



Autism Parents Association VO802 Annual General Meeting – 2019

Melita Garden, Attard – 29th March 2019



MEMBER

Table of Contents

- Message from the President
- APA – Our Mission
- Our current structure
- An overview of the year
- Public Relations Report
- Projects today and tomorrow
 - **The Social Integration Program for Teens (SIPT)**
 - **A Guide for Parents and Carers Following Diagnosis**
 - **A Guide for Catechism, Mass and the Sacraments**
 - **Craft & Coffee for Charity**
- Financial Report
- Our Sponsors
- APA Social Outlook
- The APA Committee



Message from the President

Dear Members,

It is with great pleasure to welcome you all to APA's 10th Annual General Meeting. To those who would have liked to attend in person and were unable to, we would like to wish you a pleasant read of this report and do get in touch with the members of the committee should you have any questions.



The past year was a very special year for APA as we have celebrated our 10th Anniversary from it becoming an official NGO. During the course of these 6 years in my role of president I am truly amazed with the achievements and growth of this Association. It is an honour for me to be addressing the presentation of this Annual General Meeting to brief you through what we have been upto in 2018 and what our plans are for the coming year.

We are living in exponential times and as everyone else can feel, a lot of us are playing catchup with our daily tasks which regrettably takes its toll on us in general. Due to this shift, we have ran into a few constraint throughout 2018, but as always, all our committee members have tried to put their best output in helping others and to ascertain our obligations as a support group.

As you will see in this report, APA has kept a fairly busy diary and organised several meetings with government officials & policy makers to stress on the ongoing changing requirements of our children and youths under the spectrum. It is with great honour to inform you, that notwithstanding these changes, we didn't lose the momentum and are once again in good relationships with all stakeholders.

At APA, our main focus is to remains primarily to support the families in their daily endeavours and to educate the public in general.

During the last twelve calendar monthis we have followed Autism Europe's themed campaign "*Breaking Barriers Together for Autism*" and as always, I would like to take this opportunity to thank

Mrs M. Muscat and the Marigold Foundation for their support and making Autism Campaigns at a national level.

Please bear in mind that people with Autism constantly face challenges primarily due to the discrimination they face on a daily basis. Certain attitudes and stereotype behaviour deviate participation for people on the spectrum within our society and we will work harder so that we help our society in becoming more accessible and more focused towards our children who deserve respect acceptance and inclusion be it in school, social groups or on the job.

From my perspective, and hopefully many of you here today will agree, that being a parent of a child with Autism is no easy job and one must live it to understand the feeling and the frustrations of bringing up a child on the spectrum. This is all due to the barriers and rigid systems we face every day. The biggest challenge is to recognise the potential of each and every child and guide them in the right direction. It is important for our children to be active participants in our society.

As you will see in the pages to follow, APA has celebrated it's 10th Year anniversary and as such have organised a few events to commemorate this milestone event. One event was a Conference held at the Marina hotel in St.Julians, during which we have dived into the journey of a person on the spectrum post their youth age and when venturing into the place of work and much more.

The committee of APA remains committed towards building "A new dynamic for Autism", therefore, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the committee whom dedicate their personal time "away from their families" to attend meetings, organise & entertains events and above all, offers their support to other parents.

Lastly, I wish to thank all those parents who appreciate the work we do and are constantly encouraging us continue our mission.

All the very best.

