



ST. ANDREW'S
AUTISM CENTRE

Friendship Report

2023

*“Love is the bridge to the world of autism.
Persons with autism, and their caregivers,
face significant challenges in their daily lives.
But our love, expressed through patience,
as well as understanding and acceptance
can help these special ones be more
fully included in society”*

CONTENTS

01:

Thank You

02:

Doing Good Well

Doing It Right

Doing So With Love

03:

Impact & Outcomes

04:

What Our Friends Tell Us

05:

Making Our Friends Feel At Home

06:

Towards Lasting Friendships



01: THANK YOU

Dear Friends

As we get into another year and before we all get busy and caught up with everyday life, let's pause and ponder for a moment on what makes volunteering at SAAC unique and edifying.

For regular volunteers like yourself, it's really not about volunteering in the conventional sense. It's about authentic friendship. And I'd like to thank and affirm you for accepting and embracing our students, clients and residents as they are; befriending and loving them as unique human persons, with equal dignity and a right to be here in this universe like anyone else.

We are grateful for your support for our mission: you are constantly asking how you can better support our teachers, coaches and care staff to help those we serve.

In 2023, 272 of you, whether individually or in a group spent a total of 7,530 service hours. That's a massive 45% increase in the number of volunteers deployed, and a 20% increase in the number of volunteer hours clocked compared to 2022.

This Friendship Report isn't about how well we have done. Rather, it is a tribute and testimony of your enduring friendship and generous heart.

And we look forward to continuing our journey together to enhance the quality of life of the persons we serve.





02: DOING GOOD WELL DOING IT RIGHT DOING SO WITH LOVE

01.

**Establish a
Culture of
Volunteerism &
Collaborations**

Our volunteers are our friends and you make a difference. Hence we want to build a culture where volunteerism and volunteers are recognised as essential resources within SAAC.

Having good governance with processes and procedures in place to ensure smooth operations.

02.

**Ensure
Operations
Efficiency**

03.

Evangelise

Advocacy and public education efforts to bring autism into the community not only help to increase awareness and understanding but importantly to gain acceptance and raise friends of autism.

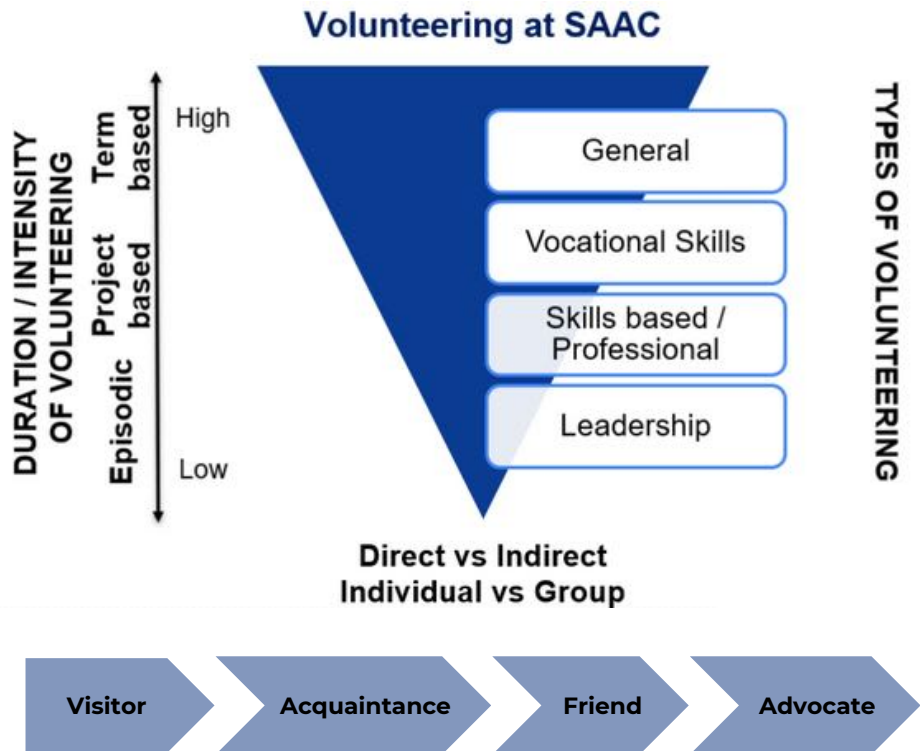
Ensure volunteers are properly oriented and progressively trained and equipped to support our teachers/coaches/care staff in and outside of class. It is important that our volunteers are affirmed and have a positive and purposeful experience when they volunteer with us.

