

# NEWS & VIEWS

Down Syndrome Association Malta

December 2014

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Newspaper Post



# The Association

Our Mission is to provide the means necessary to empower individuals who have Down syndrome to reach their full potential.

Our Vision is to become a model organisation that will not cease until every person who has Down syndrome is a valued member of society.

## SERVICES:

- Parental Support
- Aerobics, weekly
- Mass and Tombola, First Friday of month
- Social activities: three times yearly
- Talks and fora
- Christmas Party and Disco
- Book, audiotapes and video library
- "News & Views" magazine: yearly
- Members Newsletter

## MEMBERSHIP:

Full members:  
Annual: €2.50      Life: €25

Associate members:  
Annual: €5.00      Life: €35

## EDITORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS:

Esperjenzi, artikli u ittri mill-qarrejja għal dan il-magazin huma dejjem milqugħa.

Experiences, articles and letters from our readers to this magazine are always welcome.

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Founded 1981

Member of the



Federazzjoni Maltija tal-Organizzazzjonijiet  
Persuni b'Dizabilità (F.M.O.P.D.)

Associate Member of



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# Indirizz mill-President

Hbieb,

Jidher li huma hafna li ma jafux x'inhom *Supported Employment* u ghaliex huwa ta' beneficiċċju għal uliedna li għandhom *Down Syndrome*. Għalhekk iddecidejt li nuża l-indirizz tiegħi biex nispjega u ninfurmakom fir-rigward.



mill-pubbliku, li jagħmilha aktar diffiċli għall-individwi b'dizabilità biex jiksbu impjeg bi qligħ.

Fis-*Supported Employment* persuni b'dizabilità huma mgħejjuna biex isibu impjeg. Huma jkunu mgħejjuna u segwiti fil-proċess kollu – biex isibu x-xogħol, biex jittrenjaw għal

Żewġ mudelli li permezz tagħhom persuni b'dizabilità jsibu xogħol huma x-*Sheltered Employment* u s-*Supported Employment*. Fix-*Sheltered Employment* persuni b'dizabilità jaħdmu f'ambjent segregat, fejn il-ħaddiema huma kollha persuni b'dizabilità filwaqt li f'*Supported Employment* ix-xogħol isir f'ambjent mhux segregat bil-maġġoranza tal-ħaddiema jkunu mingħajr dizabilità.

dan ix-xogħol u l-aktar haġa importanti, biex iżommu x-xogħol. Is-*Supported Employment* huwa msejjes fuq il-kunċett filosofiku ta' awto-determinazzjoni. Hu bbażat fuq valuri ewlenin li jenfasizzaw id-dritt għax-xogħol, il-kapaċità biex iwettqu x-xogħol, saħħiet individwali, miri personali u l-għażliet u rwol tal-komunità fit-tkabbir u l-iżvilupp tal-persuna.

**L-impjeg jgħin jiddefenixxi post ta' individwu fil-komunità.** U hu għalhekk li rriċerkajt fuq dak li nemmen hafna fih u li qegħdin naħdmu hafna għalih biex f'Malta jkollna l-istruttura professjonali tas-*Supported Employment* biex tghin kemm lill-individwu jsib postu fid-dinja tax-xogħol u jżomm ix-xogħol kif ukoll tghin u tissapportja lil min iħaddem (*l-employer*) kull meta jkollu bżonn. L-ewwel għażla għandha dejjem tkun *Supported Employment* imbagħad, jekk għal xi raġuni u wara li nkunu ppruvajna dan il-mudell ma jaħdimx, imbagħad iva mmorru għax-*Sheltered Employment*. Imma m'għandniex naqtgħu qalb uliedna, jew aghar minn hekk, nagħmlu l-għażla għalihom mingħajr ma biss jippruvaw il-mudell tas-*Supported Employment*.

Nittama li din l-informazzjoni tkun ta' għajjnuna għalikom ġenituri u zghazagh b'dizabilità. Nawguralkom Milied hieni, sena mimlija paċi u suċċess!

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# Editorial



## NEWS&VIEWS

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Għaqda Down Syndrome Malta, darbtejn fis-sena u  
mqassma b'xejn.

## EDITORIAL BOARD

Patrick Umanah  
Marthese Mugliette  
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Views expressed in this magazine may not necessarily  
be those held by the Editor or by the Down Syndrome  
Association.

L-artikli u l-veduti miġjuba f'dan il-magażin mhux  
billfors juru l-opinjoni tal-Editur jew tal-Għaqda Down  
Syndrome.