Omar Farrugia
President - APA



APA – Our Mission

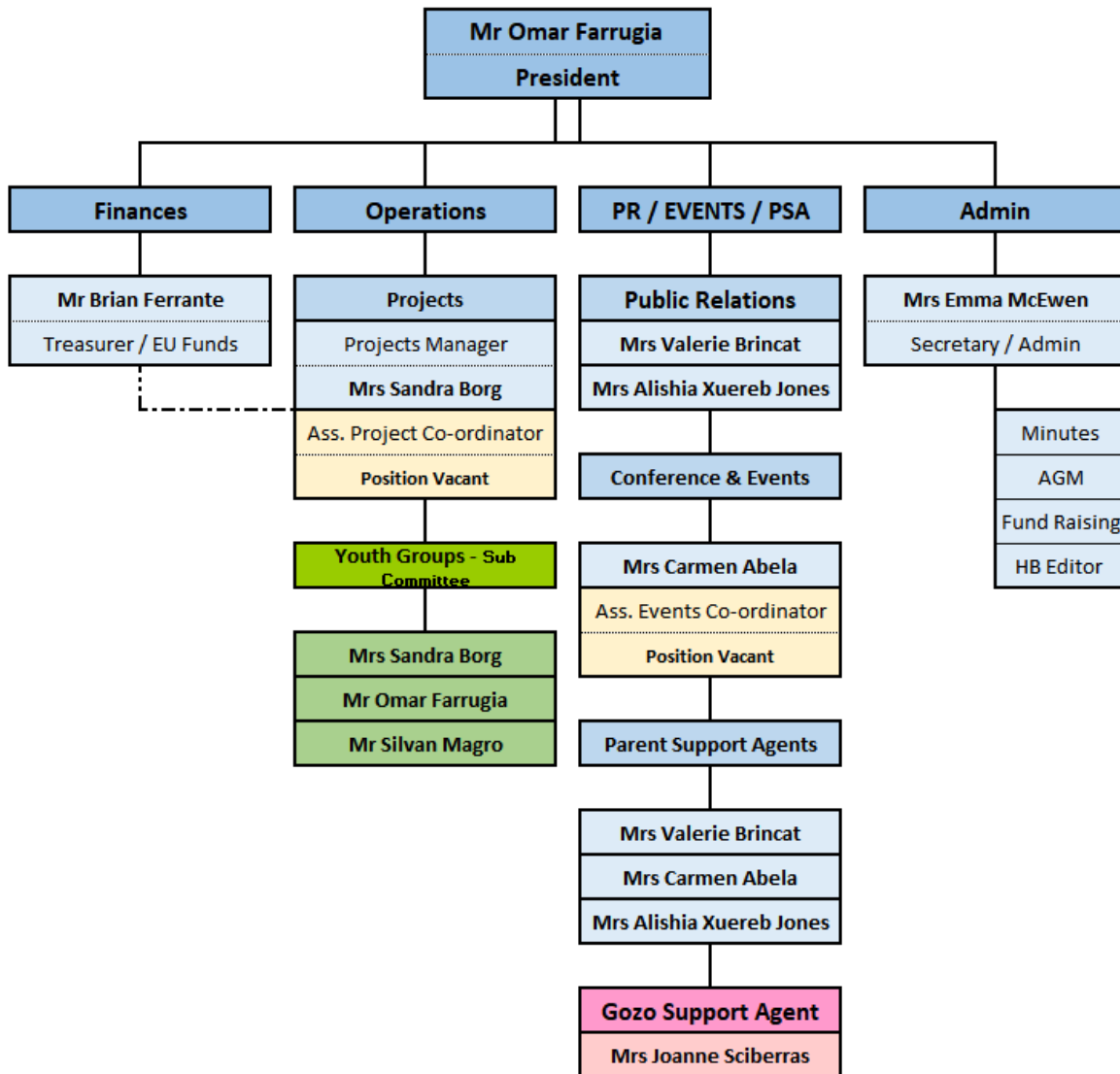
The Autism Parents Association (APA) is a registered non-profit voluntary organisation (V0802), set up to help families with children effected by Autism. The original aim of the Association was to create awareness about autism, and provide guidance to parents and carers and of children with Autism.

Today we are proud to say that our committee has worked hard to put Autism on the forefront on the agenda of Policymakers. Parents may put their mind at rest that the team is working wholeheartedly to close any gaps in services. As we approach our 10th anniversary, we are realigning our strategic approach and gearing up to promote inclusion. We are currently working on several projects to ensure a better future for our kids.

This won't be possible without building bridges and making alliances with several partners, therefore, we are thankful for all the NGOs, governing bodies, companies, educators, therapists and professionals who have collaborated with us throughout the past and will hopefully extend their help in the years to come.