04.

**Empower,
Engage & Equip**

OUR CIRCLE OF FRIENDS

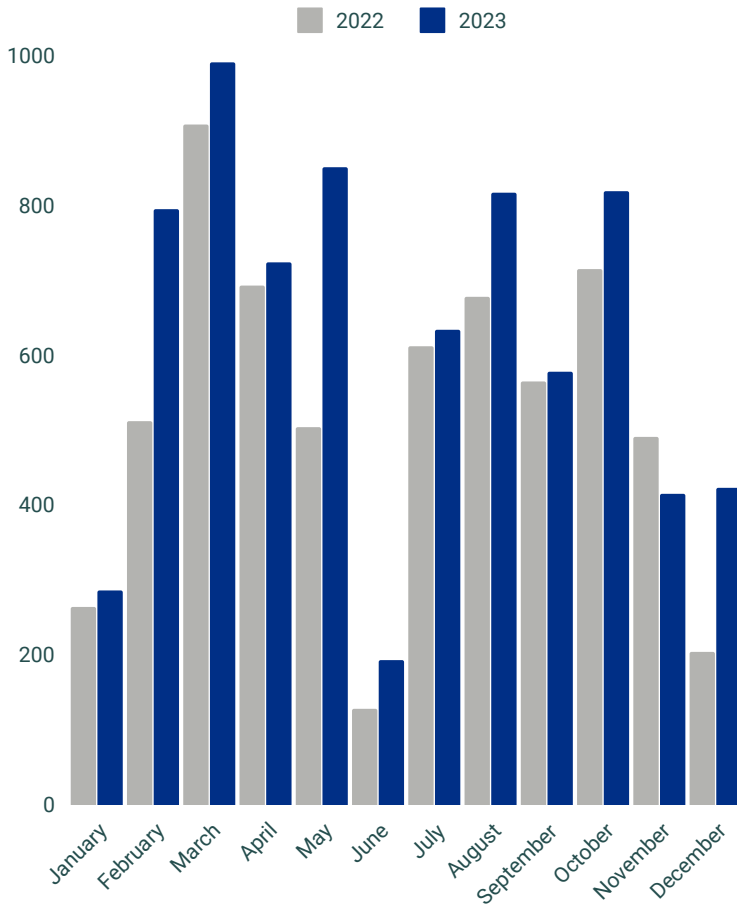
We welcome a mix of friends who are willing to commit their time and heart in journeying with our students, clients and residents.





03: IMPACT & OUTCOMES

In 2023, we had a total of 272 active regular individual and group volunteers. They clocked a total of 7,530 volunteering hours.*



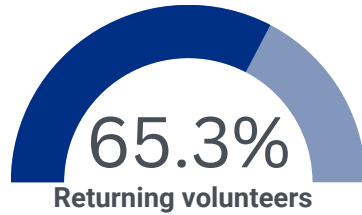
*Data does not include ad-hoc volunteers and volunteering hours

TARGETS SET VS ACTUAL ACHIEVED

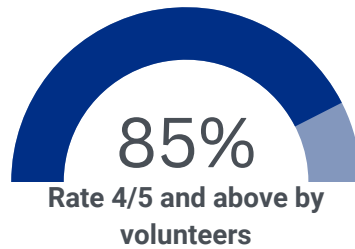
2023 Target:

60% New &
40% Returning
Volunteers.

Actual achieved:



70% rate their satisfaction
level as 4 and above based
on their volunteering
experience.

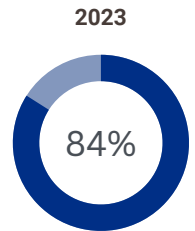
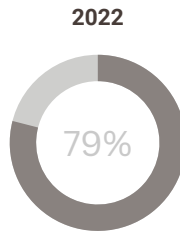


85% leave for reasons not
related to any negative
volunteering experience.

