

40 YEARS STRONG – CELEBRATING OUR JOURNEY TOGETHER

1986 – The Beginning: On January 14, 1986, Mrs. Jothy Rajalingam gathered 27 Tamil seniors, and the decision was made to establish a centre for Tamil seniors in Ontario. An ad-hoc committee was formed to draft a constitution and shape its vision. After months of planning and meetings, the organization was named the Senior Tamils' Centre of Ontario.

1988 – Expanding Support

With support from the New Horizons project, STC conducted its first seminar, *"New Approach to Settlement of Seniors."* This program helped seniors understand available government and community supports, guiding them to overcome settlement challenges and integrate confidently into Canadian society.

1989 – First Office & Rapid Growth

STC established its first office at the Oriole Community Centre. Membership grew from 27 to over 150, strengthening programs and activities. To support participation and independence, transportation services were introduced for members. In the summer of 1989, STC organized its first tour to Beaver Valley. This marked the beginning of many successful tours across Ontario for members and their families.

1991 – Official Registration

STC was registered as a Non-Profit Organization on February 13, 1991. Cultural celebrations such as Diwali and Christmas were organized with active member participation.

1996 – 10th Anniversary

STC marked its 10th year with a grand and memorable celebration.

1998 – Expanding Awareness & Support

With New Horizons support, STC conducted a seminar on "Racial Discrimination" and hired its first part-time staff member to support growing programs.

2001 – 15th Anniversary & First International Tour

STC celebrated its 15th year and organized its first 10-day tour to the USA, marking the beginning of many international tours.

2002 – West Coast Tour

STC organized a memorable tour to Vancouver and Calgary, expanding travel opportunities for members.

2004 – Growing Operations

With increased membership, STC hired a full-time office coordinator through a City of Toronto grant to support expanding programs.

2005 – First Overseas Tour

A one-week tour to Cuba marked STC's first trip outside North America, paving the way for international tours to countries such as China, Morocco, Japan, Egypt, and cruise destinations.

2006 – Bridging Generations

With New Horizons support, STC conducted "Seniors and Youths in Synergy," strengthening intergenerational connection through workshops, discussions, and cultural programs.

2007 – 20 Years Strong

STC celebrated its 20th Anniversary at the Armenian Centre with over 400 attendees. With New Horizons support, furniture and computers were purchased, and monthly talent gatherings began at Oriole Community Centre.

2008 – Panama Cruise

STC organized a successful Panama Cruise with 71 members, strengthening its travel tradition.

2009 – New Office & Women's Wing

STC relocated to a 900 sq. ft. office (5200 Finch Ave. East). A Ladies' Wing was formed, launching monthly women-focused events that continue today. Yoga classes also began.

2010 – Expanding Partnerships

STC partnered with Harmony Senior Centre, enabling access to EPC grants and extending office operations to five days a week.

2011 – The Golden Era Begins

A second staff member was hired, and weekly Friday programs at Burrows Hall were introduced, growing from 25 to over 150 participants. Yoga expanded to Aiyappan Temple, jewelry-making classes began, and the Silver Jubilee was celebrated grandly.

2012 – Growth & New Programs

With Trillium Foundation support, an event coordinator was hired. Thursday programs at Aiyappan Temple were launched, and computer classes for members began.

2013 – Elder Abuse Awareness

With New Horizons support, STC launched an Elder Abuse Awareness project, conducting information sessions and research. A bilingual (Tamil & English) handbook was published and distributed to members.

2014 –

➤ Strengthening Governance

To ensure continuity and stability, STC amended its constitution to introduce a staggered election system. This important reform strengthened governance and enabled smoother administration.

➤ Leadership & Program Expansion

To strengthen administration, the positions of Chief Executive Officer and Chief Financial Officer were created. A third weekly wellness program began at Kandasamy Temple, featuring exercise with music, laughing yoga, and Tai Chi.

➤ Pioneering Tamil Heritage Month

STC celebrated Tamil Heritage Month in 2014—before official recognition by the Federal Government (2016) and Ontario Government (2020)—with a cultural program and heritage exhibition.

2015 – Clean Air Ambassadors Program

With Trillium Foundation support, STC launched a 3-year Clean Air Ambassadors Program, promoting environmental awareness through tree planting, seminars, and energy conservation education. Seniors and youth worked together, extending the initiative to other community organizations.

2016 – Strengthening Structure & 30 Years

Operational policies and management guidelines were established. A medical conference was held at Canada Kandasamy Temple, and STC celebrated its 30th Anniversary in grand style at the Armenian Centre.