Our current structure



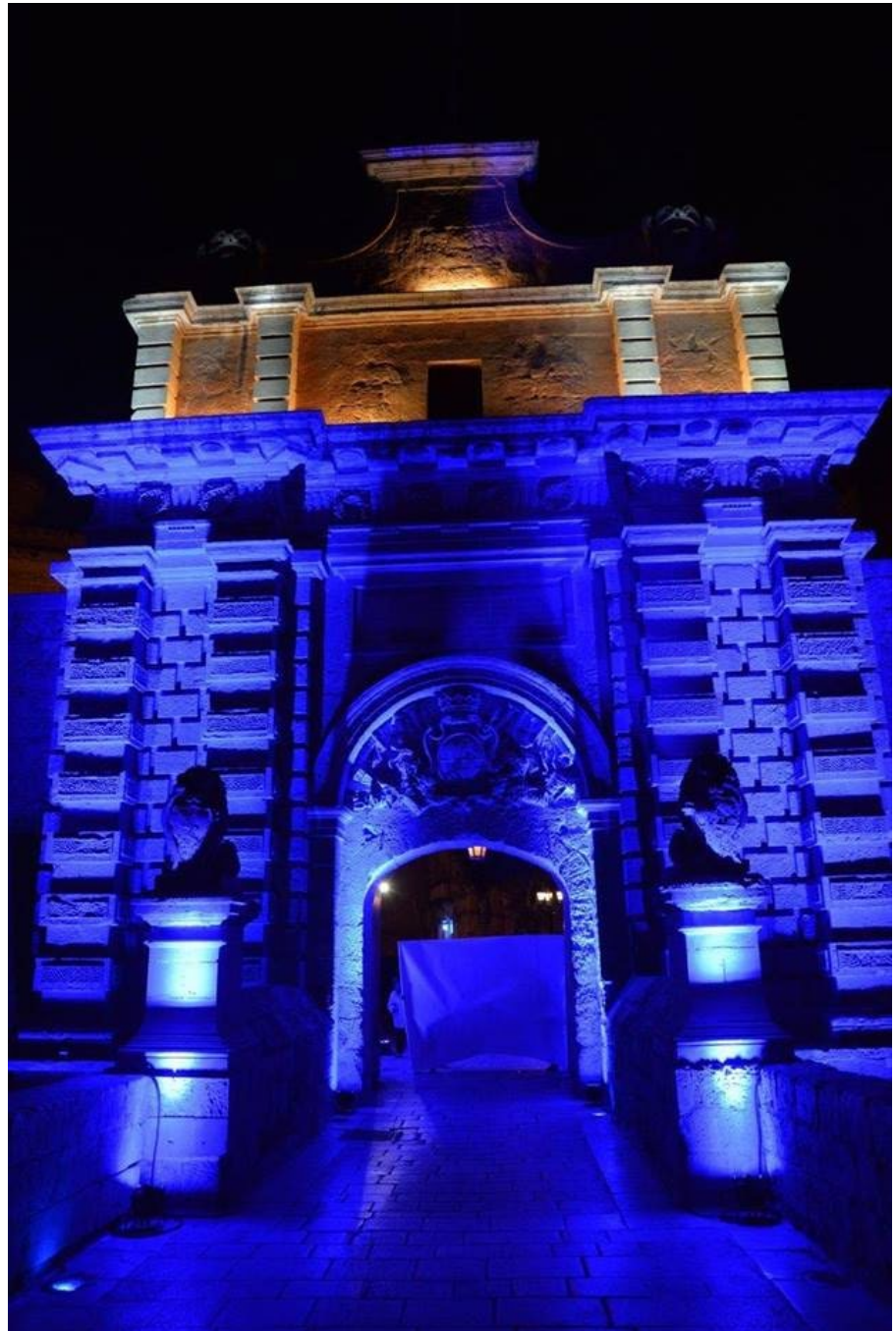
In addition to the Committee it is an honour to have Mrs Michelle Muscat wife of the Prime Minister as APA's Honorary Chairperson since March 2013.



An overview of the year;

Light It Up Blue Event – 22nd March 2018

Hon. First Lady Mrs Michelle Muscat, in her role as chairperson of the Marigold Foundation organised the 5th Light it up Blue Event to join the rest of the world to support people on the Autism Spectrum and their families. This year, Mdina was spectacularly lit for the occasion. Children and parents were invited to symbolically 'break barriers' and a drinks reception was also hosted by the Hon. First Lady Mrs Michelle Muscat.





APA AGM 2018

The 2018 AGM was held on 19th March at Melita Gardens, Attard.



APA Fun Day 2018

The 6th APA Fun day was held at Villa Francia on 28th April 2018.





APA - Autism Awareness Activities

Autism Awareness at Mater Dei Hospital - 2nd April till 6th April.



APA Fun Walk

The 5th Walk for Autism was held on 8th April 2018 from Triton Fountain to Piazza San Gorg and back.



APA 10 Years Anniversary Conference “Autism - Thinking Outside The Box”

Held on 21st April 2018 at the Marina Hotel, St. Julians.

This special seminar celebrated the 10 year anniversary of Autism Parents Association with 3 special keynote speakers. The evening was launched by a thought-provoking session by Joseph Woods, Creative Director at Creolabs and the School of Invention. Ms Ana Barkaia, a Board Approved Behaviour Analyst and a co-author, spoke about the Applied Behaviour Analysis. The third speaker was Ms. Thea Rees, a Management Consultant, described how those on the autism spectrum were being actively being recruited by SAP due to their core strengths and particular skills.

A discussion panel consisting of parents and those on the spectrum closed the conference.





APA Summer Barbeque

The 4th annual BBQ was held at Papa Peppino's (Inspire) on 19th August.



APA Christmas Party

The Christmas Party was held on the 15th December

This year's Christmas party for children aged up to 13 years was held at Montecristo Estates. It was a lovely celebration to the end of the year with both the children and parents joining in the fun.



