

# ANNUAL REPORT 2026

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# From the Founder & CEO



As I reflect on the past year, I am reminded that meaningful change begins when we listen to the needs of families and work together to remove the barriers they face.

At SAAAC, we know that autism support is about more than services. It is about creating pathways to belonging, opportunity, and hope. This year, we expanded access to culturally responsive resources through Autism 101, strengthened caregiver wellbeing through CARES, helped families navigate complex systems through Case Management, and empowered caregivers to support their children's development through Caregiver Skills Training.

We also continued to create opportunities for autistic and neurodivergent individuals to thrive. Through Goodness Gift, arts programming, and our Holiday Market, individuals built skills, gained confidence, earned income, and shared their talents with the broader community.

None of this would be possible without the dedication of our volunteers, staff, partners, donors, and families. Together, we are building a community where acceptance is reflected in action and where every individual is valued for their strengths and contributions.

As our work grows across Toronto and beyond, including new partnerships in Sri Lanka, our mission remains unchanged: to make autism services more accessible, equitable, and inclusive for all.

Thank you for being part of this journey.

Geetha Moorthy  
Founder & CEO



## Our Mission

Making autism services equitable for all Canadians.





# Board of Directors

We extend our sincere appreciation to our Board of Directors for their vision, leadership, and steadfast dedication to advancing a more inclusive future. Their guidance plays a pivotal role in shaping SAAAC’s strategic priorities and ensuring our programs continue to be impactful, equitable, and deeply connected to the communities we serve.



**Glenn De Baeremaeker**  
Board Chair



**Thanuja Karunamoorthy**  
Vice Chair



**Dr. Praveen Rayar**  
Director



**Dushyanthi Muthiah**  
Director



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Director



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Director



**Dr. Jonathan Weiss**  
Director



**Gajan Sathananthan**  
Director

# CST Impact Report

Closing the Gap: **Early Intervention** for Every Family



For families raising children with developmental delays or disabilities, early intervention can be life-changing — but for many in Scarborough, it remains out of reach. Long waitlists, high costs, and language barriers mean that newcomer families, racialized communities, and low-income households are often the least likely to access the supports their children need most.

CST was built to change that. This free, 12-week, evidence-based program trains caregivers of children ages 2 to 9 to become confident agents of change in their child's development. Crucially, no diagnosis is required— any family with a developmental concern is welcome, removing a critical barrier for those still navigating the assessment system.



### Impact beyond Scarborough

This year, SAAAC's CST team brought the model to Sri Lanka, supporting organizations in under-resourced communities where developmental specialists are scarce and early intervention is out of reach for most families.



Families that completed the program



of caregivers report greater confidence in managing their child's developmental needs and advocating for services



of caregivers increased knowledge & confidence



of caregivers report seeing their child communicate or connect with them more since completing the program

“My son uses more words in a sentence. Before the program, my son used 1 word like 'water.' After the program my son says more words: 'I want this water.' I am so happy.”

— CST Participant, Winter 2026

Program Proudly Supported by



# from scarborough to Sri Lanka

## Building Bridges of Care

For nearly four years, SAAAC has delivered the WHO's Caregiver Skills Training (CST) in Scarborough — and watched it transform families who had been overlooked. CST requires no specialist clinicians or expensive infrastructure. It builds caregiver confidence and produces real results for children. The more we saw it work, the more we asked: where else could this go?

That question brought us to Sri Lanka.

This past year, our team travelled to Mannar and Talawakelle — two regions where families raising children with developmental disabilities have had virtually no support. We came home with real progress:

- 3 critical partnerships with local NGOs
- 6 master trainer candidates selected
- 2 CST workbooks translated from English to Tamil (600+ pages)

A collaborative effort between SAAAC and our Sri Lankan partners, the translation ensures the program truly speaks to the families it serves.

Once certified, our master trainers will train local facilitators — teachers, social workers, community leaders, and caregivers — who will deliver CST directly to families, in their own languages and communities.