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## FRONT COVER

Ritratti mid-*disco* tal-Karnival

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## Down Syndrome Association

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Whether you are a first time reader of our yearly published "News & Views" or a new family with a child who has "Down Syndrome" and seeking for first-hand information, please, follow us on our website: <http://www.dsa.org.mt> or on Facebook: Down Syndrome Association Malta.



Once we have determined the right options: for example- when choosing a target skill; the next stage or step is to find out whether the ideal result or success we had in mind is in fact achieved. Besides the level of success, there should be no way to underestimate the obstacles faced by our children but to be

sure that assistance and support is often available to them.

As a starting point, it is a known fact that a family with a child who has Down syndrome is faced with many worrying concerns and expectations. Yet, we do forget to acknowledge how children with Down syndrome have enriched the world in many areas such as: in sports (Special Olympics); different places of employment; T.V. Shows; music and drama. Thanks to hard work of the European Disability Forum (EDP), the yearly awareness and celebration of the World Down Syndrome Day in March. In the lights of these developments, the negative mentalities have changed and our children can interact productively with their non-labeled peers.

To us dear parents, there is always more to learn on different steps to independence of our children. This is why our Association has been organising different activities including talks and seminars on interesting topics/issues directly concerning our children, therefore, we are all invited to these activities.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you in advance in reading this "issue 41, December 2014" which has many interesting articles with highlights on activities offered and the calendar of events.

When it comes to our duties as parents, let us continue to upgrade the passage of this historic developments as perfect partners in the making of an independent future of our children by selecting and ensuring that the right options – educational, recreational, and vocational, will always be available to them.

I wish all readers a Happy Christmas and the Blessings of a Happy New Year 2015.

Mr. Patrick Umanah  
M.A, B.ED (HONS, B.A (HONS) B.A.

# Mistoqsijiet komuni dwar il-Kustodja

## X'inhil-Kustodja?

Il-Kustodja hija relazzjoni legali bejn persuna b'dizabilità jew diżordni mentali u persuna oħra msejjaħ/msejjaħa l-Kustodju. L-iskop tal-Kustodja huwa li tipprovdi appoġġ lill-persuni fil-ġestjoni tal-affarijiet tagħhom u tipprovdi protezzjoni tad-drittijiet u l-interessi tagħhom.

## X'inhil-Kustodju?

Il-Kustodju huwa persuna maħtura mill-Bord dwar il-Kustodja biex imexxi l-affarijiet ta' persuni oħra li mhumiex kapaċi jamministraw l-affarijiet tagħhom minħabba diżabilità jew diżordni mentali. Il-Kustodju jista' jingħata l-awtorità biex jamministra l-affarijiet personali u/jew finanzjarji. Jista' jkun hemm iktar minn Kustodju wieħed jirrapprezentaw persuna.

## X'jagħmel il-Kustodju?

Il-Kustodju jgħin lin-nies fit-tehid ta' deċiżjonijiet personali, finanzjarji u oħrajn relatati mas-saħħa jew l-istil tal-ħajja u jista' jaġixxi f'isem il-persuna sabiex jissalvagwardja l-interessi tiegħu/tagħha. L-ordnijiet ta' Kustodja jispeċifikaw l-oqsma li fihom l-Kustodju jista' jagħmel deċiżjonijiet.

## Min jista' jkollu Kustodju maħtur sabiex jamministra l-affarijiet tiegħu/ tagħha?

Il-liġi tippreżumi li adult ta' tmintax-il sena jew aktar huwa/hija kapaċi jamministra/ tamministra l-affarijiet tiegħu/tagħha. Il-Kustodju jista' jinħatar biex jgħin jew iservi ta' sostitut fid-deċiżjonijiet jekk persuna jkollha diżabilità jew diżordni mentali, li ma tħallihex tagħmel jew tikkomunika deċiżjonijiet responsabbli dwar l-affarijiet personali tagħha.

## Kif tista' persuna tapplika għall-Kustodja?

Persuna tista' tapplika għall-Kustodja billi timla formola ta' applikazzjoni li tista' tinkiseb mill-uffiċċju tar-Registatur tal-Bord dwar il-Kustodja.