Public Relations Report By Valerie Brincat

The Autism Parents Association will continue working with the aims to raise awareness, gaining public attention, discussing with policy makers the needs not only for our children but for our families as a whole system. Through public relations the association evaluates public attitudes and identifies the policies and procedures necessary to make our autism journey a holistic one. We are all going through this journey with different challenges, different successes but all with the same goals... and that is to make a difference in our children's life.



There is still much more to be done but every milestone is a celebration. We will continue with passion to help our ASD families and supporting autism advocacy across the lifespan.

During this past year the following APA appearances were affected to raise awareness for Autism:

- 6 Television appearances
- APA Autism Fun Walk and Fun Day
- APA Autism awareness week at Mater Dei Hospital
- APA Autism awareness at the Mental Health Road Race
- Meeting with Prime Minister, Minister of Education and Parliamentary Secretary for Persons with Disability and Active Ageing
- Meetings with Her Excellency President Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca

- Meetings with Minister of Education Hons Evarist Bartolo
- Meeting with stakeholders of Agenzija Sapport
- Meetings with CRPD
- Meetings with Head of Speech and Language Department
- Meetings with Ronald McDonald House of Charity
- Stakeholders forum of 'Know Your Rights' website at Inspire
- Meeting with disability stakeholders for MA Disability Studies Students at University
- APA Autism Talk for Youths and Community Students at the University of Malta
- APA Autism Awareness talk for teachers and students Gharghur Primary
- APA Autism Awareness talk for teachers and students at San Anton
- APA Autism Awareness talk for teachers and students at De La Salle
- APA Autism Awareness talk for teachers and students at Marsascala Primary
- APA Autism Awareness talks for Parish Priests at Bahar Ic-Caghaq
- APA Autism Awareness talk to theology students at the University of Malta
- Opening of Qaritona
- Speech at an evening soiree at Mdina Cathedral hosted by Dar Tal Providenza
- Summer BBQ and Annual Day by the Pool
- Christmas Party for Young Children
- Parent Coffee Morning
- Autism Friendly Cinema Events



Photo DCI - Culture French

Autism Europe



APA is a full member of Autism Europe (AE). AE is an international association whose main objective is to advance the rights of autistic people and to help them improve their quality of life.

It is made up of 90 member autism organisations from 38 European countries. APA represented our members at the Council of Administration meeting held in Brussels in November 2018.

AE had launched a EU wide survey on access to education. Due to the passion of our parent members, Malta was praised for being in the top 6 highest responding countries.



Autism Advisory Council – Malta

On the 2nd April 2019 (World Autism Day) The Autism Advisory Council was officially launched by the Parliamentary Secretary for Persons with Disability and Active Ageing, Anthony Agius Decelis.

It is with great pleasure to inform you that APA is part of the AAC structure. The aim of the council is to draft a national strategy on autism and to monitor and update the strategy in the years to come.

The national law on autism, called the Persons within the Autism Spectrum (Empowerment) Act, provides for the autism advisory council and lays down the framework and guidelines for the national strategy. The council is made up of civil servants, professionals, academics, and people from civil society, including people who are autistic.

Apart from drafting a national autism strategy, the council will also advise the government and assist it in various sectors, including lifelong learning and gaining personal autonomy, therapeutic interventions and equal opportunities.

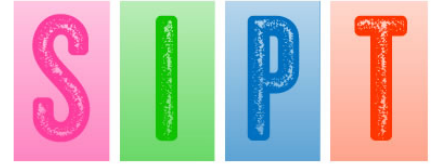


Projects today and tomorrow

The Social Integration Program for Teens (SIPT)

By Silvan Magro, Sharon Balzan and Sandra Borg

Throughout the past years, the Autism Parents Association (APA) has identified a gap in community integration services for youths aged 14+. Together with St. Jeanne Antide Foundation, APA developed an appropriate program. This project was funded through the Funds for NGOs of the Malta Community Chest Fund Foundation (MCCFF). Project Ref: MCCFF-C3-004-2016.



The main aim of the project intends empowering our youths to participate in programs to integrate in society or provide them with skills required to be active participants in the community. Through this program we bridged the gap for our youths by organising a number of outings/ sessions held in-house and also out in the community.



During the past year, various activities were enjoyed:

- Participants prepared a pizza at El Catalan. During this activity participants also learnt the skills of attending restaurant.
- A collaboration between Zejtun youth group and SIPT was initiated and our youths integrated in preparing different crafts related to carnival. During this activity the two youth groups played a football game together.
- Scouts group together with SIPT invited youths to build a tent together. In this activity our youths employed their fine motor skills in order to build the tent themselves.
- Parents of youths together with SIPT administration organised a carnival party together. During this party youth were exposed to socialize together in a healthy environment.
- In order to enhance their cooking skills, the youths prepared hotdogs and cakes in house at SJAF. Our main objective out of this activity was that our youths would feel useful and productive.
- Gross, motor and cognitive skills were employed at the Velocity (trampoline event). Throughout their two-hour workout, youths had to concentrate during their jumps and making use of their gross motor skills.
- An activity where the youths had to make use of the ferry service from Cospicua to Valletta. The goal was to break barriers of using different types of transport.



