



# Autism Parents Association VO802 Annual General Meeting - 2018

Melita Garden, Attard – 19<sup>th</sup> March 2018



MEMBER

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# Message from the President

Dear Members,

It is with great pleasure to welcome you all to APA's 9th 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.



This year is a very special year for APA as we will be celebrating its 10th Anniversary from it becoming an NGO. During the course of these 5 years in my role of president I am truly amazed with the amount of 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 2017 and what our plans are for the coming year.

2017 hasn't been an easy year especially in view of time constraints of our key committee members and the local government elections which brought about changes in the cabinet. As with every change people have been assigned new roles and therefore we had no option but to rebuild our network and explain to the new government officials & policy makers, the needs of our children, the discussions held, changes which were in the making and the vision of APA to improve the service provision to children and youths with ASD and their families.

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. Our main focus is to remain primarily to support the families in their daily endeavours and to educate the public in general.

At APA our key objective is to continue to be in line with Autism Europe's campaign around the theme "Breaking Barriers Together for Autism" and I take this opportunity to thank the Marigold Foundation for making it possible to integrate both the Autism Europe and Autism Speaks - Light it Up Blue campaigns during our annual awareness event which landed us in Gozo lighting up the beautiful Cittadella in 2017.

Regretfully, 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 under 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.

Last year the focus was on distributing the Autism Guide to the parent members of APA and putting together the Maltese version of the guide. Both versions will shortly be distributed to all Child Care centres and Primary Schools in order for staff to be in a position to guide parents whose children have been just diagnosed. The Social Integration Programme for Teens (SIPT) has continued to bloom and the youths participating in the varied and fun activities every fortnight enjoy themselves and fill the team with energy to keep the programme going. For this I would like to thank the staff of St. Jeanne Antide Foundation for believing in the need of this programme and partnering with us to obtain the funds from the Malta Community Chest Fund Foundation. I also thank all the contributors who have volunteered to organise activities for the youths and sponsors for the events.

Last but not least is the event organised at Corinthia Marina, sponsored by the Corinthia Social fund. Ms Nathalie Buhagiar, the key speaker, gave parents some excellent tips on how to deal with sensory issues at home. As to the Autism Empowerment Bill, the legislation has been passed and APA has a representative on the Autism Council. This bill empowers people on the spectrum and the council will focus on promoting the needs of this condition on a national basis.

The committee of APA is wholeheartedly working hard to “Break together the Barriers of Autism”. I would like to thank the committee who dedicate time to attend meetings, organise our numerous and entertaining events, meeting government officials and above all offering constant support to other parents .

I also thank all those parents who send us messages showing their appreciation in the work we do as this is encourages the committee to continue with their mission.

I would like to conclude with our motto, Help Us Help You !!

All the very best.

**Omar Farrugia**

## APA – Our Mission

The Autism Parents Association (APA) is a registered non-profit voluntary organisation (VO802), 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.