**The work has just begun. SAAAC is committed to walking alongside our Sri Lankan partners for years to come.**





SAAAC AND  
ALPHABEE  
HAVE PROUDLY  
SERVED

223

FAMILIES

# JASPER

## Building Brighter Beginnings: SAAAC and AlphaBee's Early Connections Partnership

For several years, SAAAC Autism Centre and AlphaBee have worked side by side through Early Connections Autism Services to bring evidence-based autism support to Ontario families with young children.

At the heart of this partnership is the Caregiver-Mediated Early Years Program, powered by the JASPER intervention, a play-based approach targeting Joint Attention, Symbolic Play, Engagement, and Regulation. Designed for children with ASD up to 48 months old, JASPER equips parents and caregivers with practical tools to nurture their child's social communication and play skills within everyday routines.

Together, SAAAC and AlphaBee have proudly served 223 families. That number matters, but so does the how behind it.

In a landscape where autism diagnoses are rising and early intervention waitlists can stretch for months or years, caregiver-mediated approaches like JASPER represent a meaningful shift in how support is delivered. Rather than positioning therapy as something that happens to a child in a clinic, this model recognizes that caregivers are a child's most consistent and powerful source of learning. By building caregiver confidence and embedding strategies into everyday play and routines, the intervention extends well beyond the session itself.

For children in their earliest and most critical years of development, that kind of reach is not just helpful. It is necessary.



# Autism 101



## Introducing Autism 101

This year, we proudly launched *Autism 101: Fostering Acceptance through Autism Education, Language, and Culture*: a free digital resource designed to meet families where they are, in the languages and stories that reflect who they are.

Autism 101 is more than a resource, it is a movement toward belonging. Featuring easy-to-understand videos, expert insights, and caregiver experiences, the platform offers multilingual content tailored to newcomer communities who have historically faced barriers to accessing culturally relevant support.

This initiative marks a deliberate shift from awareness to deep, meaningful acceptance — one that recognizes the value of neurodiversity and works toward a world where every autistic individual can thrive. Following the lead of autistic self-advocates and community organizations, Autism 101 is a tool for inclusive education that affirms both identity and possibility.

Explore the resource at [saaac.org/autism](https://saaac.org/autism)