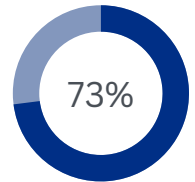
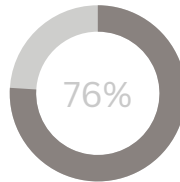


WHAT OUR FRIENDS TELL US

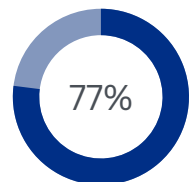
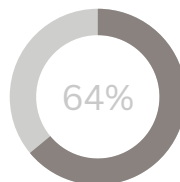
84% felt that their expectations were exceeded.
The majority felt good about being able to make a difference and to give back while gaining new knowledge and skills and experiencing personal growth.



We look forward to our friends' return as **73% said they would continue to volunteer with us in 2024.**

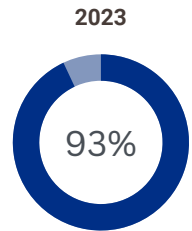
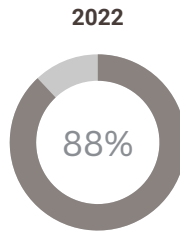


77% felt a good sense of belonging in SAAC.
It marked an increase of 13% from 2023.

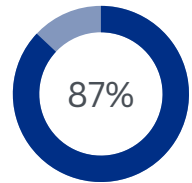
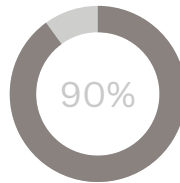


WHAT OUR FRIENDS TELL US

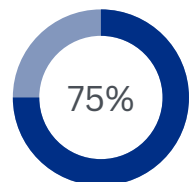
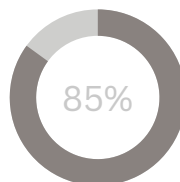
93% rated 4 or higher in terms of overall satisfaction, which was an increase from 88% in 2022.



Over 80% of volunteers rated our staff 4-5 for being supportive and appreciative of them. We are working on the slight decrease in rating as 87% hoped to be involved in more engaging tasks and receiving more in-depth training.



75% rated us 4-5 in terms of quality of current volunteer induction and orientation. We look toward providing more training and guidance to augment what is currently provided.



INDIVIDUAL VOLUNTEERS



WHAT OUR FRIENDS TELL US | VOLUNTEERS

BRENDA VILLANUEVA (SAAH)



Volunteering with SAAH may have been the best decision I made. Aside from spending my time meaningfully, I also learnt to get involved in the community. It helps me to become a better person and to learn the importance of gratitude, empathy and teamwork. I salute the staff of SAAH on their patience and hard work.



JACQUELINE ONG (SAAS)



In a milieu brimming with love and patience, the challenges I faced were not just hurdles but stepping stones in a journey that proved immensely rewarding and fulfilling. The care and guidance given to me by the teachers have been a great inspiration, propelling me to step up further and work alongside with them. The simple gestures of friendships I experienced from these beautiful students consistently brighten my days. Indeed, Love conquers all! Thank you SAAS for these opportunities.



NG YIKAI (SAAS/SAAH)



Volunteering at SAAC has been an enriching experience. Engaging with both children and adults showed me the impact of fostering a compassionate environment. I hope my time volunteering at SAAC has made a positive contribution to their well-being as much as the indelible mark it left on my perspective in life.



WHAT OUR FRIENDS TELL US | VOLUNTEERS

PETER JOHN BURGE (DAC SL)



I gain much more from volunteering than what I put in. SAAC creates a welcoming and supportive environment where I feel a sense of belonging. Clients have shown me how autism is no barrier to friendship, connection and affection.

SAM YEO (DAC SK)



It has been an eye-opening experience for me as a volunteer at DAC Sengkang. I learnt a lot from the staff on how to care for and befriend the clients. I also had the opportunity to be involved as a facilitator for their outdoor activities. It has been a memorable and enjoyable journey. Thank you, SAAC.

VARMA SONALI (SAAS)



I feel fortunate for the opportunity to volunteer at SAAC. I have learnt and grown in my journey of understanding autism. I appreciate the efforts put in by SAAC, teachers and associates in empowering children; they are very compassionate, empathetic and generous. I hope to contribute to this beautiful cause.



CORPORATE PARTNERS

ACT 3 Theatrics



ACT 3 Theatrics provides immersive learning opportunities for students in SAAS Drama CCA. The team put together an entertaining skit for Volunteer Appreciation Night in 2023.