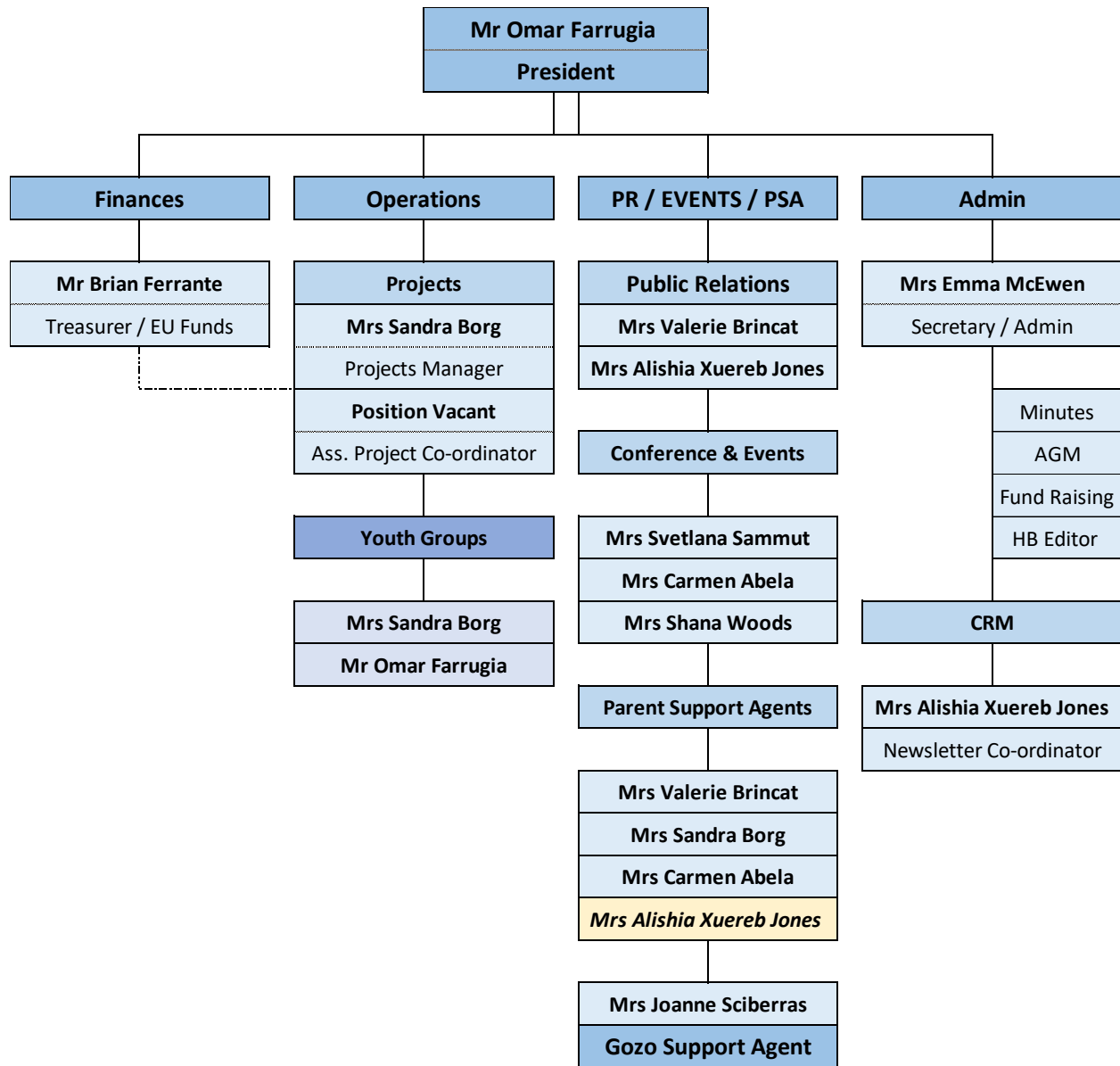
Today we are proud to say that our committee has worked hard to put Autism on the forefront on the agenda of Policymakers. Parents may put their mind at rest that the team is working wholeheartedly to close any gaps in services. As we approach our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we are realigning our strategic 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.

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, volunteers and professionals who are and have collaborated with us throughout the past and 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

2<sup>nd</sup> April Marks World Autism Day. Hon. First Lady Mrs Michelle Muscat, in her role as chairperson of the Marigold Foundation organised the 4<sup>th</sup> Light it up Blue Event to join the rest of the world to support people on the Autism Spectrum and their families. This year, the event was held in Gozo. A fundraising dinner was later hosted by the Hon. First Lady Mrs Michelle Muscat and part of the proceeds were donated to APA to cover the costs of Autism-Europe Membership.



Photo - MGOZ - George Scerri





# APA AGM and Fun Day 2017

The 5<sup>th</sup> APA Fun and 2017 AGM were held at Villa Francia om 29 April 2017.





# APA Fun Walk

The 4th Walk for Autism was held on 9th April 2017 from Qui-Si Sana to the Love Sign in Spinola



Photo - DOI - Reuben Piscopo

Join us on Sunday the 09th April 2017 @ 10.00AM

Walk with us from Qui-Si-Sana Gardens to the Love Monument in Spinola Bay.

Participation is open to everyone, so just come along in your Blue T-Shirt and help us spread the awareness.

[www.autismparentsassociation.com](http://www.autismparentsassociation.com)

The graphic features a colorful border of puzzle pieces in shades of blue, green, and yellow. In the center, there is a blue and white sneaker. The APA logo is prominently displayed at the top.

## APA Summer Barbeque

The third annual Barbeque was held at Buccaneers in Marsascala on 2<sup>nd</sup> September



## APA Christmas Parties

This year, we organised two Christmas Parties, one for children aged up to 12 years, and one for our youths. Both parties were held at Montecristo Estates.

We had a very good turnout, with over 50 kids attending the children's party, and over 20 youths attending the second party. Animators kept our both groups entertained. Some parents joined in the fun, while the less adventurous relaxed over a cup of coffee.





## APA meeting with Malta Institute of Accountants

20<sup>th</sup> July 2017



## APA meeting with Hand in Hand

27 July 2017



# Seminar by Ms Nathalie Buhagiar

## Supporting the participation of children with ASD in daily life: Sensory Processing Knowledge put into practice

Held on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2018 at the Marina Hotel St Julians





## Public Relations Report By Valerie Brincat

Since 2008, the Autism Parents Association (APA) has brought together hundreds of families affected by autism spectrum disorders with the aim to support one another and empower advocates. APA encourages its members and supporters to keep current on and active in ongoing advocacy issues regarding autism and make an effort to attend autism events and activities. The benefits of being involved in the autism community are many – not the least of which is educating yourself about the most appropriate therapies and resources available to help our loved ones on the spectrum. We as an association are doing our utmost to spread awareness and raising issues of concern to empower our children.