# Case Management

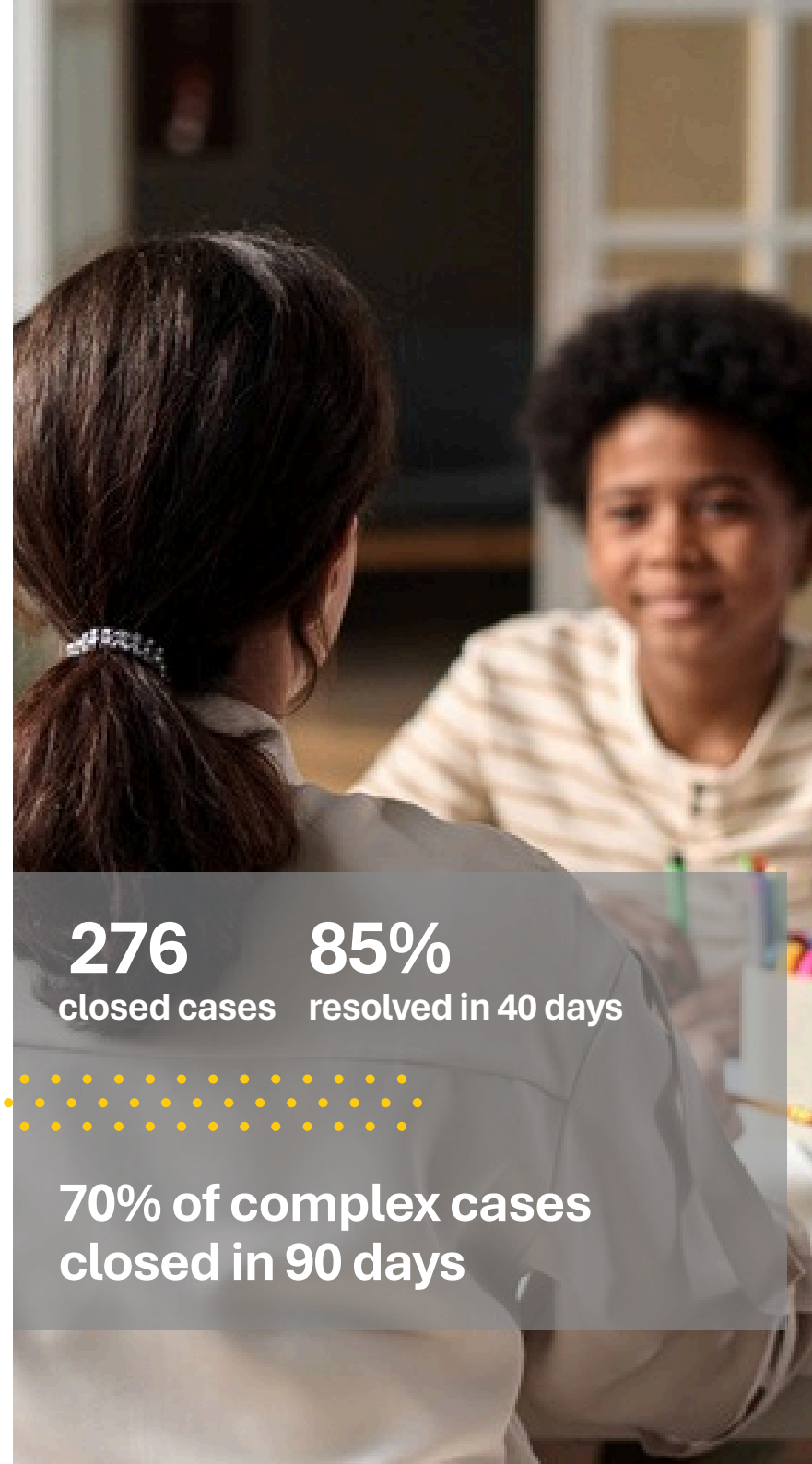
## Help Navigating What's Next

Navigating autism services is rarely straightforward. Families face long waitlists, unclear systems, and time-sensitive decisions, often at the most overwhelming moments of their lives. SAAAC's Case Management program walks alongside caregivers to cut through the complexity and move forward with confidence.

Whether a child has a diagnosis or not, our team provides clear, goal-oriented guidance tailored to each family's needs, connecting them to funding, health, education, and community supports, and preparing them for the appointments and decisions that matter most.

Last year, 276 cases were closed, with 85% resolved within 40 days. Even the most complex cases saw 70% closed within 90 days.

Every case is focused on a defined outcome. For families in the middle of it all, that clarity and direction can make an overwhelming journey feel manageable.



**276** closed cases **85%** resolved in 40 days

**70% of complex cases closed in 90 days**



# URS

## Urgent Response Services: A Lifeline When Families Need It Most

When a child's behaviour escalates suddenly, through self-injury, aggression, or the terrifying risk of a child running, families can feel completely alone. Urgent Response Services (URS) is a Surrey Place program delivered through a network of community partners, including SAAAC Autism Centre, designed for exactly these moments.

URS is a short-term, intensive program supporting children and youth ages 0-18 with autism whose behaviours have recently and dangerously escalated. Within 12 weeks, families receive personalized behaviour support, respite, team consultations, and connections to long-term services, a bridge from crisis to stability.

For many families, it is the difference between holding on and falling apart. SAAAC is proud to be a key delivery partner in this critical program. To date, we have walked alongside 261 families through their most urgent moments and helped them find a way forward.

Without programs like URS, families in crisis have nowhere to turn. For autistic children and youth, a moment of escalation without the right support can have lasting consequences, deepening isolation, straining families beyond their limits, and increasing the risk of more serious interventions down the road. URS fills a critical gap in our community's care system, ensuring that no family has to face their hardest moments alone.

**261**  
FAMILIES  
HELPED



# TASN

## One Network, One Vision: Supporting Toronto's Autism Community

SAAAC Autism Centre is proud to be part of the Toronto Autism Services Network (TASN), a collaborative partnership of seven leading agencies — including Geneva Centre for Autism, Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital, Kerry's Place, Lumenus Community Services, Strides Toronto and Surrey Place.

Together, TASN offers families a single access point to consistent, high-quality, family-centred autism services. This year, SAAAC served 86 children through the Entry to School program, helping families prepare for a child's first school transition. An additional 16 children were supported through Project ImpACT, building caregivers' capacity to nurture social, communication and developmental skills at home.

