya
V. Thevarajah
Vic Ramalingam
Vignabalan Sellakandu
Vinayak Fashion Boutique

Our Seeds Partners

Anjela Kulasegaram
Amir Akbari
Antanat George
Anusiya Jeyakumar
Arumugam Kanasapillai
Arunan Kuven
Bharathy Vivekanantham
Brintha Sabeskumar
Chandra Sivapalan
Chenthuran Aryharan
Concepta Perinpanayagam
Dhivya Panchalingam
Ellakiya Sivapalan
Erasiah Kobikrishna
Geetha Moorthy
Gowthaman Kurusamy
Jallaja Pararajasingham
Janoni Pararajasingham
Jennifer Cuellar
Joseph Vijayaraj
Kankaparan Jeyanthan
Karan S.
Karthigesu Yogendran
Kingston Yogendran
Kiruparan Markandu
Krishnambal Arumugam
Lavanya Kirubakaran
Dr. Maheswaran Srivamadevan
Manojit Saha
Marina Albert
Marina George
Mary Joe Yogendran
Melissa Monteiro
Nathan Thachanamoorthy
Nevin Jenovathas
Neshanth Shanmugalingam
Nishan Arumugam
Nishiya Arumugam
P. Kumaraswamy
Prasanthi M. Gunatilleke
Raguraman Ramachandran
Raguvaran Rajaguru
Rohenston Yogendran
Russanthy Velummailum
S. Anandasangaree
Selvanayagam J Roshan
Shanthani Thuray
Shironika Thambirajah
Sinthuja Sivanantharajah
Sivathasan Mathiaparanam
Sharmica Mohan
Suresh Tharma
Teena Koogathasan
Thanuja Karunamoorthy
Tharshika Karunanithi
Vadivambikai Nadarajah
Varatharajan Nagamuthu
Vinoth Radhakrishnan
Yogendran Moorthy

"THE FUTURE BELONGS
TO THOSE WHO SEE
POSSIBILITIES BEFORE
THEY BECOME
OBVIOUS"
- JOHN SCULLY



See the Potential Sponsors- Our New Home

Building Renovation Sponsor

City of Toronto

Technology Sponsor

Tekno Media Inc

Sensory Room

Kuber Mortgage

Social Enterprise Room

Balasingham/ Moorthy Family

Early Years Programming Room

Mayuran Tharmabalan
Professional Corporation

Creative Development Room

Jeyanthan Sritharan Family &
Mr. Sivagnanam Sritharan

Therapy Rooms

Baby Doppler
Bharathy Vivekanantham
Kobikrishna Family
Krishanthan Thuraiarah Family
Mayuran Tharmabalan Family
Shira Wignarajah & Neruja Sivanesan
Toronto Police South Asian ISN
University Of Toronto – UTSG – TSA

Parent Lounge Sponsors

Emmanuel Family
Hathaharan Family
Jennifer Cuellar
Jeyachandran Family
Jeyakumar Family
Kanagaratnam Family
Kingston Yogendran
Kirubaharan Family

Kuruparan Family
Ladha Family
Mariyanayagam Family
Murugatheeswaran Family
Rajaratnam Family
Ravimohan Family
Sivapalan Family
Solomons Family
Venkata Guda Family
Vijayarajah Family

CONTACT US



youtube.com/saaacmedia



facebook.com/thesaaac



twitter.com/thesaaac



instagram.com/thesaaac

SAAAC Autism Centre
705 Progress Ave. Unit 63
Toronto, ON, M1H2X1

t:416.289.0100
f:416.289.2394
www.saaac.org
info@saaac.org



Design & Concept by: Amir Akbari