The Autism Parents Association has continued raising awareness and distributing knowledge about the Autism condition by making participating in local media and taking part in various awareness events.

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

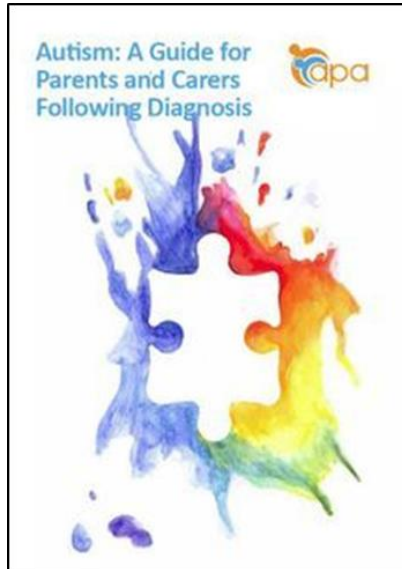
- 5 television appearances
- 3 radio discussions
- APA Autism Fun Walk and Fun Day
- Meeting with Minister of Health Hons Chris Fearne
- Meeting with Chief Medical Officer Dr. Dennis Vella Baldacchino
- Meetings with Minister of Education Hons Evarist Bartolo
- Meeting with Minister of Gozo Hons Justyne Caruana
- Meetings with CRPD
- Meeting with Ministry for Family and Social Solidarity
- Meetings with Director General of Social Security
- APA Autism Awareness talk at Tarxien Primary (For parents)
- APA Autism Awareness talk at St. Joseph School Sliema
- Summer BBQ and Annual Day by the Pool
- Christmas Party for both Young and Youths
- Mother Night Out in July
- Seminar with Nathalie Buhagiar re: Sensory Processing Knowledge put into Practice
- Autism Friendly Cinema Events

## The Autism Handbook By Emma McEwen

Last April, APA was delighted to launch the guide 'Autism: A Guide for Parents and Carers Following Diagnosis'.

This initiative was born from parents asking APA and other parents in the support forum for advice on how to help their child, what therapies are offered in Malta and what social services were available.

The guide was developed by parents for parents and provides an overview of autism,



guidance on how to cope in the early years, services offered locally and the benefits one can avail from.

The project was funded solely by a Small Initiative grant awarded by the Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector. The value of the fund was Euro 3000. A fellow autism association in Wales granted us permission to use the text from their guide. APA wrote the sections on Education, Social Services and gathered information on the services providers in Malta. EC Language Schools, very kindly, created the design of the guide so that the funds were spent purely on printing. From the original aim of printing 100 copies we had the funds to print 500 copies.

The guide is available in English to every APA member, free of charge. It is also available on our website and on DVD on request.



### The next step – 'Autism: A Guide for Parents and Carers Following Diagnosis' in Maltese

The production of the guide in Maltese relies solely on fund raising. Fundraising efforts started last March when Board member Emma McEwen, and Sandra Peyre raised Euro 2,082 by running the Malta Half Marathon. Fundraising continued 6 May 2017 when 4 athletes took part in the Hellfire 'Gozo 50km trail run'. We were blessed with amazing sponsors and donors. Team Sport Birkirkara provided the runners t-shirts, Mayhem Design & Branding printed the t-shirts, 'Alan the designer' produced the artwork for the t-shirts and adverts, Sado Printing provided the banner for the event. Vibe FM aired adverts both in English and Maltese on the radio. Vodafone provided the ability to receive donations by SMS from all mobile networks. We had a campaign on ZAAR, a crowd funding platform. Public Relations was driven by Write Me Anything. Emma McEwen and Patrick Tabone were invited on Trudy Kerrs Big Drive Home

A fundraising banner for the '50 KM GOZO COAST' run. At the top is the APA logo. Below it, the text reads 'GRIT, ENDURANCE &amp; DETERMINATION' in large, bold, orange letters. Underneath, it says 'RAISING FUNDS FOR THE FIRST EVER AUTISM HANDBOOK IN MALTESE FOR MALTESE PARENTS'. The banner features a photo of four runners. Below the photo, it says '4 RUNNERS', '50 KM GOZO COAST', and '1400 METRES TOTAL CLIMB'. At the bottom, it says '6TH MAY 2017 - HELP US MAKE IT HAPPEN!' and 'DONATE VIA SMS' with the numbers '€2.33 - 50617314, €4.66 - 50617919, €11.65 - 50619249'. Below that, it says 'CHEQUE &amp; ONLINE BANKING' and provides the account details: 'BOV - Autism Parents Association - Malta', 'Account No. 4002386130-9', and 'IBAN No. MT39VALL22013000000040023861309'.

and Matthew Caruana from Zaar was interviewed on the TVM show Twelve to 3 to raise autism awareness and funds.