- Sports event in collaboration with the Mscala local council. The aim was to support youths to understand the concept of competing and when working in a team, all of them can succeed.
- Explora visit, during this session our youths were able to use their senses. During this activity, youths also engaged in 2 workshops.
- A collaboration between Marsaxlokk local council and SIPT was initiated. Through this activity, youths were able to experience local traditional food and also were able to caught a traditional luzzu. Through this activity we enhanced the local history.
- Youths went to visit the Aquarium. During this activity, youths enhanced their knowledge on different fish.
- Archery activity was another event where the youths had to use their gross motor skills and cognitive skills.
- Bowling activity was another activity where the youths had to use their gross motor skills and cognitive skills.
- The youths wanted to organize a day trip in Gozo. Therefore, a day trip was organized, the day consisted of a train tour, Rabat tour and a meal. Our youths had the opportunity to ride different means of transport and also to explore the other part of the country.



- APA organized an annual summer BBQ and our youths were invited to this event. They enjoyed themselves socializing with other people in a healthy way.
- Youths requested a session Robotica, therefore a professional tutor attended to hold a session with our youths. During this session youths managed to follow instructions given and managed to build robots.
- Cooking sessions at the Chocolate Factory. Once again the objectives were of how to work in a team and preparing lunch independently.
- A session was planned at ECO farm but due to bad weather session was cancelled.
- A day trip to Sicily. The Youths were involved in the planning of the trip. During the excursion youths explored another means of transport, visiting Ethna, an eco village and did some shopping.
- SIPT were invited to attend a show at Manuel Theatre, through this experience the youths integrated with other groups.
- A Christmas dinner was organised where youths and their parents celebrated together. During this event we also did the secret Santa, where youths gave presents to each other.

“The youth club changed both my life and my son’s life. My 17 year old son now has friends and activities to look forward to. The minute he gets home from a youth club activity he asks me when the next one is. As a mother I have also found friendship and support and I too look forward and join in activities. No words could express the heartfe It gratitude I have for the people who dedicate their time to make this possible.” Parent

“SIPT made it possible so that my youth could socialize in a safe environment. With this project we also managed to build a strong relationship between us parents and this helped us to support each other in difficult time.” Parent

“Youth club is a very good idea. It is nice to have friends in youth club and it is important to have friends. Youth club has fun activities. It is great to have somewhere to go on Saturdays. Youth club is great for teens and for the adults too.” Youth

“Our meetings are very important for my life since I made new friends with whom I can have fun. By this youth group I managed to go abroad for the first time. I was so excited to this. I would like to thank all those involved who made it possible.” Youth

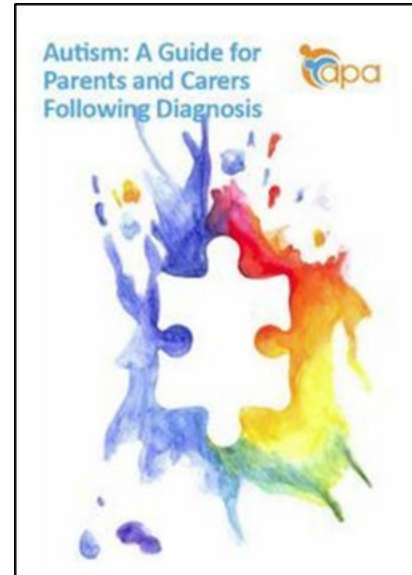


A Guide for Parents and Carers Following Diagnosis

By Emma McEwen

The guide was launched in April 2017 and has had a fantastic reception. This valuable guide has been circulated to our members and will be continue to be given to new members free of charge.

By now we had all hoped that a Maltese translation would have been available. However, we have encountered some difficulties. Hopefully these challenges have been overcome and we hope to be able to launch the Maltese edition by the end of 2019.



A Guide for Catechism, Mass and the Sacraments

Going to church, following mass and the sacraments can prove challenging for those with autism. APA has been working with the Church and parish priests to provide clarity, awareness and understanding.

APA has conducting a lot of research, given talks to parish priests and attended an interview on newsbook about autism and the church. A presentation was also given, together with Father Martin, about disability at the Yearly Meeting of all Parishes in Malta.

To help our children, catechists, parents and parish priests Autism Parents Association is writing a guide 'Autism: A Guide for Catechism, Mass and the Sacraments.