BlueAcres



BlueAcres continues to operate the rooftop aquaponics farms at SAAC. It offers a platform where some of our clients and students are taught to plant seeds, transplant and harvest crops, providing them the dignity of work. Greens harvested here are sold to restaurants, grocery stores and hotels.

EagleWings Cinematics



Residents and clients from St. Andrew's Autism Adult Services went on a movie outing that was subsidised by EagleWings Cinematics. Here, they could enjoy the movie in a more brightly lit environment with lowered volume. Lunch was included too.

McCann Worldgroup



Since adopting SAAC as its charity partner, McCann Worldgroup has supported us at Walk of a Lifetime - it created visual aids and boards for the event.

The team also leveraged the strength of its global network to create an autism advocacy campaign for its client Mastercard's inclusive experiences initiative.

National Australia Bank Ltd



For 3 enriching months, a team of dedicated volunteers from National Australia Bank Ltd took turns every fortnight to befriend and accompany our students during their weaving lessons.

Parkway East Hospital



Our friends from Parkway East Hospital have been supporting us in a variety of ways. Besides buying our homegrown vegetables for their patient meals, they also helped to distribute care packages during Chinese New Year and Hari Raya Puasa to our beneficiary families on financial assistance. They also provided medical coverage at Walk of a Lifetime.

Red Dot Penguins Pte Ltd



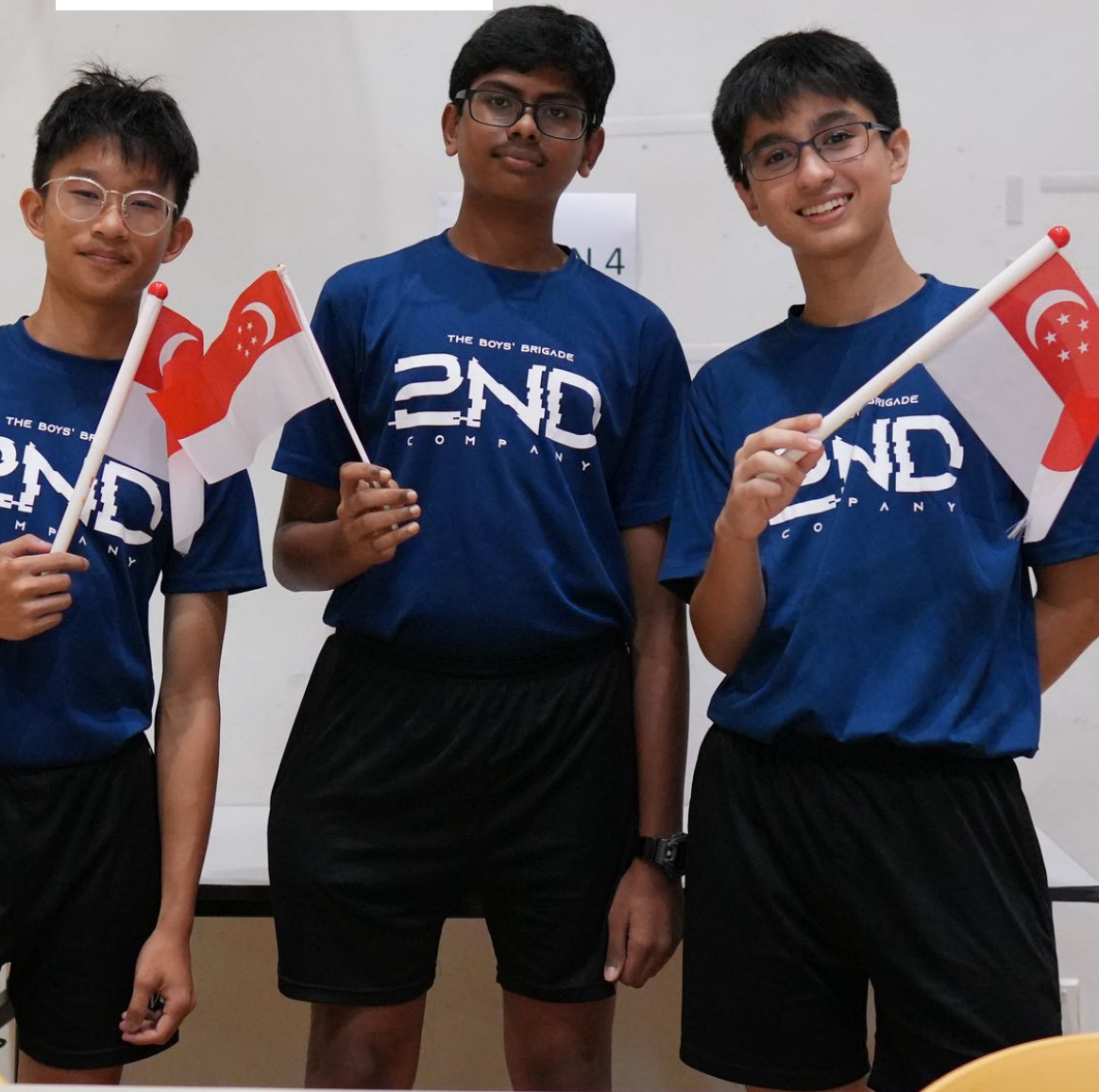
Red Dot Penguins continues to support SAAC through its bespoke swimming programme tailored to the needs of our students who are on the moderate-to-severe spectrum of autism.