For Toronto's diverse and growing communities, this partnership matters. By uniting seven agencies under a shared vision, TASN ensures that no family navigates an autism diagnosis alone — creating a stronger, more equitable city where every child has the support they need to thrive.



# Volunteer Program

April 2025 – March 2026



**129 volunteers engaged**

The equivalent of \$77,000 in time when converted to minimum wage.



**4,387 hours donated**

Our volunteers donated thousands of hours—making a difference in therapy sessions, events, administration, and family support services.

## Volunteers are the engine of our mission.

This year, our volunteer community continued to make a meaningful impact. With 4,387 hours contributed by 129 dedicated individuals, the equivalent of \$77,000 in time when converted to minimum wage, every hour given represents a true investment in our community.

Our corporate and community partnerships brought meaningful moments to life. Best Buy's Impact Day volunteers spent the day supporting our Goodness Gift social enterprise, while University of Toronto students devoted over 30 hours during Alternative Reading Week to redesign the sensory room at our Birchmount campus.

We're also proud to celebrate the recipients of this year's Balasingham Scholarship, awarded annually to SAAAC's most dedicated volunteers. Congratulations to Shameeka Francis, Sana Ebadi, and Nilane Arulalagan. Since 2017, this scholarship has invested over \$25,000 in the young people who make our mission possible.

Thank you to every volunteer who gave their time and heart this year.



**\$25,000+**

**Awarded through the Balasingham Scholarship since 2017.**

**3 Scholarship recipients this year.**



# CARES

## 121

Caregivers Support

## 5

Delivered in 5 languages:  
English, French, Tamil, Farsi,  
and Urdu



### Caring for the People Who Care

Research consistently shows that caregivers of autistic children experience significantly higher rates of burnout, anxiety, and social isolation than other parents, yet they are often the last to seek support. CARES exists to change that, offering caregivers a structured group program built around peer connection, practical strategies, and culturally responsive support to reduce stress, build confidence, and strengthen resilience.

In 2025–2026, the program reached 121 caregivers across six partner organizations, with groups delivered in five languages: English, French, Tamil, Farsi, and Urdu. New translations in Hindi, Punjabi, Urdu, and Arabic are continuing to open doors for newcomer and racialized families who face the greatest barriers to mainstream supports.

For many caregivers, CARES is the first time they have felt truly understood, and that makes all the difference. When caregivers are given the tools to manage their own stress and wellbeing, the whole family benefits. Children thrive when the people caring for them are supported. That is why caregiver support is not an afterthought. It is foundational to family wellbeing.





# The Goodness Gift

Behind every candle poured and every box assembled at Goodness Gift is a person who was told, in one way or another, that the working world wasn't built for them.

**This year, 44 of those people proved otherwise.**

They showed up, learned, and contributed 9,500 hours of meaningful work — earning \$174,222 in wages. Nine associates moved from Goodness Gift into jobs at the Toronto Zoo, local farms, bakeries, and SAAAC itself, surpassing our placement target by 50%. New product lines launched, employer partnerships deepened, and the enterprise joined the Scarborough Business Association — expanding its reach into the broader business community.

Sales targets remained a challenge in a difficult corporate gifting market, and the work of building a sustainable revenue base continues. But the social outcomes this year were undeniable. What no financial statement fully captures is the confidence built through real responsibility, the dignity of a paycheck, and the quiet power of belonging.

**Goodness Gift is proof of what becomes possible when we invest in people.**

**44**  
Associates enrolled and trained



**9.5K** Work Hours Contributed

**9** Labour market connections

**\$174K**  
Wages paid





# Holiday Market



## Celebrating Neurodiverse Entrepreneurship at our Holiday Market

This year's SAAAC Holiday Market was more than a festive gathering. It was a powerful celebration of neurodiverse entrepreneurship and the Scarborough community coming together with purpose.

At the heart of the Market were our vendors: autistic and neurodiverse business owners who brought creativity, passion, and dedication to every table. From handcrafted gifts to thoughtfully designed products, each booth told a story of resilience, talent, and pride. For many vendors, the Market offered a meaningful opportunity to reach new audiences, connect with customers, and share their work in a welcoming, supportive space.