The guide is in the final stages of editing and hopefully the printing will be sponsored by donations.



Craft & Coffee for Charity

APA has been approached by Craft & Coffee for Charity who have enthusiastically offered to make weighted blankets for those with autism.

Many children on the autism spectrum struggle with sensory issues including Sensory Processing Disorders (SPD). SPD is a neurological disorder that

causes difficulties with processing information from the five senses: vision, auditory, touch, olfaction, and taste, as well as from the sense of movement (vestibular system), and/or the positional sense (proprioception). For those with SPD, sensory information is sensed, but perceived abnormally. Weighted blankets provide deep pressure touch stimulation without discomfort to individuals on the autism spectrum. These will be very beneficial for them by giving a calming effect for these sensory issues and will help with their overall functioning in their daily activities.

We are currently trying to source the plastic pellets needed to produce the blankets.



Financial Report by Brian Ferrante CPA



Autism Parents Association
Income and Expenditure
For the year ending 31 December 2018


	EUR	EUR
Income		
Memberships		310
Fund Raising Activities		
Autism Month 2018	210	
BBQ 2018	390	
Christmas 2018	220	820
Catania Trip (SIPT) - donation	3,820	
Catania Trip (SIPT) Parents Tickets (at cost)	2,606	6,426
Donations received		9,753
Other		1
Total income		17,310
Expenses		
Promotional items		331
Conferences attended		357
Membership - Autism Europe		825
Catania trip (SIPT)		4,524
Activities		
AGM 2018	526	
Autism month 2018	430	
Seminars and conferences organised	3,169	
BBQ Sep 2018	1,182	
Youths event	112	
Christmas 2018	996	6,415
Bank charges		16
Other		15
Total expenses		12,483
Surplus/(deficit) for the year		4,827
Opening Surplus as at 1 Jan 2018		32,095
Closing Surplus 31 Dec 2018		36,922
Represented by:		
HSBC current account		515
BOV current account		24,867
BOV Savings account		11,540
		36,922

Thanks to our Sponsors and Partners



Social Outlook – APA Website



Home About Us Calendar APA Handbook AGM - 2018 Partners Newsletters More

 **Autism Parents Association - Malta**
for parents by parents






Upcoming Events

-  **APA AGM - 2019**
Friday, Mar 29 at 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM
-  **LIUB - MDINA MALTA**
Tuesday, Apr 2 at 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM
-  **LIUB - CITTADELA GOZO**
Friday, Apr 5 at 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM

Youht Programme





[Download the Application Form](#)



[Privacy Policy](#)


10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Welcome to the Autism Parents Association website.

The Autism Parents Association (APA) is an official non-profit voluntary organisation (VOS02), designed to help and facilitate the process to families with children effected by Autism.

APA has been set up, by parents of children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorders. We currently have **286 families members** in the association all of whom are parents of children with the spectrum of Autism.

The aims of the Association is to create awareness in our local Society, since Autism is a condition which is not visible and the number of children being diagnosed with (ASD) Autism Spectrum Disorders is on the increase year on year. Unfortunately, parents pass through lots of hardships primarily to obtain diagnosis and secondly to identify the needs of their children.

As an Association and as clearly highlighted in our "Statute", We would like to create opportunities for parents to become educated in developing opportunities both locally and hopefully internationally.

In order to this effectively, we have developed this website to communicate with the general public, keep you up to date with our activities, our mission statement, current information and most of all, share our experiences.

Anyone who wishes to help us, any **DONATIONS** are Welcome. ([Click here to find out how](#))

You can easily **BECOME A MEMBER** by filling in the application form and send it to us by post.