A big thank you to the athletes – Emma McEwen, Sandra Peyre, Jason Greenaway, Italo Bonnici, Tiziana Bonnici, Patrick Tabone for taking on and completing the challenges. We hugely appreciate the efforts of APA members who spread the word. Thank you to everyone who donated including our generous corporate donors – Alfred Mizzi Foundation, The Corinthia Group of Companies, Ganado Advocates, F5 Magazine, Ladybird Foundation, Malta Information Technology Agency, Malta

Institute of Accountants, Mazars, Sigma Coatings.

A grand total of Euro 13,000 was raised enabling not only the production of the guide in Maltese but also providing funds for future guides.

The Maltese translation has now been completed and is currently with the designer. We hope to receive the Guide in print before the summer. We would like to thank Mark Vella and Joe Salomone for the translation, Marvic Budeja for proof reading and Julian McEwen for designing.



## Sponsors



Mayhem Design  
and Branding



TeamSport  
Birkirkara



Sado  
Printing



TVM



VIBE FM



Vodafone



Write Me  
Anything



X FM



ZAAR



Coming soon...



**L-Awtiżmu: Gwida għall-Ġenituri u l-Carers wara d-Dijanjożi**

**apa**

# **BREAKING BARRIERS**

The first autism guide in Maltese for parents of newly diagnosed children. It can only happen with your kind donation.

**HELP US MAKE IT HAPPEN**

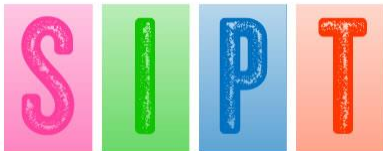


# Projects today and tomorrow By Sandra Borg

## SIPT Programme May 2017 to April 2018

The Social Integration Programme for Teens (SIPT) is a partnership project between the St Jeanne Antide Foundation and the Autism Parents Association (APA). This project is funded through the Funds for NGOs of the Malta Community Chest Fund Foundation (MCCFF). Project Ref: MCCFF-C3-004-2016

This was the second project that APA embarked upon which related to providing a service to Youths with Autism. This was a follow-up of the Integrating youths with Autism in the Community (IYAC) Programme and therefore most youths who attended the previous year, once again enrolled for this programme. The application was open for 25 youths aged between 14 and 21 years. They were all professionally assessed to determine their ability across 3 areas; communication level, social integration skills and cognitive ability.



The SIPT programme had a twist from the IYAC programme. The IYAC had three groups running at the same time whilst all youths attending SIPT were grouped together. The reason being that although the ability levels were quiet varied, the activities organised were all enjoyable and accessible to all the

youths. Plans were to eventually split the group however it was agreed to continue organising activities together, considering the success.

The activities consisted of a visit to Esplora, make your own pizza at El Catalan in Xaghra, Xmas decoration craft activity, dancing and fitness activities in preparation of the Xmas party, trampolining, red sponge making and hot dog night, preparation for the European Waste Recycling competition, scouts tent assembling, a boat trip from Birgu to Valletta and a carnival party which was organised by the parents.



European Waste Recycling Competition 2018



Carnival Party February 2018

Overall, the IYAC programme turned out to be a successful initiative since its primary aim of enabling youths with ASD to integrate in the community has been reached. The second aim of having other youths join the group turned out to be difficult since no youth groups meet on a Saturday. The aim is for the project to continue for another 2 years.

Overall, SIPT is turning out to be a successful initiative since its aim of enabling youths with ASD to integrate in the community is being reached. Members of APA together with the help of SJAF staff, the coordinators Silvan and Sharon, activity facilitators and parents worked wholeheartedly to make this a success and we are truly thankful. The proof of this is that the youths enter and exit with a smile and eagerly look forward to the next activity. The aim is for the project to continue during the summer and for the second phase to proceed until May 2019.



Trampolining Activity 2018

## Training for Police first responders

APA are in touch with Autism Hampshire who have already organised training to first responders in Hampshire and a plan of action is currently being developed. Training dates and agreement on the cost and training material are being assessed by APA and the local Policy Academy.



## MCAST – Creating an Autism Friendly Environment April 2017 to June 2018

APA continue to work with MCAST with the aim to accomplish yet another “Breaking Barriers together for Autism” in line with the Autism Europe Campaign.

