



SJDSF 2024

The Rearview



SJDSF



Thrive.

Sheltered Workshop

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SJDSF 2024 in Review



“With my own money, I bought my mother a present for her birthday.”

- Workshop Trainee



Making Christmas decorations and decorations for floral arrangements

“I don’t like staying at home. I wanted to come out of the house and do a job like my brother.”

- Supported Employee



Volunteer Quality Controller Sharmalie with pop up sale stock

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Udara making Christmas themed tie-dye clothes



Shopping at the local corner shop



Sohan and Teruni creating awareness at Good Market

Managing Director's Message



2024 has been nothing short of transformative for the Shiranee Joseph de Saram Foundation (SJDSF) and one full of revelations. Old friends have stepped up to help SJDSF grow, new allies from unexpected sectors have rallied to support our cause, and there have been a few jolts from places we expected better from. Through it all, we have grown stronger, more determined, and more innovative.

Celebrating Trailblazers

Our service users and partners continue to blaze new trails. Pahan, now in his second year of employment at Barista, has become the breadwinner for his family. His achievements inspired his sister, Rusiri, to join our Job Coach training program, pursuing a career path that resonates deeply with her.

Expanding Opportunities

This year, we conducted over 30 assessments, created four work placement opportunities, and welcomed 11 new trainees to our Thrive Sheltered Workshop. At SJDSF, we continue to lead with three essential questions:

What are you interested in?

What abilities do you already have?

Where would you like to get to with our help?

These questions guide us in crafting meaningful and achievable pathways for our trainees. But over time, we've realized the importance of supporting the entire family. That's why we've added a fourth question:

How can we help your family not just survive, but thrive?

Family-Centered Support

Recognizing the pivotal role families play, we launched **counseling services for families in October** and will inaugurate a **Sibling Support Group** in January. We also started providing counseling to families with children under 14, guiding them to harness the full potential of their child and prepare them for our Supported Employment Programme in the future.

Stories of Bravery and Growth

We've been humbled by the courage families have shown in seeking our support, particularly those navigating complex challenges. Parents have sought counseling for their neurotypical children struggling with societal expectations, including finding partners willing to embrace a sibling with intellectual disabilities. These stories motivate us to keep proving that neurodiverse people are just like anyone else—individuals with hopes, desires, and life goals who deserve opportunities.

Looking Ahead

The progress we've made this year would not have been possible without the dedication of the SJDSF team, our board, supportive corporate partners, our volunteers and donors, and the families who trusted us with their journeys. Together, we've shown that adaptability and innovation can create lasting impact.

However, from HR leaders misunderstanding Equity to the organizers of an inclusive fashion show not standing up to disparaging comments against PWDs, we have also had shocks that show much more needs to be done.

Join Us in 2025!

As we step into a new year, we invite you to support our mission:

Purchase our products to sustain our Sheltered Workshop and provide meaningful work for individuals with ID.

Volunteer with SJDSF and bring your unique skills to our growing community.

Make a donation to help us expand our programs and services.

Thank you for being part of our story. With your support, we're building a world where every individual with special needs can thrive.

Warm regards,
Praveena Joseph de Saram

Thrive.
Sheltered Workshop



Opportunities for all



With SJDSF Board Member and Founder of Accedo Intel at the launch of the SJDSF Good Market stall



Savithri Rodrigo speaking to Dilupa Pathirana, CEO of Barista, about his Orion City' outlet's inclusive hiring journey with the support of SJDSF's Supported Employment Programme



Art session with Janaki Perera

Thrive Sheltered Workshop

In 2024, our sheltered workshop made significant strides in expanding product offerings and spreading the word about the abilities of neurodiverse people. We unveiled our new "**Thrive, Sheltered Workshop**" logo, marking a fresh chapter in our growth.

Throughout the year, we raised awareness through pop-up sales with the help of our supporters at **Stax, Access Group, DFCC Bank, Barefoot, Brandix, NDB, Seylan Bank, MAS Battaramulla, LB Finance, Standard Chartered Bank, HSBC, Sunshine Holdings, Phoenix, and WSO2**. These events promoted the skills and potential of our trainees, while also helping to raise our profile and highlight the range of services we offer.

On October 12th, we launched our stall at Good Market, where we will have a weekly presence due to the generosity of board member Chiranthi Cooray and Accedo Intel. **Good Market and Accedo Intel**, with their focus on ESG have been ideal partners for amplifying our reach.