## Min jista' jagħmel applikazzjoni għall-Kustodja?

Skont il-liġi (Artiklu 189(3) tal-Kodiċi Ċivili u Artiklu 521 tal-Kodiċi ta' Organizzazzjoni u Proċedura Ċivili), it-talba għall-Kustodja tista' ssir minn:

- kwalunkwe persuna b'diżabilità jew diżordni mentali li jixtieq li jkollha Kustodju maħtur
- konjuġi ta' persuni b'diżabilità jew diżordni mentali
- qraba ta' persuni b'diżabilità jew diżordni mentali
- l-Avukat Ġenerali, sakemm id-domanda ma ssir minn xi persuna oħra

## Min jista' jkun Kustodju?

Kustodju maħtur legalment irid:

- ikollu mill-inqas 18-il sena
- ikun residenti f'Malta
- ikun irid jaġixxi bħala Kustodju tal-persuna li dwarha ssir l-applikazzjoni
- ikun ippreparat biex jaġixxi fl-aħjar interessi tal-persuna fil-ħinijiet kollha u jinkoraġġixxi l-indipendenza tal-persuna, it-tehid ta' deċiżjonijiet personali u l-partecipazzjoni fil-ħajja komunitarja
- ma jkunx f'pożizzjoni fejn l-interessi tiegħu jkunu f'konflitt mal-aħjar interessi tal-persuna rappreżentata

Il-Kustodju jista' jkun membru tal-familja jew ħabib intimu.

## Kemm idum il-proċess tal-Kustodja?

Kull każ jibda jinstema' mhux aktar tard minn tletin (30) ġurnata minn meta jitressaq quddiem il-Bord. Deċiżjoni tittiehed fi żmien raġonevoli.

## Hemm xi ħlas dovut meta wieħed japplika għall-Kustodja?

Le; il-Bord dwar il-Kustodja ma jimponi l-ebda ħlas għall-applikazzjoni.

## Kemm idum ordni ta' Kustodja?

L-ordnijiet ta' Kustodja jiġu riveduti perjodikament mill-Bord u d-data ta' reviżjoni hija stipulata fl-ordni nnifisha.

L-ordni tista' tiġi riveduta qabel jekk xi ħadd b'interess fil-persuna rappreżentata

jagħmel applikazzjoni lill-Bord dwar il-Kustodja għal reviżjoni tal-ordni, jew jekk il-Kustodju:

- jmut
- japplikabiex jinħall mir-responsabbiltajiet miftehma
- m'għadux aktar kapaċi jonora r-responsabbiltajiet miftehma
- jinstab ħati ta' negliġenza jew imġiba ħażina u fil-fehma tal-Bord dwar il-Kustodja ma jkunx jisthoqqlu iktar li jaġixxi bħala Kustodju

Is-setgħat tal-Kustodju jieqfu mal-mewt tal-persuna rappreżentata.

## Lil min nista' nkellem jekk ikollu aktar mistoqsijiet dwar il-Kustodja?

Tista' tagħmel kuntatt mal-uffiċċju tar-Registatur tal-Bord dwar il-Kustodja billi ċċempel fuq 22568249 jew tibgħat email fl-indirizz [guardianship.mfss@gov.mt](mailto:guardianship.mfss@gov.mt).

## INVIT biex tirreġistra mal-Klinika tal-Adulti Down Syndrome

- Inti persuna li għandek id-*Down syndrome*?
- Għandek 'il fuq minn sittax-il sena?
- Trid li tiegħu ħsieb saħħtek?
- Trid min jgħinek u jiggwidak kif tiegħu ħsieb saħħtek matul ħajtek kollha?

Jekk it-twegħiba tiegħek għal dawn il-mistoqsijiet hija **iva**, u/jew jekk int ġenitur u jew *carer* ta' tali persuna, l-Assoċjazzjoni *Down Syndrome* tteġġigkom biex jekk għadkom ma rreġistrajtux biex tibbenefikaw mill-Klinika għall-Adulti *Down Syndrome*, tagħmlu dan minnufih.

Għal aktar informazzjoni ġentilment ċempel fuq 21494960/1 u staqsi għan-*nurse* tal-klinika Ms Josette Camilleri jew ibgħat *e-mail* fuq [dsc.phc@gov.mt](mailto:dsc.phc@gov.mt).

Dan is-servizz huwa għall-Maltin u għall-Għawdxin u huwa b'xejn.

Dan is-servizz jingħata kull nhar ta' Sibb, bl-appuntament, miċ-Ċentru tas-Saħħa ta' Birkirkara.

# Guardianship – Frequently Asked Questions

## What is Guardianship?

Guardianship is a legal relationship between a person who has a disability or a mental disorder and another person called the Guardian. The purpose of Guardianship is to provide support to the person in managing their own affairs and to advocate for their rights and best interests.

## What is a Guardian?

A Guardian is a person who is appointed by the Guardianship Board to manage the affairs of another person who is not capable of managing their affairs due to disability or mental disorder. The Guardian may be given the authority to manage personal and/or financial matters. There may be more than one Guardian representing a person.