2017 – Bridging Generations & Baltic Cruise

With New Horizons support, STC conducted a 5-day intergenerational workshop engaging 40 youth in culture, arts, nutrition, and elder care. The Centre also organized a memorable Baltic Cruise.

2019 – Innovation, Capacity Building & Community Impact

- Robotics-Makers Club launched with weekly classes at Burrows Hall.
- Medical seminar organized in collaboration with IMHO and Toronto North Support Services.
- Capacity Building Committee formed to guide strategic growth and future planning.
- Monthly outreach program started at 50 Tuxedo Court for members unable to attend weekly events.
- Member survey conducted, leading to enhanced programs and services.
- Board and staff training workshops held on governance, leadership, communication, and financial management.
- Technical Support Committee established, strengthening event delivery and cultural programs.
- Strategic planning workshop conducted to modernize and expand Centre activities.
- \$25,000 raised for the Tamil Chair at the University of Toronto through the show “Sange Mulangu,” performed entirely by senior members.

2020 – Resilience During the Pandemic

- COVID-19 lockdown closed the office, but services continued remotely through phone and email support.
- Zoom training provided; regular programs including yoga resumed online by April 2020.
- Weekly 6-page e-magazine “*Vaiharai*” launched, reaching members and the wider Tamil community.
- Meetings, seminars, talent shows, and major celebrations continued virtually.
- “*Nila Mutram*” weekly cultural program launched in October 2020 and continues successfully.

2021 – Service Beyond the Pandemic

- Supported government efforts by assisting with COVID vaccination for seniors.
- Distributed masks, dry food, and hot meals to vulnerable seniors in high-rise residences.
- Sent personalized birthday and sympathy cards; milestone gift hampers delivered to members.
- Constitution amended to redesignate leadership roles as Executive Director and Financial Officer.
- Additional staff hired to support growing programs and services.

2022 – Reconnection & New Initiatives

- Office reopened in April 2022; in-person Friday programs resumed at Burrows Hall with strong participation.
- Quarterly newsletter relaunched as “*Sanganatham*.”
- *Together in Friendship* program launched to combat loneliness, training 17 “Friendly Ambassadors” to support and visit seniors.
- Youth Group named “*Ilam Thalirkal*” formed (ages 10–16), strengthening intergenerational bonds and promoting Tamil language and heritage.

2023 – Growth & Greater Reach

- Office fully operational Monday–Friday (9:30 a.m.–4:00 p.m.) with three dedicated full-time staff.
- *Sangamam* mega event held with over 600 participants.
- Free Income Tax Clinic launched to support members.
- An 8-week Digital Skills Workshop was conducted to help members effectively use smartphones, iPads, tablets, and computers.
- Staff and subcommittee members received training to better support seniors.
- Printed copies of the “*Vaiharai*” magazine were distributed to seniors without computer access.

2024: A Dream Realized: Our Permanent Home

- STC Building project launched in Jan 2024. STC acquired Unit #210, 3852 Finch Avenue East, and moved in on June 24, 2024 — a historic milestone achieved through collective vision and generosity.
- Two 8-week Computer Training programs conducted to enhance members' digital skills.
- Arts & Craft / Painting classes introduced, fostering creativity through canvas and stone painting while encouraging emotional well-being.

2025: – Innovation, Wellness & Digital Expansion

- Free Legal Clinic launched, offering monthly legal consultations (Power of Attorney, Wills, affidavits, certifications, and humanitarian matters).
- 3-week AI Training Workshop conducted in three batches, empowering seniors to explore artificial intelligence and digital tools.
- Wellness Warriors program launched in April, engaging 75+ members through Rhythm & Fun (dance fitness), board games, Recipe Rebels (including meal donations to seniors), and Arts & Crafts.
- Thendral newsletter introduced, showcasing programs, tours, and member contributions.
- Official YouTube channel, "Puthiyathor Ulagam Seivom," launched to share STC's activities and talents with the wider community.
- Constitution reviewed and updated under expert guidance to strengthen governance for the future.
- STC launched the six-month project *"Empowering Seniors Through Cultural Engagement and Elder Abuse Prevention"* designed and led by seniors, the initiative focused on elder abuse awareness, cultural participation, and strengthening intergenerational connection.

2026 – 40 Years of Legacy & Literary Growth

- STC continues to foster intellectual engagement through its vibrant Book Club and *"Puthaga Poonga."*
- Grand celebrations mark STC's 40th Anniversary, honoring four decades of service, culture, and community.

Forty years strong.

Rooted in heritage.

United in purpose.

And the best... is yet to come.