Following the meeting with MCAST top management, where an explanation on what it feels like to be Autistic was delivered, training for the staff of the learning support unit was also organised. These will be the, so called, Autism Ambassadors. Printed guidelines to be provided to all levels of staff are in the process and the training needs are currently being assessed.

These best practices will be transposed to MCAST by June 2018.

## Compulsory Education

APA met with the Education Minister a number of times addressing the issues we are encountering with our children and youths at all levels being primary, secondary, post secondary and also in the work environment. A number of project ideas were given to the Minister three of which were:-

- To train a pool of LSAs on Autism and select a number of LSAs to become Autism Ambassadors
- To reform Adult Training Centres and Resource Centres by restructuring the curriculum and provide Autism Training to management and staff
- To organize a national educational campaign on Autism targeted to households and employers with the aim for more understanding of the condition.

The following issues were addressed:-

- Shortage of LSAs
- No compulsory training for teachers on handling children with Autism in the school setting and there is no synchronization with LSAs and parents
- Specialised training for LSAs is needed
- LSAs are not all at the same level...salary and position scales must be introduced.
- Are schools really Autism Friendly? One can engage the National Autistic society to obtain accreditation
- No continuation in students learning – time is wasted when there is a change in LSA or when an LSA is not trained enough
- Children with special skills are losing out and are not motivated leading to depression and behavior issues.
- Summer School LSA's to be provided for all children with an LSA – not provided in private schools.
- Security in the schools is weak – there have been issues of children walking out of school unattended

A number of training ideas and educational resources were also provided to the Minister.



# Reaching out to our Community By Alisha Xuereb Jones

## Newsletters 2017

### March 2017

**Celebrating the sacraments:** For many parents, faith is an important aspect of their lives. However as parents of children with Autism we all know that actually attending Mass and preparing our children for their sacraments can be stressful on our children and on us. Ideas on how to make our children's spiritual journey a positive experience is given in this issue.

**Autism; Cures, therapies and interventions:** This article, written by Dr Alistair DeGaetano, provides useful pointers for parents to consider when trying to choose a suitable therapy for their child.

**Picky eaters:** tips and advice for parents and caregivers on how to deal with a picky eater.

**Spring:** lovely and creative ideas for activities parents can engage in with their children to enjoy some quality time this Spring especially to fill their days during the Easter Holidays.



### June 2017

**Perspective from an adult with autism:** Dr Catherine Alvarez, an adult on the spectrum, shares her experience of living with Autism and talks about the 'Theory of Mind'

**Give it a go:** Janet Silvio, Executive Director of Hila home writes about the importance of trying out new experiences with people with Autism. Although it may not always work out, it is always worth giving it a try.

**Malta's first Autism Guide book!** A short article about a huge project carried out by APA in launching the Autism Guide Book.

All our Newsletters are digitally available on :-

<http://www.autismparentsassociation.com/newsletters>

# Financial Report by Brian Ferrante CPA

Autism Parents Association  
Income and Expenditure  
For the year ending 31 December 2017



Income		<b>EUR</b>	<b>EUR</b>
Memberships			1,020
Fund Raising Activities			
	Autism Month 2017	220	
	BBQ 2017	650	
	Christmas 2017	1,053	1,923
Donations - Marathon and Gozo Ultra			13,380
Corporate and other donations			10,841
Other			113
<b>Total income</b>			<b>27,277</b>
Expenses			
Promotional items			680
Conferences & memberships			582
Handbook expenses			2,560
Activities			
	AGM 2017	110	
	Autism month 2017	565	
	BBQ Sep 2017	1,000	
	Christmas 2017	979	
	Youths	182	2,836
Assets	IT equipment		1,453
<b>Total expenses</b>			<b>8,111</b>
<b>Surplus/(deficit) for the year</b>		<b>€</b>	<b>19,166</b>
Opening Surplus as at 1 Jan 2017			12,929
Closing Surplus 31 Dec 2017		<b>€</b>	<b>32,095</b>
<b>Represented by:</b>			
HSBC current account			515
BOV current account			30,379
BOV Savings account			1,201
		<b>€</b>	<b>32,095</b>
<b>Assets at cost price</b>			
Boiler	Purchased 2016		130
Gazebo	Purchased 2016		92
IT equipment - Laptop and projector	Purchased 2017		1,453
		<b>€</b>	<b>1,675</b>

# 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



## Youth Programme



## Newsletters



## Welcome to the Autism Parents Association website.

The Autism Parents Association (APA) is an official non-profit voluntary organisation (VO802), 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 213 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. [\(Click here to find out how\)](#)