What made the day truly special was the community surrounding them. Families, volunteers, staff, and members of the public showed up with intention, engaging with vendors, learning their stories, and supporting their businesses. Every interaction reinforced why creating spaces where neurodiverse entrepreneurs are seen, valued, and celebrated matters deeply.

Looking ahead, SAAAC is committed to building more events like this: spaces where autistic and neurodivergent individuals have the platform to showcase their skills, connect with their community, and build toward economic independence.



# Inclusive Arts

## Arts Programming Reimagined: Supported by the Ontario Trillium Foundation

In 2025–2026, SAAAC received a \$99,900 Ontario Trillium Foundation Seed Grant to build a year-long arts program rooted in accessibility, safety, and joy. Over the past year, the program supported 114 students, opening doors to creative spaces that are often out of reach, particularly for newcomer families and those facing financial barriers.

Our arts program is not centred on performance or outcomes. It is centred on participation, regulation, communication, and belonging. Participants are never pressured to engage in a certain way instead, they are supported to move at their own pace, make choices, and build confidence over time.

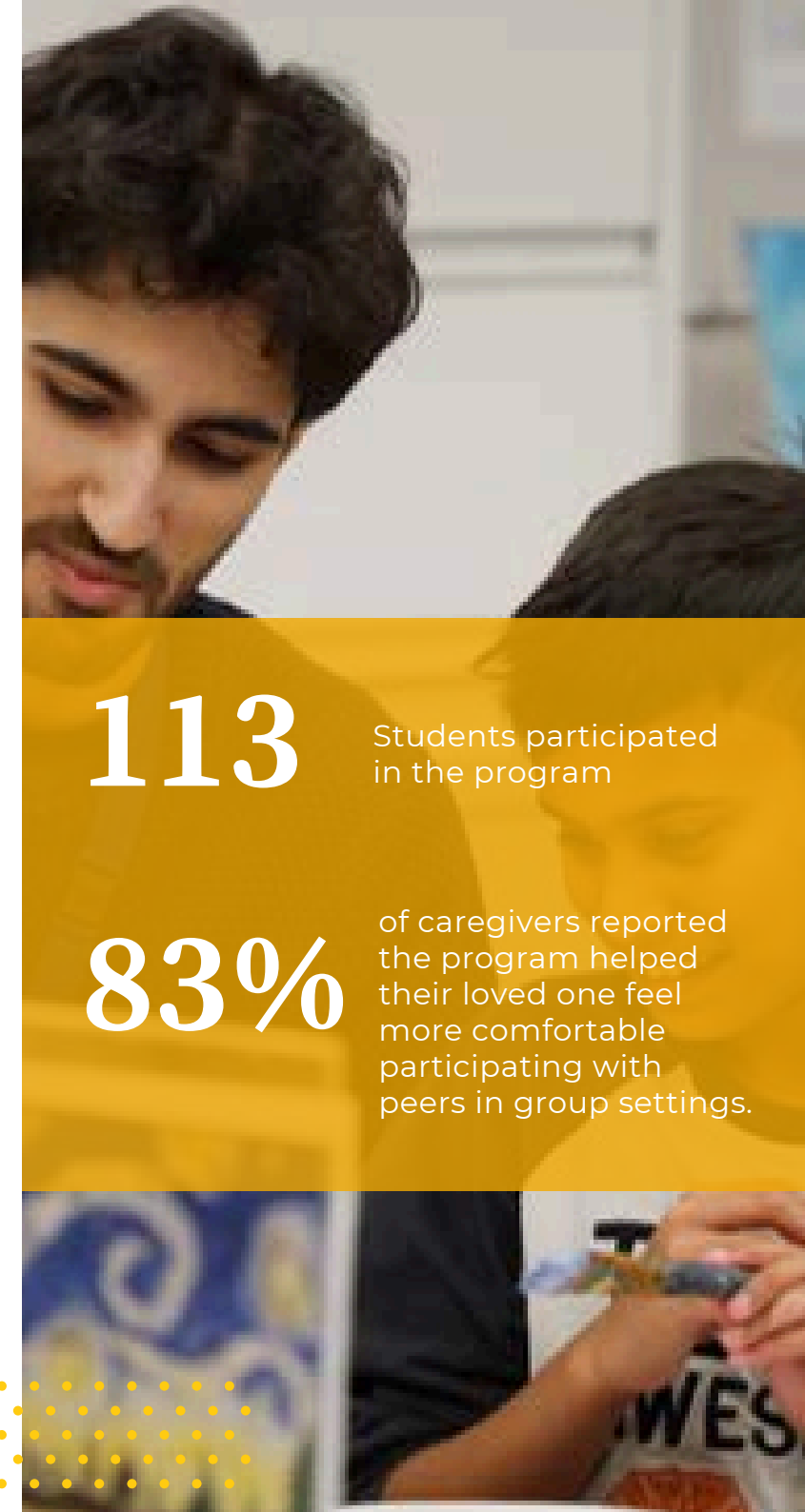
This work is guided by SAAAC's newly developed Pillar Model for inclusive arts spaces: a framework built around predictability, visual supports, sensory accessibility, communication-friendly environments, and individual autonomy. Moving forward, the Pillar Model will shape how SAAAC designs and delivers arts and recreation programming for autistic and neurodivergent individuals across Scarborough.