SP Group



SP Group delivered 112 power packs to SAAC on 4 October 2023. These packs were delivered to our beneficiaries on financial assistance.

SCHOOLS



Anglican High School



Anglican High School (AHS) collaborated with our students over multiple inter-school partnerships. Among others, we formed badminton and basketball teams for Play Inclusive 2023.

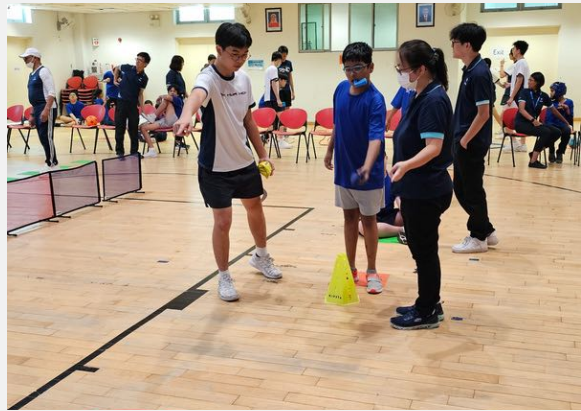
Our students also participated in AHS Service Learning Day: Beach Cleaning at Pasir Ris Beach. Student volunteers from AHS St. John Brigade attended SAAS Combined St. John & Scout Campfire 2023.

Assumption Pathway School



Assumption Pathway School partnered with SAAS Art Club CCA PM students to create a captivating collaborative artwork. It was displayed at the National Gallery.

Nan Hua High School



Students from Nan Hua High School organised a Sports Day programme tailored to senior students of SAAS. Their dedicated effort and meticulous planning ensured a seamless and memorable experience and fostered a vibrant atmosphere of sportsmanship and camaraderie.

Ngee Ann Secondary School



Students from Ngee Ann Secondary School (NASS) spent 4 sessions working with our students through craft and/or sports. Our students were also invited to participate in National Day 2023 celebrations at NASS.

Punggol View Primary School



Punggol View Primary School students connected with SAAS students online and organised a fun amazing race within their school compound.

Raffles Institution



Raffles Institution (RI) collaborated with SAAS for 2 projects. For Project Atrapasol, they took time to befriend our students over a few sessions, joining them in classroom activities and for CCAs. Through the experiences gained in class, they produced a children's picture book featuring real stories about persons with autism.

For Project Aboard, meanwhile, 7 RI students buddied with our students from SAAS Art Club CCA to learn about and worked on upcycled artworks. This was followed by a trip to the National Gallery to view an exhibition on upcycled artworks.

starringSMU



10 students from starringSMU facilitated Fitlight and Basketball Activities for SAAH residents on Thursday and Friday afternoons.

St. Anthony's Canossian Secondary School



St. Anthony's Canossian Secondary School students participated in a befriender programme. Here, they buddied with our students on Wednesday afternoons and participated in CCAs and classroom interaction.

St. Andrew's Junior College



Students of St. Andrew's Junior College organised Children's Day activities to engage our students. They also actively participated during Walk of a Lifetime, managing advocacy booths where they passionately shared their meaningful experiences working with persons with autism, inspiring others with precious insights.