## What does a Guardian do?

Guardians assist people in making personal, lifestyle, financial and health-related decisions and may act on behalf of the person in order to safeguard their interests. Guardianship orders specify the areas in which the Guardian can make decisions.

## Who may have a Guardian appointed to manage his/her affairs?

The law presumes that an adult eighteen years of age or older is capable of handling his/her own affairs. A Guardian may be appointed to help or serve as a substitute decision-maker if a person has a disability or mental disorder, such that it prevents the adult from making or communicating responsible decisions about their personal affairs.

## How does a person apply for Guardianship?

A person applies for Guardianship by filling in an application form that can be obtained from the office of the Registrar of the Guardianship Board.

## Who may file an application for Guardianship?

According to law (Article 189(3) of the Civil Code and Article 521 of the Code of Organization and Civil Procedure), the request for Guardianship can be made by:

- any person with a disability or mental disorder who wishes to have a Guardian appointed
- spouses of persons with disability or mental disorder
- relatives of persons with disability or mental disorder
- the Attorney General, unless the demand is made by any other person

## Who may act as a Guardian?

A legally appointed Guardian must:

- be at least 18 years of age
- be resident in Malta
- consent to act as Guardian to the person about whom the application is being made
- be prepared to act in the person's best interests at all times and encourage the person's independence, personal decision-making and participation in community life
- not be in a position where their own interests conflict with the best interests of the represented person

A Guardian can be a family member or close friend.

## How long does the Guardianship process take?

Every case shall be heard not later than thirty (30) days commencing on the day it is filed before the Board. A decision will be taken within a reasonable time.

## Are there any fees when applying for Guardianship?

No; the Guardianship Board does not charge any fees for applications.

## How long does a Guardianship order last?

All Guardianship orders are periodically reviewed by the Guardianship Board and the review date is stipulated in the order itself.

A review may be conducted sooner if someone with an interest in the represented

person applies to the Guardianship Board for a review of the order, or if the Guardian:

- dies
- applies to be discharged from the agreed responsibilities
- is no longer able to fulfill the agreed responsibilities
- is found guilty of neglect or misconduct which in the Guardianship Board's view, makes them no longer appropriate to act as Guardian

The powers of a Guardian cease upon the death of the person they represent.

## Who can I contact if I have more questions about Guardianship?

The office of the Registrar of the Guardianship Board may be contacted on telephone number: 22568249 or by email at [guardianship.mfss@gov.mt](mailto:guardianship.mfss@gov.mt).

## INVITATION to register with the Adult Down Syndrome Clinic

- Are you a person who has Down syndrome?
- Are you over 16 years of age?
- Do you wish to take care of your health?
- Do you wish to be helped and guided to take care of your health throughout your life?

If you have answered yes to all these questions and have not yet registered with this clinic, and/or you are a parent / carer of such a person, the Down Syndrome Association urges you to immediately register with the Adult Down Syndrome Clinic to benefit from the services.

For more information kindly call 21494960/1 and ask for the nurse clinic, Ms Josette Camilleri or send an e-mail on [dsc.phc@gov.mt](mailto:dsc.phc@gov.mt).

This service is for both Maltese and Gozitan persons and is free of charge. This service is being offered every Saturday by appointment from the Birkirkara Health Centre.

# Disability Children's Allowance

Membru tal-familja taht is-sittax-il sena li għandu diżabilità taht Artiklu 77 tal-liġi tas-Sigurtà Soċjali jikkwalifika għall-benefiċċju msemmi, bir-rata fissa ta' 20 ewro fil-ġimgħa. Il-ġenituri jridu jagħmlu t-talba fuq formola apposta li tkun mimlija, sew minnhom kif ukoll minn persuna medika li tiċċertifika li dan il-membru tal-familja jkun qed ibati minn diżabilità msemmija fl-istess liġi. Jekk persuna tkunx eliġibbli jiġi deċiż minn Bord Mediku mahtur apposta. Dan il-benefiċċju mhux *means tested*, u jingħata sa mal-persuna tagħlaq is-sittax jew kif jiddeċiedi l-Panel Mediku li jassessja l-każ.

## Pensjoni għall-Persuni b'Diżabilità

Malli l-istess membru tal-familja jagħlaq is-sittax (jew l-erbatax-il sena fil-każ ta' persuni b'vista batuta), tkun trid issir applikazzjoni għall-Pensjoni tad-Diżabilità. Diżabilità tista' tkun sew intellettuali kif ukoll fiżika. Persuni nieqsa mid-dawl ukoll ikunu intitolati għal din il-Pensjoni.

