

Managing Director's Message



It only takes one person to blaze a trail.
But I am blessed to be surrounded by
many trailblazers.

It all started in 1979 with my mother,
Shiranee, returning to Sri Lanka to find
that she is the only speech therapist in a
country of 15 million people.

However, **much of what we do today is driven by the dreams of our trail blazing service users themselves.** We created employment opportunities because Teruni and Varsha said they were done with school and wanted jobs.

We learned a great deal about ourselves over the last five years thanks to that impetus. Dilshan is meticulous at print making. Pathuniya leads dance fitness like a pro. Pahan can find his way home via a new route when the bus schedule changes unexpectedly. Maheshika's work has doubled her family's income.

At SJdSF, we start with three questions.

What are you interested in?

What abilities do you already have?

Where will you like to get to with our help?

Through their answers and enthusiasm, my friends at SJdSF have helped us bring attention to the interests and abilities of people with Intellectual Disability with much courage. This is all enabled by a **team of people unafraid to try new things** - from our board to our teachers and supportive parents.

Be it with one young woman with Downs Syndrome declaring that she likes to go clubbing while being interviewed on national radio or another telling me (almost daily) that what she actually wants is my job, they prove that they are just like anyone else. People with hopes, desires and life goals. People who deserve opportunities.

We are here to help identify realistic targets and help them reach their potential. Together, we dream of more possibilities for all.

You can support our journey by purchasing our products, joining our team, volunteering at SJDSF or making a donation. Thank you for your interest in us and our work!

Praveena Joseph de Saram



Varsha, Shiranee and Praveena at the RCCI circa 1999



Varsha, Swetha, Hashan and Teruni modelling with Umali and Ridma at SJdSF in September, 2023



SJdSF General Manager, Ranjula Senaratna Perera with Teruni, first supported employee

Opportunities for all



At Good Market, with Umali



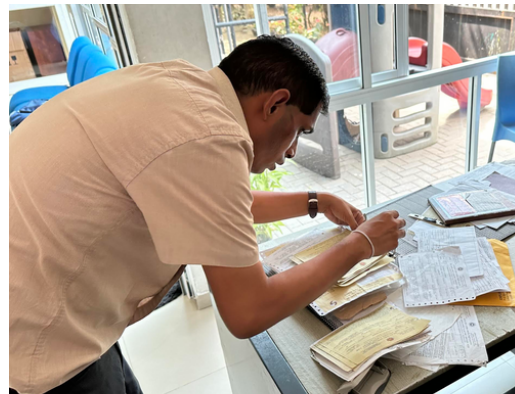
Pahan, at Barista, Orion City



Gardening module of our curriculum in practice



Maheshika working at HRMI



Sohan training at filling tasks in the SJdSF office



Dilshan stencilling paper for Christmas Markets

We have made tremendous progress towards our goal of helping people with **Intellectual Disability (ID)** reach their individual potentials. In September 2023, we launched our **Colours for Cause campaign**, a range of student-made tie-dye products such as t-shirts, tote bags, pouches, scrunchies, table runner sets etc. Our photo campaign featuring our service users modelling alongside celebrated actor Umali Thilakarathna and performer Ridma Weerawardena made dreams come true for Hashan, Teruni, Varsha and Swetha. The interest generated created unprecedented awareness about our centre and the abilities of people with ID. It also showcased the opportunities that exist for them at SJdSF.

We continue to produce other handmade items such as wrapping paper, gift bags, decor and jewellery. Thanks to the generosity of donors who consider the dignity of labour and the empowerment that comes with earning, we are now able to provide **stipends to the trainees** in our workshop. The impact of this has been a pleasure to behold - both in the satisfaction that comes from their value being recognized monetarily and from the novel ability to give back to their families.

Our **Supported Employment Programme** also made great strides in 2023. We conducted multiple awareness programmes and site visits to **inclusive employers** to encourage the creation of supported employment opportunities **specifically for people with ID**. Two of our students were successfully placed at Barista and HRMI after receiving training on workplace behaviour, travel training and task specific training. As a part of the programme we provide continued support to both the employer and employee with regular on-site visits, training and opportunities to trouble shoot. All of us have learnt a lot and look forward to sharing best practices with more like minded people in 2024!



RCCI
REHABILITATION
CENTRE FOR THE
COMMUNICATION
IMPAIRED

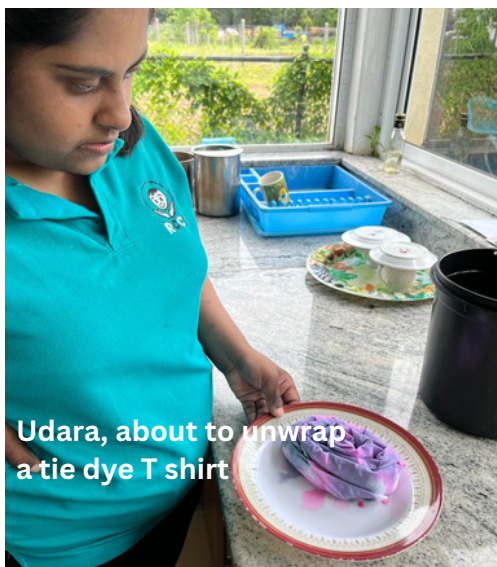
2023 Year in Pictures



Pathuniya with her art from our regular workshop with artist Janaki Perera



Ayara painting christmas wrapping paper



Udara, about to unwrap a tie dye T shirt



Selling our products at Aluth Pola



Pathuniya, Udari and Varsha sharing a laugh after a performance



Ishan Practicing independence skills in the SJdSF Kitchen

A huge thank you to our partners Barista and HRMI for leading the way with the first structured supported employment programme in Sri Lanka



Travel training with Nazly Hameed, the Manager of our Special Education Programme and Rasanjalie Wickramasinghe our Lead Teacher



Caroling at the SJdSF Christmas Party



Our Speech Therapist, Nayanalie Dassanayake with our younger students

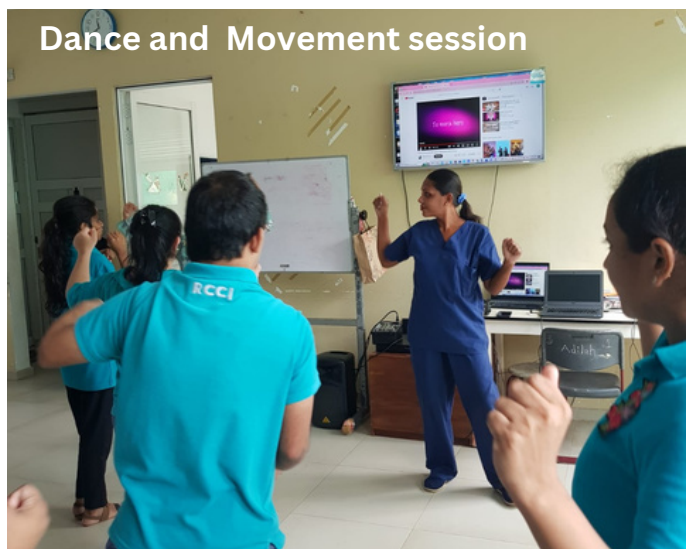


Pathuniya with freshly dyed tie dye T shirts

**Thank you for
 your support.
 We could not
 have had
 such an
 impactful
 year without
 you!**



**Independence training:
 Shopping at the local corner
 shop**



Dance and Movement session