SUPPORTED BY

Ontario Trillium Foundation



Fondation Trillium de l'Ontario



113

Students participated in the program

83%

of caregivers reported the program helped their loved one feel more comfortable participating with peers in group settings.



# Donors

## Champions

- Azrieli Foundation
- Balsam Foundation
- Holman Community
- Inclusion Canada
- Jumpstart - Canadian Tire
- Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services
- Northpine Foundation
- Ontario Trillium Foundation
- RBC Foundation
- Toronto Foundation
- United Way of Greater Toronto
- Unity for Autism



The incredible work of the SAAAC Autism Centre would not be possible without the generosity and dedication of its donors. These compassionate individuals, families, organizations, and corporate partners have played a vital role in helping SAAAC continue to provide high-quality, accessible services for children, youth, and adults with autism. Their support has allowed the Centre to offer critical programs in communication, life skills, mental health, and employment readiness—empowering individuals with autism to lead fuller, more independent lives.

## Legacy Donors

- Suganya Varagunan
- Tony Balasingham

**\$15,000+**

- I2 Developments (Brampton) Inc.
- Geetha Moorthy



# Donors

## \$5,000 - \$14,999

Boston Pizza Foundation  
Eufemia Developments Inc.  
Jeganathan Mylvaganam  
Sivagnanam Sritharan  
Tamil Christian Church of Canada  
The Wawanesa Mutual Insurance Company