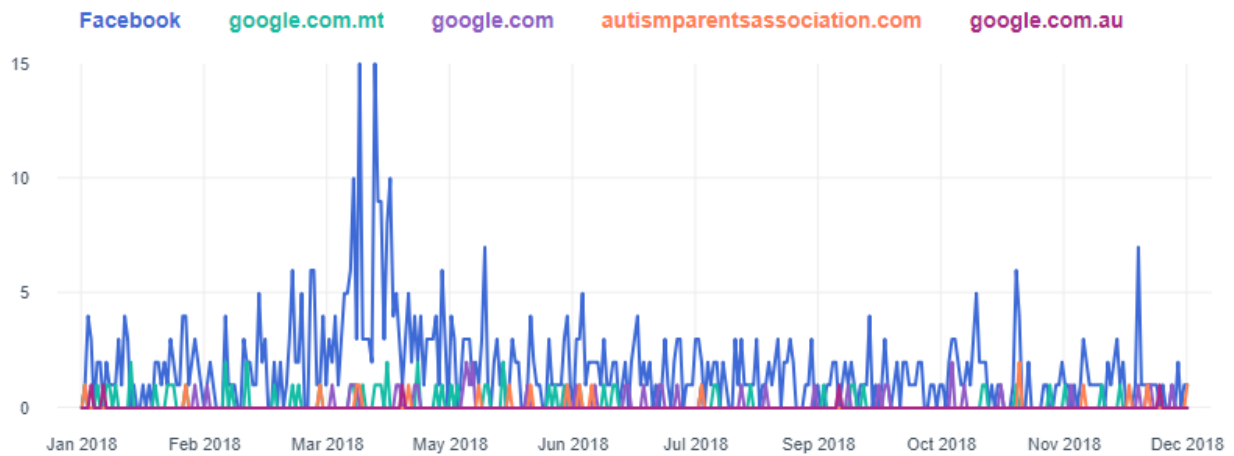
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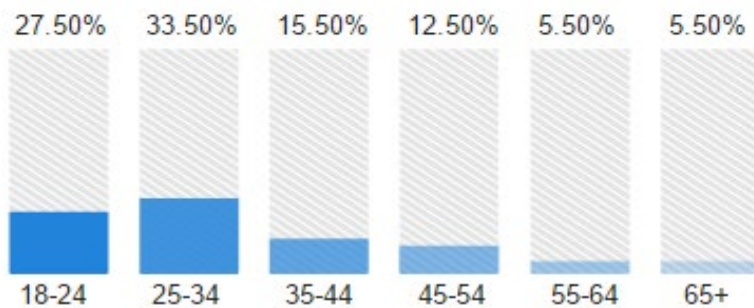
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Pageviews Summary