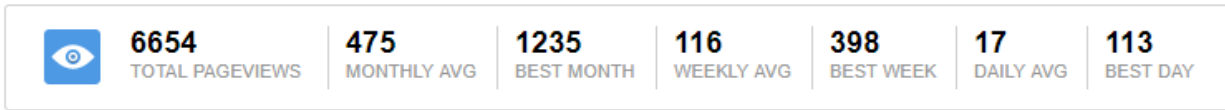
You can easily become a member by filling in the application form and send it to us by post. [\(Click on the link below\)](#)

[APA - Application Form](#)





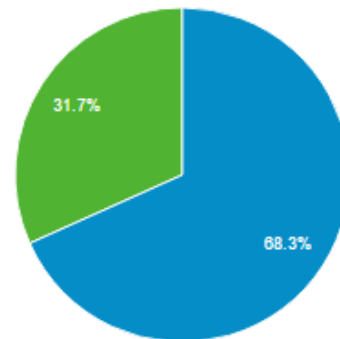
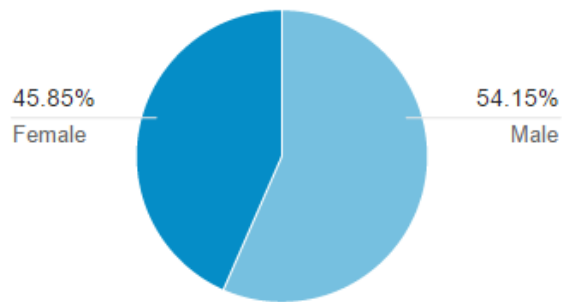
## Pageviews Summary



### Gender

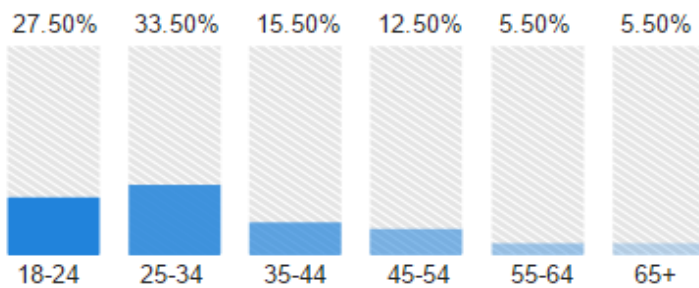
100% of total sessions

■ New Visitor ■ Returning Visitor

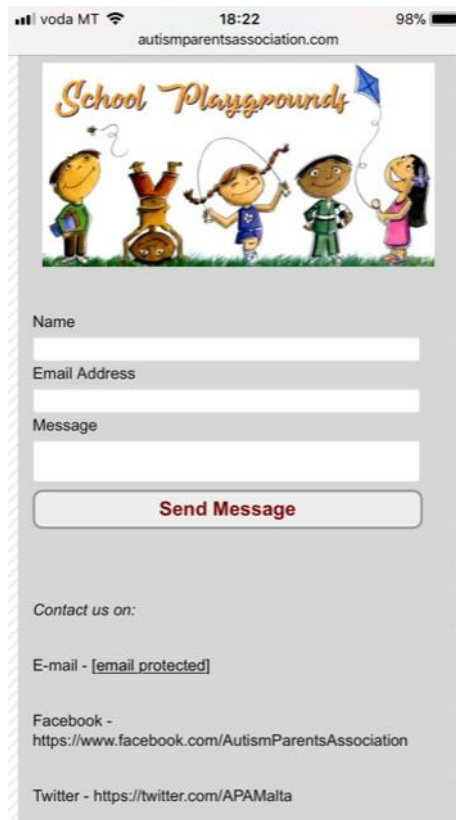
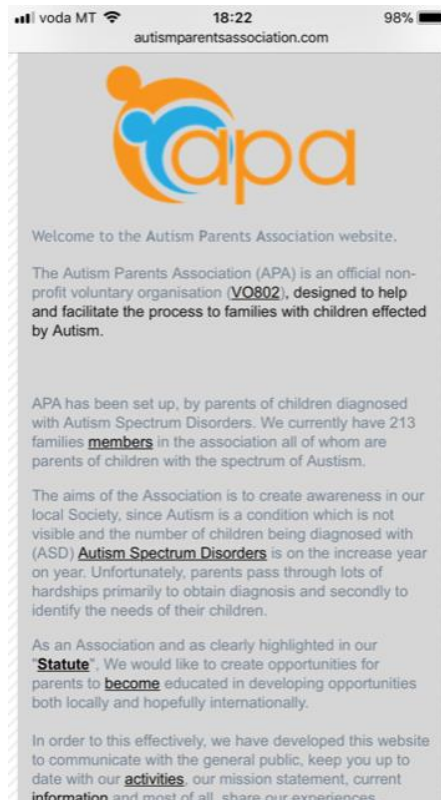
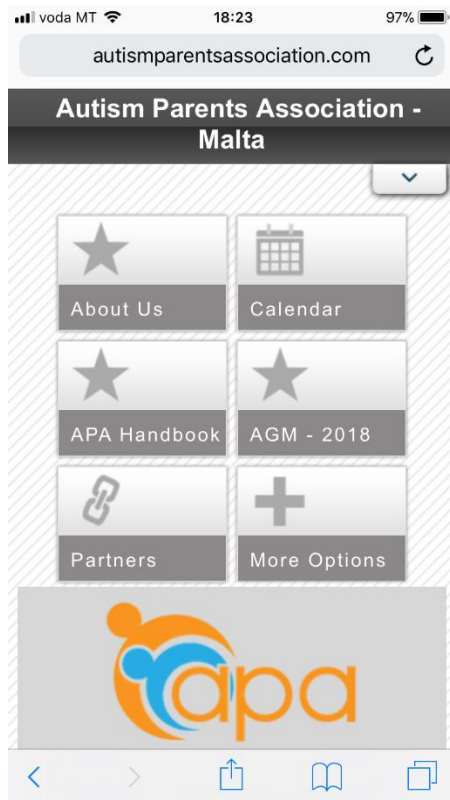


