

Autistic Society of Trinidad and Tobago.
Secretary's Report for AGM 2024.
23rd November 2024

Some Highlights since our last. AGM in 2023.

Persons who want more details can contact us as we send detailed quarterly reports to the Ministry of Health

Board Members.

- President : Teresina Sieunarine
- Vice President : Denanath Dalipram.
- Treasurer. : RoseAnna Trestrail.
- PRO. Dr.Sarah SooHon.
- Secretary : Miscah Lander
- Assistant Secretary : Theresa Phipps
- Floor members: Alicia Mohamid ,Victoria Antoine, SuzetteNeptune-Fortune

Members of staff at our Point Fortin Centre

- Gina Mohammed our Centre Manager retired in September .Highlights of her retirement function are posted on our website. Thanks so much for your years of service.
- Gina continues to be a Foundation member of ASTT.

Embracing Gina and floral presentation



Zyanne Inniss our new Programme coordinator, Chandroutie Goolcharan and Coleen Cunningham Edwards.

Staff at Autism Place

- Amoy Raymond Boodoo Centre Manager ,
- Alicia Sylvester Hackett, Administrative Assistant
- Cellenia Smith. - Tutor
- Herute Phillip - Tutor

- Damali Jordan Brown, a tutor who left at the end of August to take up a position overseas . Thanks for your service. We wish you all the best in your new job.
- 2 OJTs : Sandy Carter, Kishon John and Tahirah Charles.
- Glendon Crepin, volunteer
- Kendell Boodoo BA who handles our IT needs.
- We have volunteers from SAGHS ,Bishop Anstey and Trinity East, Hillview College and Tunapuna Secondary.
- University students from : UWI and USC.



Volunteer orientation

- Membership to October : 1,178.
- We get numerous calls and emails from families seeking assistance in finding schools, screening for Autism and information on how to access disability Grants. We plan in the new year to organize a meeting at Autism Place with the staff of the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services , so parents can get relevant information re. Grants etc.

We use the “ Parent as Partner Model”

- We continue to support parents , caregivers and family members in acquiring the necessary skills to empower them to advocate for their children.
- Our goals focus on building Social interaction , communication skills and behaviour management

This requires an individualistic approach as each Autistic Person has unique needs.

Services offered at D’Abadie:

- Individual Sessions
- Small group Sessions
- Social Play Groups and Therapy Sessions for children.
- Adult Recreational Group and Parent Support on Friday
- Daily appointments with new families
- Individual sessions with new families and small group
- Easter and Summer Camps for Adults and children.
- Art Therapy and Music and movement on Saturday
- Facilitating University Students for field experience.
- Parent Meetings and Community Outreach.
- Volunteer Orientation for our volunteers and those of other organizations.
- Monthly Staff Meetings and Training Sessions.

- Sensory Friendly Movies.
- Advocacy:empowering parents to advocate for their children.
- We said goodbye to Joy Valdez who was a mentor and motivational resource person for our Friday adult group. Thanks for your continued friendship and service Joy.

Services offered at Point Fortin's TLSC:

- Children Social Play Groups.
- Teen and Adult groups.
- Parent Community Groups.
- Sensory friendly movies
- Game Day at the Point Fortin Arena Park.
- Art Therapy and Music and Movement Sessions.
- Monthly visits to the Point Fortin Library.

Collaboration: We continue to work with many groups and organizations.

- Horses helping Humans with Karen Stollmeyer. Hippo Therapy sessions for children. About 25 to 30 depending on funding.
- Service Clubs : Kiwanis, D'Abadie Lions ,Soroptimist Esperance and Police Youth Clubs.
- Religious Organizations : Presbyterian Church , Seventh Day Adventist , Sai Foundation and the Church of the Nazarene.
- We continue to work with the Disability Affairs Unit of the Ministry of Social Development and Family Affairs.
- ODPM : Some of our Board members and staff have attended sessions and shared information specific to autism for first responders in the event of a disaster.
- We have given sensitization sessions to the Children's Authority for their staff and Caregivers.
- NALIS Maloney and Point Fortin : the staff have been very welcoming and accommodating.
- Global Environmental Facility (GEF) facilitated by Dr.Sharda Mahabir. The project has been aimed at helping ASTT to achieving a level of Self Sustainability and providing vocational training for adults with ASD to learn and create opportunities for employment.
- Work on the SHADE HOUSE (Greenhouse) is completed. Crops are being planted.
- The Caribbean Association of Massage Therapists ,- massage sessions for persons with ASD and their parents at Autism Place.
- Community Rehabilitation Therapy facilitated by Dr Derrick Sowell.- an Introduction to Horticultural Therapy. This has been helpful for with our Shade House project.
- CKFTO for Occupational Therapy -Affordable sessions for some of our children

AUTISM AWARENESS .

2nd April is designated as World Autism Day by the United Nations and ASTT devotes the month to increasing awareness.

We commemorated the 2nd with a hybrid function.