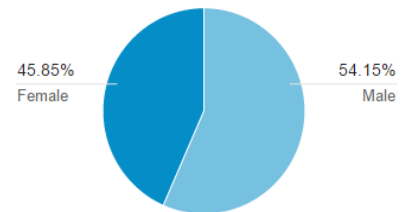
Age

100% of total sessions

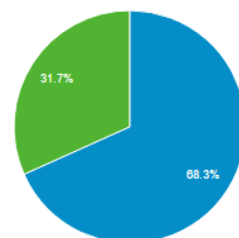


Gender

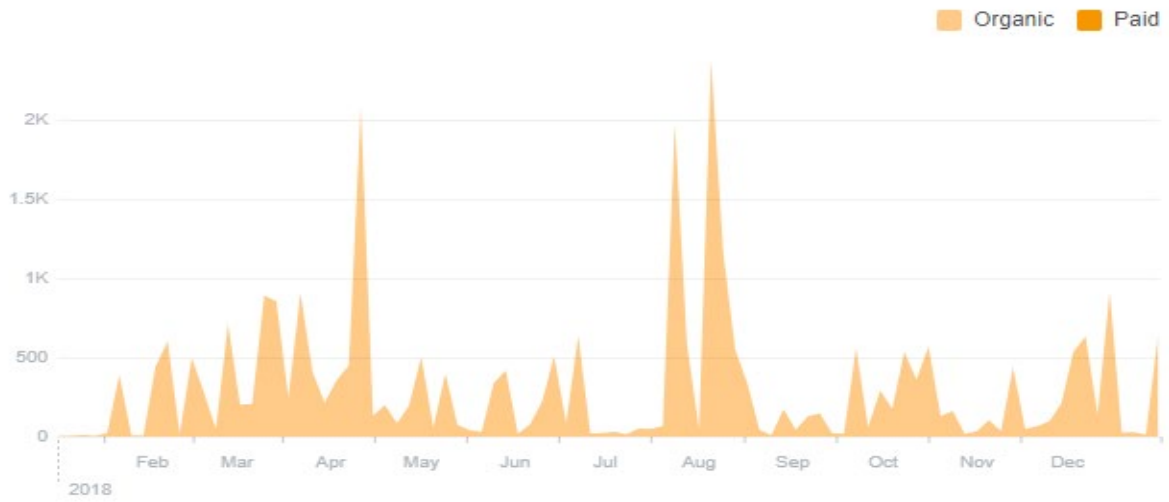
100% of total sessions



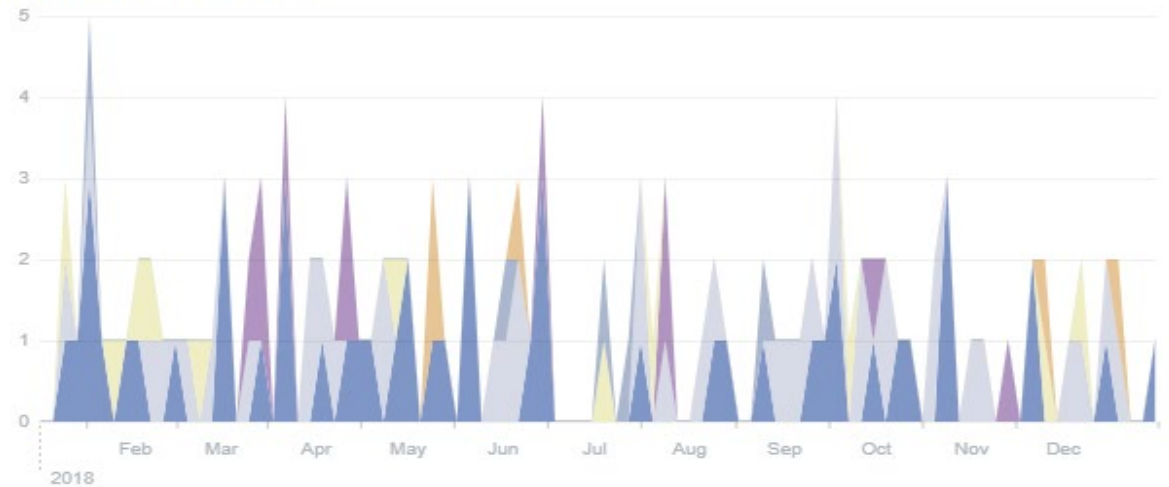
■ New Visitor ■ Returning Visitor



Social Outlook – Facebook



- Your Page
- Search
- News Feed
- Restored Likes from Reactivated Accounts
- Page Suggestions
- Other



The APA Committee



The committee – extending their roles



Omar Farrugia, is a father of 3 children, one of whom is on the Spectrum. Omar has held the role of President since 2013 and has successfully maintained the mission of APA. As a Director of Online Sales by profession, Omar has used his skills to keep APA on the very top of Social Media and worked wholeheartedly to push APA onto the very top of the Agenda of Policymakers. He is leading the team with integrity and dedication.



Sandra Borg, is a mother of 2 children one of whom is a youth on the Spectrum. Sandra is the founder of APA and held the position of President from 2008 to 2013. Sandra is an Insurance and Compliance Manager and she oversees professionalism in the operations of APA. She is currently responsible for the management of projects and the development of the 14+ youth group. Sandra brings to the committee a wealth of knowledge through an Autism Certification from University of Birmingham.



Valerie Brincat, is a mother of 3 children on the Spectrum. Valerie is now established in her role as Public Relations Officer in APA and has contributed considerably helping APA reach the exposure it has today. She contributes substantially in meetings with government officials and supports parents on a daily basis either through face to face meetings or via the closed Facebook page.



Brian Ferrante, is a father of 2 children on the Spectrum. Brian a qualified accountant by profession held the role of Treasurer for APA since 2010. Brian is responsible for maintaining records of all income and expenditure and contributes towards the finance side of projects.



Emma McEwen, is a mother of boy on the spectrum. Emma is a fulltime house wife with lots of energy. Emma is the Association's Secretary. Her duties are maintaining minutes of committee meetings, member enrolments, answering queries received via email and our Facebook pages, assisting the coordination of events and coordinating the Annual General Meeting.



Carmen Abela, is a mother of 2 children one of whom is a girl on the spectrum. Carmen is a clerk and is the Events Coordinator for APA. In addition, she diligently assists APA in a number of initiatives, including fundraising activities, talks and public relations and making herself available for anything else required by the committee.



Alishia Xuereb Jones is a mother of 3 children - a daughter and twins (girl/boy), her son being on the spectrum.

She is a primary teacher and graduated in Early Childhood Education and Care. Before this, she worked as an LSA for 10years. Alishia is a Public Relations Officer in APA conveying parents' concerns to members of the Government, in the media and raising awareness and inclusion through talks.



GOZO – Support

Joanne Sciberras, is a mother of two children one of whom is a boy on the spectrum. Joanne is a learning support assistant in a mainstream public school. She joined APA in April 2015.

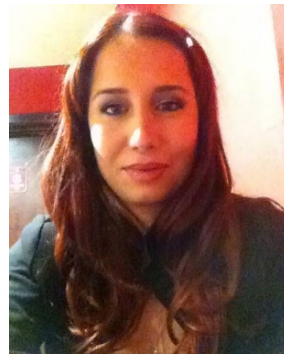
Joanne is a Parent Support Aid and is our **key contact for Gozo**.

The Committee – Terminating their roles

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Svetlana Sammut and Shana Woods for their support and services rendered to our community. Regretfully, they have both decided not to form part of the APA Committee moving forward.



Svetlana Sammut



Shana Woods

Thank You.. Thank You.. **Thank You..**

Thank You

Autism Parents Association
Annual General Meeting - 2019

Melita Gardens, Attard – 29th March 2019