Għal din il-Pensjoni jrid isir it-test tal-mezzi u għalhekk meta l-persuna jew l-amministratur tagħha japplika fl-Uffiċċju Distrettwali, se jiġi mitlub jiddikjara l-assi u id-dhul tal-persuna li qed tapplika. Tajjeb jingħad illi f'dawn l-erba' kelmiet ma nistax niġbor spjegazzjoni sħiħa tat-test tal-mezzi għaliex skont l-istat tal-persuna, japplikaw kriterji differenti. Għalhekk ikun għaqli li l-persuna jew l-amministratur javviċina l-manager tad-distrett għall-parir personalizzat.

Sal-aħħar tas-sena 2014 persuna li tirċievi l-Pensjoni tad-Diżabilità tista' taħdem u d-Dipartiment jikkunsidra biss l-eċċess 'il fuq mill-paga minima nazzjonali (165.68 euro). Mill-bidu tas-sena 2015, skont miżura fil-baġit tal-istess sena, persuna tibqa' tirċievi l-pensjoni sħiħa irrISPETTIVAMENT minn kemm taqla' paga. Fil-każ ta' koppja miżżewġa, id-dipartiment jikkunsidra biss id-dhul tal-persuna b'diżabilità u jinjora d-dhul tal-konjugi.

L-applikazzjonijiet għal din il-pensjoni jinkisbu mill-Uffiċċini Distrettwali kollha kif ukoll jistgħu jitnizzlu minn fuq il-Website tad-Dipartiment jiġifieri [www.socialsecurity.gov.mt](http://www.socialsecurity.gov.mt). Persuna tista' wkoll iċċempel u ssaqsi għall-informazzjoni lil SPIC (Social Policy Information Centre) fuq numru 159.

Is-Sur Raymond Chetcuti  
Direttur  
Dipartiment tas-Sigurtà Soċjali

# Nitgħallmu l-Kompjuter... b'mod differenti

Għal dawk fostna li ġieli għamlu użu mill-Facebook, jaf mhux darba jew tnejn li Itqajna mal-cartoon li jipprova jispjega s-sistema edukattiva fl-iskejjel tagħna. Hafna mid-drabi fi skejjel *mainstream* ikun hemm sillabu rigidu li l-għalliema jridu jsegwu biex fl-aħħar tas-sena skolastika l-istudenti jkunu jistgħu jagħmlu l-istess eżami li jiddetermina jekk l-istudenti humiex 'tajba' jew le fis-sugġett. Però, kif jgħid tajjeb l-ixjentist Albert Einstein, ma tistax tgħid li ħuta mhix intelligenti biżżejjed sempliciment għax ma tafx titla' siġra. U l-istess japplika għall-istudenti fl-iskejjel tagħna.

Kull student għandu abiltajiet u potenzjal differenti. Huwa għalhekk li waqt il-

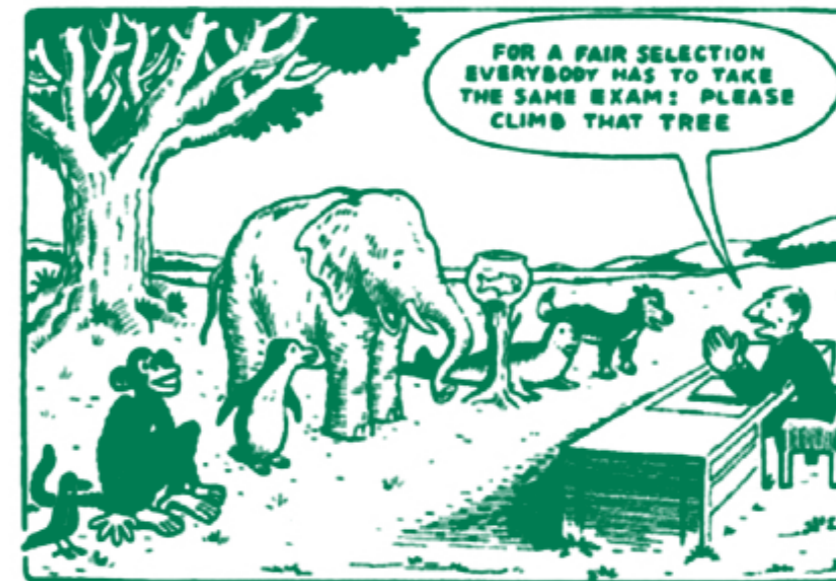


lezzjonijiet tal-Computer li nieħu ħsieb ġewwa d-Down Syndrome Association, nipprova li kemm jista' jkun immexxi kull student bil-pass tiegħu. Fl-ewwel lezzjoni nieħu idea tal-livell tal-istudent fl-użu tal-kompjuter u nagħmel mezz li waqt il-lezzjonijiet ta' wara naħdem biex nieħdu għal-livell li jmiss. Hemm min jgħaġġel biex javvanza 'l quddiem u hemm xi wħud oħra li jimxu