Singapore University of Social Sciences



A group of SUSS students launched a year-long composting project at SAAS. Their goal was to plan and develop a curriculum for our Gardening CCA. They started by volunteering as class support, which helped them to gain experience in interacting with persons with autism.

Victoria Junior College



DAC Siglap clients went on a learning journey to Victoria Junior College (VJC). Organised by VJC students, it was an opportunity for our clients to experience a day in the life of a JC pupil.

Our clients were paired up with first-year students and participated in fun and engaging activities such as ice-cream making, obstacle courses and dancing, etc.

Victoria School Boys' Brigade



In celebration of National Day, the Boys' Brigade from Victoria School organised a carnival with booths and games for SAAS students.

COMMUNITY



Azel & Jane Salon



Hairstylists from Azel & Jane Salon drop in every 6 weeks to give our SAAH residents and DAC Sengkang clients a haircut.

Filos Community Service & Allkin Singapore Ltd

Filos Community Services



Allkin Singapore Ltd



To recruit volunteers for SAAS, DAC and SAAH, we depended on our friends from Filo Community Services and Allkin Singapore Ltd. They are our SG Cares Volunteer Centre partner in Bedok/Siglap and Sengkang/Punggol respectively.

Happiness Thru Fitness SG



The Happiness Thru Fitness SG team conducts monthly Dance with Music sessions for our DAC Siglap clients.

**Marine Parade Christian Centre,
Chapel of Christ our Hope &
Happy Hearty Hearts**



Friends from the Marine Parade Christian Centre, Chapel of Christ our Hope, and Happy Hearty Hearts helped to deliver festive packages during Chinese New Year and Hari Raya Puasa to our beneficiary families on financial assistance.

Project Metanoia



Set up by 4 Ngee Ann Polytechnic students, Project Metanoia aims to spread awareness on autism as well as to raise funds for SAAC. The team has helped with our advocacy efforts at the Children's Charities Association Fair, Sengkang MRT as well as Celebrate Christmas In Singapore.

They also worked closely with our DAC Sengkang clients to upcycle preloved clothes into fashion accessories, where were sold at pop-up booths set up on their campus.

RSVP Singapore



Our friends from RSVP turn up every Tuesday afternoon to run health and fitness exercises for our residents at SAAH. They also brought our residents for an outing to Gardens by the Bay.



05: MAKING OUR FRIENDS FEEL AT HOME

VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION NIGHT

We held our Volunteer Appreciation Night in November to thank and affirm our friends who have chosen to serve at SAAC with their heart and time.



Special thanks to our volunteer champions: Chan Ah Khim, Denise Gay, Varma Sonali, Sam Yeo and Peter John Burge. Together they gave 1,151 hours in befriending our beneficiaries!

VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION NIGHT





Taken during the International Volunteer Day: Celebrating Our Nation's Volunteers tea reception at the Istana on 7 December 2023. Image courtesy of Audrey Tan.

06: WE'RE IN THIS TOGETHER

Finally we want to continue to train and equip our friends to better engage with our beneficiaries and support our staff on the ground.

Commencing in 2024 is a new series of volunteer training sessions supplemented by video tutorials. We seek to maintain an open channel and ongoing conversation through regular engagement and dialogue platforms. And our volunteer leaders will help us to do just that.

Thank you everyone for being a friend to our students, clients and residents!

“Not all of us can do great things,
but we can do small things with great love.” - Mother Teresa

This report was made possible because of the time and love our friends have poured into the lives of our beneficiaries.

We also thank our colleagues from SAAS, DACs and SAAH for the volunteering opportunities and for guiding our volunteers.

Concept: David Fong

Content: Jolin Lau

Design: Alvin Ong

CONTACT

Partnerships & Volunteer Management

St. Andrew's Autism Centre
1 Elliot Road S458686

www.saac.org.sg
volunteer@saac.org.sg

**AUTISM LASTS A LIFETIME.
NO ONE SHOULD TAKE
THAT JOURNEY ALONE.**



WILL YOU CONSIDER BECOMING A FRIEND TO THOSE WE SERVE?

Take this opportunity to befriend, care for, and support our beneficiaries in our autism school, day activity centres or adult home. If you are ready to start your volunteering journey with us, apply at <https://www.saac.org.sg/volunteer/>

