

2025 Thrive. Mid Year Sheltered Workshop Report





Teruni modelling at Walk to Equality fashion show



Praveena receiving the Social Entrepreneur of the Year 2024 Award by H.E. Harini Amarasuriya, Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, at the WCIC Awards



Inaugural Art exhibition by trainees celebrated neurodiverse talent for World Down Syndrome and Autism Days



Mihiri getting work experience at the Colombo Hilton Hotel

Celebrating Progress, Nurturing Potential

As we reach the halfway mark of 2025, we're filled with gratitude, pride, and inspiration. The first six months have been rich with creativity, growth, inclusion, and advocacy. Here's a look at the milestones that shaped our journey so far.

Honoring Neurodiverse Talent through Art

In March, we proudly celebrated World Down Syndrome Day and World Autism Awareness Day with a vibrant art exhibition. Featuring more than 70 original pieces created by our trainees, the event was brought to life under the guidance of our volunteer art teacher, renowned landscape artist Janaki Perera. Acclaimed sculptor Prageeth Manohansa graced us as chief guest, and the public reception was both heartening and humbling, with all the artwork being sold out.

Supported Employment Readiness Programme

Our Supported Employment Readiness Programme has made significant strides in 2025. Four of our trainees continued their apprenticeship under the Work Options Programme at The Cakery, Barista, and Elysio Aesthetics. We have also begun an exciting partnership with the Clombo Hilton, offering trainees hands-on experience across multiple departments including housekeeping, laundry, café, and restaurant. Trainees are developing valuable skills in areas such as polishing, vacuuming, folding, and general service.

Following successful interviews, two trainees secured internships at The Cakery and Barista — a major milestone in their journey towards independence



National Innovation Report Sri Lanka

Coming Together for Innovation

Our programme was among 100 innovations from across the island featured in the inaugural National Innovation Report



Thrive Stall at Good Market



Making cupcakes as part of the cookery session

To ensure continued support and safety for our trainees in the workplace, we are collaborating with WSO2 to develop a wellbeing monitoring tool: the **Worky App**. It is currently being piloted by our trainees.

In another breakthrough, two neurodiverse candidates were selected for the 12 week “Testing Pro” online training programme created by Nagarro. With daily support from our staff, these candidates are learning how to test software applications — a role specially designed for neurodiverse talent.

Recognition & Awards

We are proud to share that our Managing Director, Praveena Joseph de Saram, received the Social Entrepreneur of the Year Award and a Bronze Award for Small Business at the WCIC Women’s Entrepreneurship Awards – Prathibhabhisheka.

Inclusion in the Spotlight

Three of our trainees had the incredible opportunity to participate in the Walk to Equality and the Good Market Avurudu Fashion Shows. Being in the spotlight was a dream come true for these young individuals, who embraced the moment with confidence and joy.

Empowering Families & the Next Generation

Recognizing the vital role of families and caregivers, we delivered essential training sessions this year:

- Hygiene Awareness led by Speech and Language Therapist Nayanali Dassanayake
- Identifying Signs of Sexual Abuse, presented by Dr. Yasuni Manikkage
- Social Skills and Personal Boundaries facilitated by Behaviour Therapist Ishanthi Perera
- We also continued counselling and support groups for parents and siblings lead by Charnaine Thampapillai

Our work introducing medical students from the University of Colombo to Community Based Rehabilitation continued. We also embarked on a new first - hosting medical students from the University of Sri Jayewardenapura for their elective placements.



Thank You for Supporting Us

Everything we do is made possible by the unwavering support of our donors, volunteers, and partners. Your belief in our mission helps empower individuals with special needs to shine with dignity, skill, and joy.

More Ways to Help:

Create an internship opportunity for a person with Intellectual Disability

Volunteer

Donate

Make a purchase from our Art Sale (email ranjula@sjdsf.lk for catalog)

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