### Age

100% of total sessions



# Social Outlook – APA Mobile Website



# Social Outlook – APA Facebook Page

**Autism Parents Association**  
@AutismParentsAssociation

Autism Parents Association  
For Parents by Parents  
www.autismparentsassociation.com

Autism Europe

Home  
About  
Events  
Photos  
Videos  
Community  
Groups  
Reviews  
Posts  
Contact  
Forum  
Promote  
Manage Promotions

Photos

Autism TV Feature by Mr. Sergio Mallia from TVM This...

Nonprofit Organization in Marsa, Malta  
4.8 ★★★★★

67% response rate, 2-hours response time  
Respond faster to turn on the badge

4,152 likes +17 this week  
Sandra Borg and 154 other friends

4,091 follows

See Pages Feed  
Posts from Pages you've liked as your Page

1 was here 0 this week  
Sandra Borg

3,757 post reach this week

Community [See All](#)

Giselle Pisani and 154 other friends like this or have checked in

Invite Friends

4,152 people like this  
4,091 people follow this

Build community around your Page by linking a group

About [See All](#)

# Social Outlook – APA Facebook Page (Closed)

## Autism Parents Association Support Group

Secret Group

- About
- Discussion**
- Members
- Events
- Videos
- Photos
- Files
- Group Insights
- Recommendations
- Manage Group

Shortcuts

- Niltaqghu I-Hadd fil... 20+
- tmax malta
- Buddy 1
- Corinthia Social Club
- Autism Parents Associa...
- Malta Motorcycles 20+
- Corinthia Online Sales...
- Corinthia Web Marketing
- Autism Parents Asso... 9
- Catermax 1
- Expedia Partner Award...
- MUTURI= ixtri bieq... 20+
- Maltapark on Face... 20+

# Support Group

For Parents by Parents

www.autismparentsassociation.com

Joined ▾ Notifications More

Search this group

Write Post Add Photo/Video Live Video More

Write something...

Photo/Video Poll Watch Party

### ADD MEMBERS

+ Enter name or email address...

### MEMBERS

835 Members

You have 5 new members this week. Write a post to welcome them.

Write Post

### DESCRIPTION

Edit

We have opened this group with the aim to give online support to... See More

### TAGS

Add Tags

Add a few descriptive keywords. Suggestions:

+ Autism

### LOCATIONS

Add Locations

Add locations for this group.

### CREATE NEW GROUPS

Groups make it easier than ever to share with friends, family and teammates.

Create Group

### RECENT GROUP PHOTOS

See All

### PINNED POST

Omar Farrugia shared Autism Parents Association's event. Admin · March 12 at 8:08pm

Autism Parents Association  
Annual General Meeting  
Monday - 19th March - 6 pm  
Melita Gardens - Attard