daqsxajn iktar bil-mod. L-importanti mhux fejn jasl u imma li jtejb u l-ħiliet tagħhom. Fil-fatt fl-istess klassi jkun hemm studenti li ma jafux jaqraw u studenti li huma pjuttost avvanzati fl-użu tat-teknoloġija. Biex dan il-metodu jkun tassew effettiv, il-klassijiet jinżammu kemm jista' jkun żgħar u hekk ikun hemm ċans li kull student jingħata l-attenzjoni individwali li għandu bżonn.

Ma nistax ngħid li tkun dejjem faċli li tmexxi klassi b'dan il-mod, però nista' ngħid b'ċertezza li huwa l-iktar mod ġust u effettiv kif dawn l-istudenti b'abiltajiet differenti jkunu jistgħu jtejb u lilhom infushom fil-qasam tal-informatika.

Roberta Farrugia



## Our Education System

*"Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid."*

- Albert Einstein

# Mill-Kalendarju tal-Assoċjazzjoni



Il-grupp ta' kitarristi mmexxi minn Ms Runza waqt il-quddiesa tal-Jum Dinji tad-Down Syndrome.



Il-grupp tar-Radio Valo (bidu sena 2014) mal-Acting President, Sinjura Maria Dolores Cristina.



Membri tal-Għaqda taghna waqt l-attività li saret fil-Belt Valletta l-okkażjoni tal-wasla tal-Journey of Hope.



Okkażjoni oħra wara l-quddiesa tal-ewwel ġimgħa tax-xahar.



Il-grupp tar-Radio Valo, il-ġenituri taghnom u mistednin oħra fil-laqgħa li kellhom mal-E.T. Dr G Abela, President ta' Malta.



Il-harġa għall-iSplash & Fun.



Patri Żaren mill-Knisja ta' Santu Wistin, Valletta flimkien ma' min kien prezenti għall-quddiesa.



Uhud mill-membri taghna prezenti għat-training li kellhom ma' coaches tal-Liverpool FC.



Il-President tal-Assoċjazzjoni flimkien ma' membri tal-Għaqda mal-wasla tal-vapur Journey of Hope.



Is-Sotto Kumitat u membri taghna waqt l-NGO Stand.



Waqt l-ikla li saret fil-Jum Dinji tad-Down Syndrome.



Waqt il-lezzjoni tal-Aerobic.



It-tberik taċ-Ċentru taghna fil-Belt Valletta.



L-atmosfera waqt l-ikla tal-Milied.



Waqt il-quddies f' Jum Dinji tad-Down Syndrome.

## Journey of Hope



On Monday 16<sup>th</sup> June, Kuwait's "Journey of Hope" boat docked at the port of Malta's capital city of Valletta. This visit was part of its 19-country tour aiming to deliver a message to the world for benefit of persons with intellectual disability.

The idea of the 'Journey of Hope' was conceived by a group of parents with successful experiences dealing with their children who have learning disabilities.



The team on board were warmly received by Kuwait Ambassador to Malta H.E. Faisal Sulaiman AlMusaileem, the diplomatic staff of the embassy, Military Attache in Paris Dhari Bouresly, coordinator of backup and support Homoud Al-Shemmeri and representative of the executive board of the mission Khaled Al-Athari as well as by the Down Syndrome Association Malta.

The Down Syndrome Association was represented by the President of the Association Ms Marthese Mugliette, Ms Helen Mifsud, Ms Gayle Mugliette and Ms Maria Mifsud. Our representatives were welcomed on board the boat and showed around it. The President, together with H.E. the Ambassador of Kuwait, signed the visitors' book and left a message on behalf of the Association.

This was a great and unique experience for our representatives. The Down Syndrome Association is glad to have accepted the invitation for this marvellous event. The Association was also invited, and attended the event held on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> June at St George Square, Valletta which event was also attended by H.E. Ms Marie Louise Coleiro Preca, President of Malta.

It was a great pleasure for the Down Syndrome Association to meet and make new friends through the 'Journey of Hope'.

**Marthese Mugliette**  
*President*

## Ringrazzjamenti

Lill-KMPG li ta' kull sena jivverifikaw il-kotba u l-kontijiet finanzjarji.

Lit-Times of Malta li tirriklama b'xejn l-Assoċjazzjoni tagħna.