- The theme "Amplifying Autistic Voices "

- Our keynote speaker was Independent Senator, Dr. Paul Richards. He spoke about the need for legislation to support persons living with disabilities. A bill is being worked on at the moment. More advocacy is vital. The print media noted the concerns:
https://trinidadexpress.com/news/local/senator-slams-discrimination/article_af37478a-f16a-11ee-a228-5f5578600758.html



- Aliyah Drakes, an Occupational Therapist and Self Advocate spoke about her experiences as someone living with ASD.
- Shaira Ali, an Adult living with Autism, read her poem "Boxed In". Her poem is on our website.
- A musical item by Deena on the keyboard and her mother Penny.
- This event was covered by TV6 and broadcast on their network.
- During April Amoy and Sarah were interviewed by numerous media houses. Print and Television.
- Sip and paint activity with Dr. Sarah Soo Hon-art therapist and PRO



- Our Point Fortin Centre had their Autism walk through streets of the borough and were supported by Police and community groups including the Soroptimists Esperance:
<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1588609998379194>



Easter Egg hunt

Outreach and Advocacy

- Our Point Fortin Centre in “The White and Bright Dental Clinic an “ annual Health Fair.
- Numerous schools , faith based organizations and companies have been requesting Sensitization Sessions
- We expect to start a training/sensitization programme with Caribbean Airlines in the New Year.
- In April the parents of the Adult group led by Theresa Phipps and Ameliah Sankar managed booths at Trincity Mall and East Gates Mall, supported by some families. They interacted with shoppers and handed out flyers about Autism. They were also able to sell Tee shirts and pins.



They were well received. They plan to make it an annual event. Tutor, Herute led the audience with music and all enjoyed the event

- Staff attended the South West Regional Health Authority's World Mental Health Fair at the Gulf City Mall , where they handed out flyers on Autism and interacted with the public.

Workshops and Training .

- December 6th : Ashley Davis (a Trinidadian resident in the UK) hosted an online Parent session on “ Positive Behaviour Support “ . Talk was well received by the Parents.
- February : Virtual session with Donella Rodriguez (Speech and Language Pathologist) “. Topic : “ What does my child need to be doing to talk “ 22 persons attended. It was most informative
- Art Project with the group Artify . They provided all the paints and material required.
- Virtual Development for Staff at both Centres also teachers and parents. Presenters were Alison Luke Teelucksingh M.Ed BCBA and Khadine Ali. MA BCBA . Topics: Understanding Behaviour ABC's and function of Behaviour. Another session : Proactive and reactive strategies for Managing Challenging Behaviour.
- 3 day coaching sessions by the Neurodiversity Foundation hosted by Dr Stacy John Legere. Topics : Neurodiversity in Education. Neurodiversity in Mental Health. Neurodiversity in the Workplace.
- In March Sessions with Dr .Raquel Martinez. Topic : “Sensational Moms a Parent Sensory Integration Program” It was a free four day session. Excellent and very practical sessions .
- Virtual workshop with Carmela Gunderman (Trinidadian Resident in Norway)Topic : Working with the Autistic through Communication Education and Love. 56 people logged In.
- Carmela did another hybrid workshop when she visited Trinidad. Topic “ Make it Happen “ focusing on Visual Supports. Meeting at Autism Place was interactive.
- Workshop facilitated by Aliyah Drakes Topic : Fine Motor Development and Activities to Support Living Skills.
- Training for staff by Greenages for our Shade House.
- Project Psalm “Let's talk inclusivity”



Zyanne Inniss, Programme Coordinator of Point Fortin on left attended for ASTT

-launch of Project Psalm grand opening of the Child Development and Behaviour Unit (CDBU) waiting room at the Eric Williams Medical Sciences Complex Paediatric Department.

- Ms. Boodoo, Centre Manager, represented ASTT at the International American Development Bank Country office workshop. The workshop was titled “Achieving Collaborative Change and Equity for Sustainable Success” (A.C.C.E.S.S.). This workshop focused on steps to supporting ongoing regional efforts to advance Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belongingness within workspaces.

Celebrations and Camps.

Autism Place

- Sensory Friendly Carnival Jump up and Cool down (pool). Penta Paints donated paint for face painting.
- Easter Egg Hunt for Adults on Friday and children on Saturday.

Camps

- Point Fortin Theme “The Artful Adventure Camp.”

Art activity with Sarah, Art Therapist



Music activity via Zoom with Martina

- Autism Place Adults : Theme. “ Alice in Wonderland” duration one week

Children : Theme “ Jurassic Camp” also one week.



- Both camps were very successful and enjoyed by ALL.

New Developments at Autism Place

- Shade House is completed. Aquatic Solutions designed the interior.
- Flying Tree built the Shade house using plastic, which was converted to posts and d boards.
- Green Ages Farms installed the hydroponic system, vertical and horizontal units, electrical systems and plumbing.

Video:

<https://autismtt.org/2024/08/08/keeping-it-green-autistic-societys-green-house-project/>

- D'abadie Lions Club : Landscaping project.
- Two of our trees were termite infested and had to be cut down. New trees to replace.

Fund. Raising

Point Fortin

- Snack Box Sale . Curry Que.

Autism Place

- Snack box sale
- Hot dog sale
- Movie Night.

Thanks to our Donors and Supporters

- The Government through the Ministry of Health for an annual subvention.
- Atlantic L.N.G
- Shell LTD.
- Massy Foundation
- “Adopt a Toy “ a group of Occupational Therapist who donated Sensorial Toys.
- Sai Foundation
- Flowers by Magical Expressions
- Peakes
- A.A Laquis
- Penta Paints
- Granton Thonton. A group of Auditors
- Edward Kacal working with us to update our Strategic Plan.
- SWMCOL
- Thomsons : Soil for shade house.
- My Time Inc of New York.
- Sway

Thanks to All our Supporters and Volunteers.

- Our parents ,our caregivers, family members,.Corporate Sponsors and The Ministry Health.
- Do have a Blessed and Holy Christmas

Have a Happy and Healthy 2025