**MAR 19** **APA - AGM**  
Mon 6 PM · Melita Gardens · Flal Balzan  
Giselle, Emma and 8 friends

Going ▾

Emma McEwen

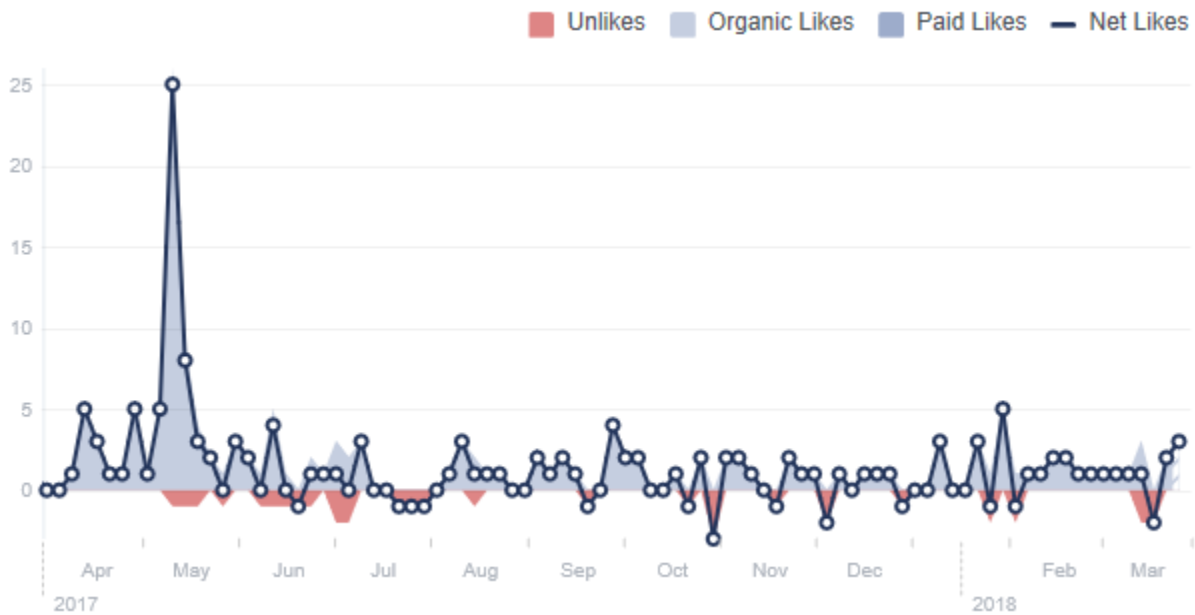
Like Comment

### RECENT ACTIVITY

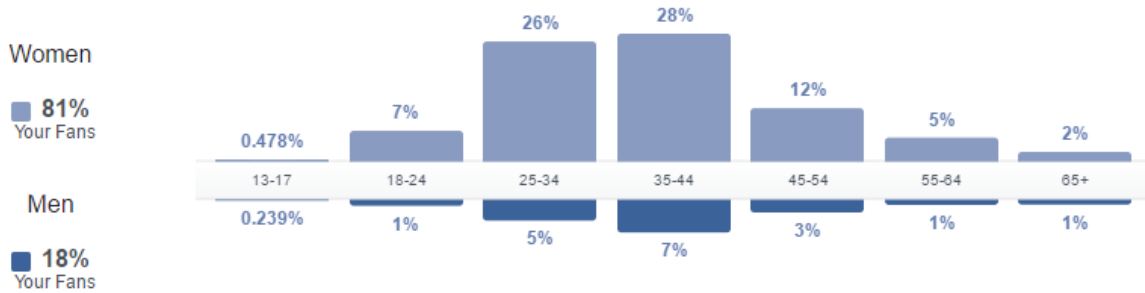
Omar Farrugia updated the group photo...



Total Page Likes as of Today: 4,152



The people who like your Page





## 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 leads the coordination of events, 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 to give away. Emma is a new member and will take the role of Secretary for the forthcoming year. Her duties will be maintaining minutes of committee meetings, book keeping and coordinating the Annual General Meeting.



**Svetlana Sammut**, is a mother of 2 girls, one of whom is on the spectrum. Svetlana runs her own hairdressing salon and brings along a can-do attitude to APA. Since joining APA she has assisted in a number of initiatives being mainly event coordination and fundraising activities.



**Carmen Abela**, is a mother of 2 children one of whom is a girl on the spectrum. Carmen is a fulltime house wife and during this year she has assisted APA in a number of initiatives, including event organisation, fundraising activities, and making herself available for anything else required by the committee.



#### **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**.



**Alishia Xuereb Jones** is a mother of 3 beautiful children - a daughter and old girl/boy twins. Her son is on the spectrum and is currently attending Applied Behaviour Therapy as well as OT and speech therapy.

She is a primary teacher and graduated in Early Childhood Education and Care. Before this, she worked as an LSA for 10years.



**Shana Woods**, is a beauty therapist by profession from Fgura. She is married to Howard Woods and has 2 children, one of whom has autism.

Shana decided to join the team as she and her family have been supported previously by APA and decided to give back some of my energy as thanks to the support group.

We would like to take this opportunity to officially THANK Maruska Dimech for the support and services rendered to our community. Regretfully Maruska will not form part of the APA Committee moving forward.



# Thank You

Autism Parents Association  
Annual General Meeting - 2018

Melita Gardens, Attard – 19<sup>th</sup> March 2018