Lis-Sinjuri Mary Runza u Jessica Curmi u lill-grupp kollu għall-għajnuna u s-sapport kontinwu tagħhom. Fiż-żmien tal-Milied dawn ġentilment jieħdu hsieb jagħmlu *fundraising* għall-Assoċjazzjoni tagħna.

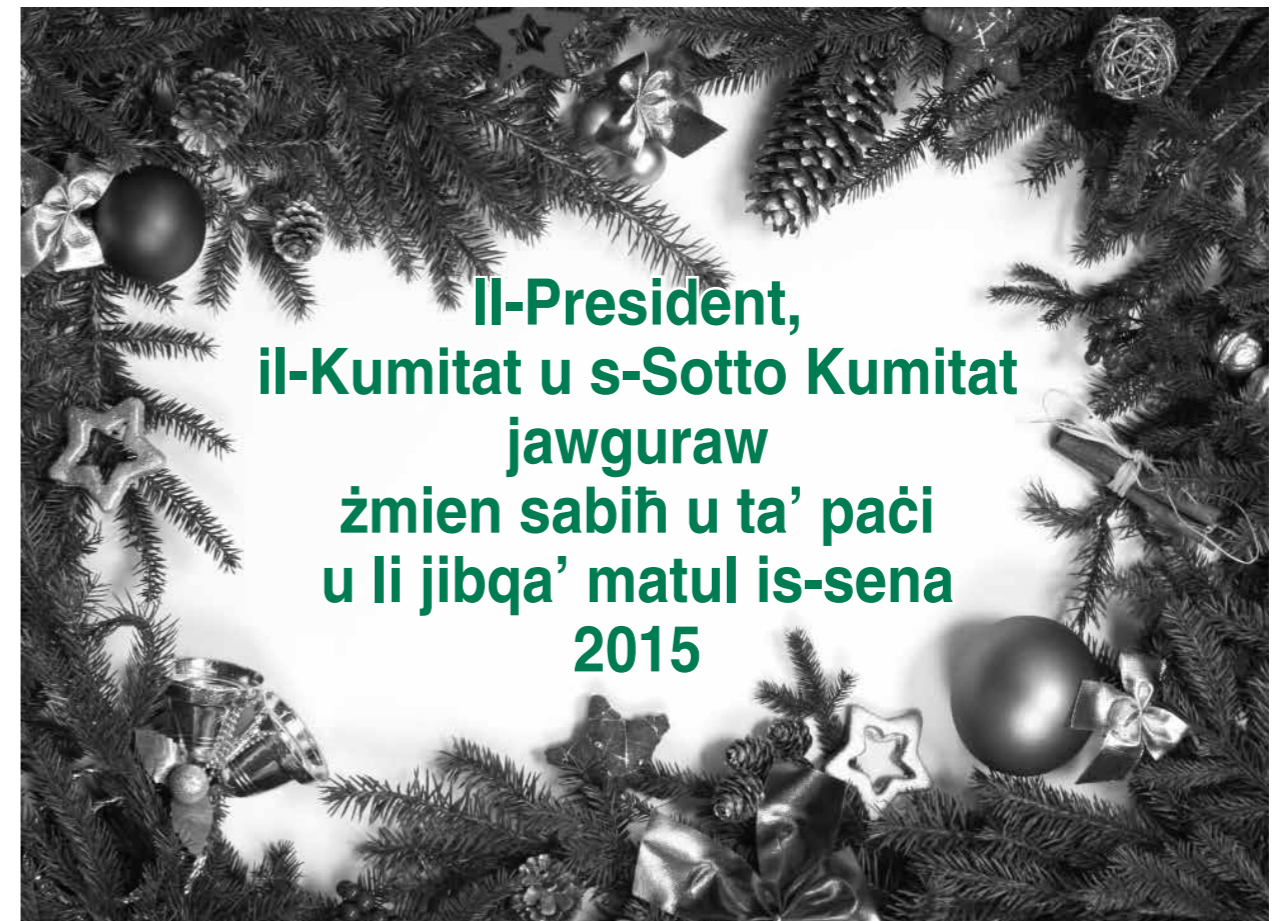
Lill-Kumitat Qlub Ġenerużi fi ħdan il-Kumpanija Trelleborg Sealing Solutions Malta għall-għotja finanzjarja tagħhom

Lill-Middlesea Valletta Life Assurance Company Ltd li anke din is-sena komplet tagħtina l-appoġġ permezz ta' hlas ta' polza tal-assigurazzjoni tagħna.

Lill-Commanderjay Music Entertainment għas-servizz li dejjem jagħtuna kull u meta jkollna bżonn mingħajr hlas.