In 2025, we look forward to continuing our collaboration with **Aitken Spence** for corporate gift-giving, and to developing more partnerships with like-minded organizations.

This year, we expanded beyond our signature tie-dye items and introduced new resin products such as key tags, coasters, and Christmas decorations. We also teamed up with **Kapruka** by becoming a Partner Central vendor and by providing resin decorations for their floral arrangements. We also piloted production of dog treats and plan to scale this initiative in 2025.

Supported Employment Programme

One of the highlights of the year has been the continued success of our trainee placed at Barista. We've also secured work placements for trainees at **The Cakery, Kapruka, Na Tree Caterers and Eliseo Aesthetics**. Our team remains dedicated to providing ongoing support to both employers and employees through regular on-site visits. In 2025, we aim to help more trainees transition into paid employment at **TRACE Expert City, Nagarro and Aramex**.

Opportunities for all



Talent Show Chief Guest, Miss International/SL Maya Dmitri



At ICCB 2024 at Galle Face Hotel



Lifeskills training



Sewing tags for our products

Other Highlights

We teamed up with counsellor Charmaine Thampapillai, to start a **social emotional support group for parents**, to enhance their psychological wellbeing and create a strong community support network. We will launch a **Sibling Support Group** in 2025. We continue to **facilitate placements for medical students** at the University of Colombo, ensuring that the next generation of doctors are informed about both the challenges and potential of persons with disabilities.

We also had **our first talent show** to the great enthusiasm of the trainees, who showed off their dance, singing, rapping and modeling skills. SJDSF's **aspiring models** also started training with The Walk Academy and Dasun Wijesinghe to prepare for the Equality Fashion Show run by Caroline Jurie in May 2025.

We held **our second art auction and sale at Barefoot Gallery Loft**, showcasing over 100 exceptional artworks generously donated by more than 25 talented artists. The works donated to the Charity Art Auction and Sale include those from the collections of Alex Stewart, Alonna Jagodinski, Aruni Wijegunewardena, Asela Abeywardena, Avantha Tennekoon, Chammika Jayawardena, Dila Weerasinghe, Dominic Sansoni, Druvinka, Gihan Mackay, Habeeba Haroon, Janaki Perera, Kesara Ratnavibhushana, Kushlani Perera, Michael Wijesuriya, Muhanned Cader, Nirmala Paiva De Silva, Nuwan Shilpa, Prageeth Manohansa, Prasanna Jayatilaka, Ravindu Sachinda, Rushana Cassim, Ruvini Kariyawasam, Ruvini Kariyawasam, Saashya Rodrigo, Shasheema Ambegoda, Shenu DeSylva, Simpson David, Sita Goonetilleke, Sithila Dassanayake, Siva Kajendran, Supuli Hewage, Susiman Nirmalavasan, Tilak Samarawickrema. In addition to the main exhibition, we hosted '**Children for an Inclusive Future: Art Competition for Kids**' for children aged 5-10 years to encourage dialog about diversity and inclusion from an early age.

"I am so happy now that I have a job like my sisters."

-Workshop trainee



Sandun making resin jewellery

"My daughter really looks forward to going to work and gets back home very content. Having her own income every month has opened out a whole new aspect to her, going shopping, being able to select, therein building her personality with each day."

- Parent of trainee

"I see a big positive difference in my son since he started working."

- Parent of trainee



Job training at Eliseo Aesthetics



Weekly training for the SJDSF Team of Instructors and Job Coaches conducted by our Consultant Speech Therapist Nayanalie Dassanayake



Ishan and Udari grocery shopping at the local supermarket as part of our Life Skills work



With US Ambassador Julie Chung and board members at the annual charity art auction and sale at Barefoot Gallery loft.



"Many people don't know such opportunities exist in Sri Lanka"

- Shanuki de Alwis
Host of Shhh... The Talkshow

A huge thank you to our supporters! We could not have done any of this without their belief in the potential that people with special needs have for greater independence.





SJDSF

**Thank you for your support. We
could not have made such
impact without you!**

More Ways to Help:

Identify an employment opportunity for a person with Intellectual Disability

Volunteer

Donate

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

Shop from Thrive Sheltered Workshop

Our Bank Details:

Name: Shiranee Joseph de Saram Foundation

Bank: Commercial Bank

Branch: Nawala CSP

A/C No: 1000129586

Swift Code: CCEYLKLX

Bank Code: 7056

Branch code: 101

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