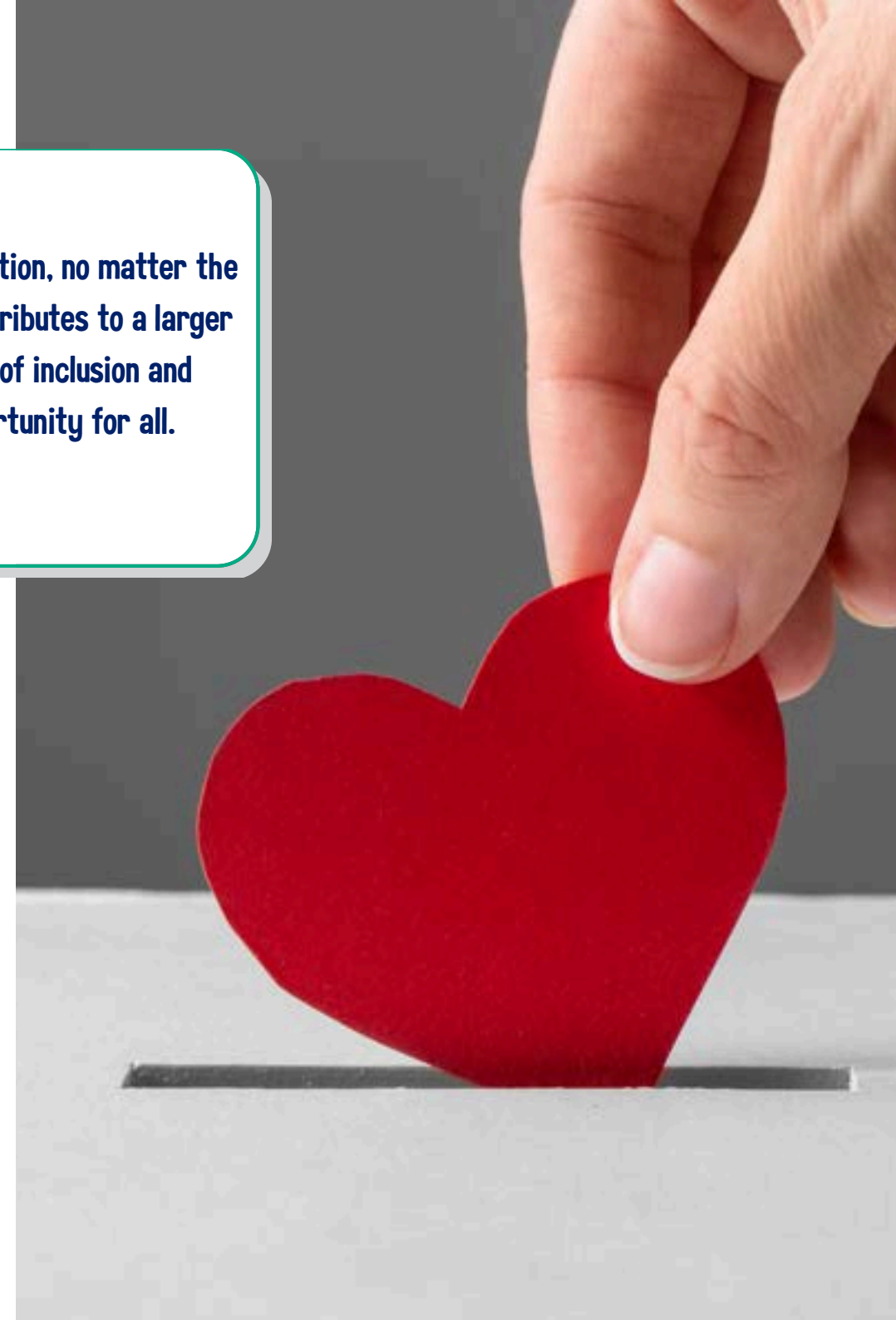
## \$2,500 - \$4,999

Confused Kitchen Restaurant Inc.  
Dr. M. Srivamadevan Medicine Professional Corporation  
Mohammad Samad Zubairi  
Tordon Capital Management Ltd

## \$1,000 - \$2,499

Asian Cash and Carry  
Cambridge Club  
Daniel Nalliah  
Joseph Vijayaraj  
Komathy Jayashankar  
Lakshmi Solomons  
Mayuran Tharmabalan  
Ramya Raghavan  
Ronald Solomons  
Varagunan Karunanantham  
Wealth Bridge Financial Services Inc.  
Yogendran Moorthy

Each donation, no matter the size, contributes to a larger vision of inclusion and opportunity for all.





# Financial Overview

At the SAAAC Autism Centre, transparency is a core value. We understand the trust our community places in us through their generous contributions. Whether from individual donors, business leaders, foundations, or government partners, every contribution reflects a belief in our mission to build inclusive, thriving communities.

We are sincerely grateful for this support. In return, we remain committed to delivering impactful programs, maintaining strong operations, and improving the lives of the families we serve.

Our complete financial overview is available through the Canada Revenue Agency's charitable organization directory. All consolidated financial statements for SAAAC were independently audited by Truster Zweig Raithatha LLP.



# Financial Report

REVENUE	2025-26
Received donations	\$ 266,926
Non-receipted donations	\$ 157,131
Gifts from other registered charities	\$ 826,943
Government funding	\$ 3,680,248
All other revenue	\$ 3,376,127

**\$8,307,375**  
TOTAL REVENUE

EXPENSES	2025-26
Charitable programs	\$ 7,007,776
Management and administration	\$1,202,071
Fundraising	\$ 107,947
Gifts to other registered charities and qualified donees	\$ 0
Other	\$ 0

**\$8,317,794**  
TOTAL EXPENSES