Lis-Sinjuri Marysa Portelli, Charmaine Scerri, Natasha Aquilina u s-Sur Conrad u lill Chev Charles Deguara għad-donazzjoni finanzjarja tagħhom.

Lill-Gaba Gioielli Ltd għall-għajnuna finanzjarja tagħhom.



**Il-President,  
il-Kumitat u s-Sotto Kumitat  
jawguraw  
żmien sabiħ u ta' paċi  
u li jibqa' matul is-sena  
2015**



## II-Grupp Radio Valo Malta

Aħna t-*Team* Radio Valo – Gayle Mugliette, Maria Gauci, Maria Mifsud, Rosalie Bonello u Thomas Buttigieg. Niltaqghu kull nhar t'Erbgħa mill-5.00pm sas-6.00pm fiċ-Ċentru tagħna, il-Belt Valletta.

Ir-Radio Valo *Team* ilu mwaqqaf madwar sena u nofs u jieqaf jiltaqa' matul il-vaganzi tas-sajf. Kulma jsir u niddeċiedu naghmluh bhala *Team* – kollha flimkien. Eżempju ta' dan hemm il-videos ta' Kemmuna u wkoll ta' San Anton. Aħna nieħdu r-ritratti u naghmluhom f'videos. Nixtiequ wkoll li nieħdu sehem fl-attivitajiet Valletta 2018.

X'qal kull membru tar-Radio Valo Malta:

**Gayle:** Jien ilni mal-grupp mill-bidu nett. Nieħu gost nikkomunika ma' ħbiebi tal-grupp u ngħinu lil xulxin.

**Maria Gauci:** Jien ukoll ilni mal-grupp mill-bidu nett u l-fatt li niġi hawn waħdi jgħini nkun indipendenti.

**Maria Mifsud:** Jien ukoll ilni mal-grupp mill-bidu nett u nieħu gost nitghallem u ngħid l-opinjoni tiegħi ma' shabi.

**Rosalie:** Jien m'lnix fil-grupp – minn wara s-sajf 2014. Nieħu gost għax nista' nitkellem u ngħid dak li jkolli f'moħħi.

**Thomas:** Jiena wkoll bdejt ma' Rosalie. U jogħgobni għax jiena parti minn *Team*.

U x'ikomplu jgħidulna:

Dan it-term għandna lil Valentina, li hija tfajla Taljana simpatika ħafna li bdiet tiġi magħna biex tgħinna fil-laqgħat tagħna



tar-Radio Valo. Aħna t-*Team* kuntenti ħafna b'Valentina għaliex minkejja li mhijiex Maltija, hija xorta waħda qiegħda tiġi kull ġimgħa tgħinna fil-laqgħat. Kienet l-għażla u x-xewqa tagħna stess li tiġi magħna u ta' dan aħna kuntenti u kburin ħafna.

Aħna nixtiequ nkomplu naħdmu flimkien bhala *Team* tar-Radio Valo ħalli nkunu nistgħu nieħdu sehem fil-Valletta 2018. Barra minn hekk qegħdin nitgħallmu u naghmlu ħafna affarijiet godda.

Aħna nisperaw li l-Kumitat tal-Valletta 2018 jaċċetta li aħna nkunu parti mill-attivitajiet tal-Valletta 2018.

## Is-Sotto Kumitat għall-Attivitajiet

Fl-ewwel laqgħa tal-Kumitat tal-ġdid li ġie elett fl-aħħar Laqgħa Ġenerali Annwali, ġie deċiż li jinholq sotto Kumitat għall-attivitajiet u dan peress li għas-sentejn li ġejjin jiena ħadt il-kariga ta' Viċi President tal-Għaqda tagħna.

B'din il-kariga l-ġdida tiegħi, inholq post vakanti għal min jieħu ħsieb l-attivitajiet. Dan il-post huwa ferm importanti għaliex huwa permezz ta' dan l-irwol li l-Għaqda tagħna tkun tista' torganizza u toffrilkom attivitajiet matul is-sena kollha.

Din is-sena ddeċidejna li noħolqu sotto Kumitat u dan biex ikun hemm aktar għajnuna u ideat godda ħalli kemm jista' jkun nakkomodaw lil kulhadd. Is-Sinjura Debbie Borg, bhala membru tal-Kumitat, ħadet ir-responsabilità li twaqqaf u tmexxi dan is-sotto Kumitat għall-attivitajiet tal-Għaqda. Peress li kont ilni snin twal norganizza l-attivitajiet fi ħdan l-Għaqda, jien aċċettajt li ngħin ukoll fi ħdan dan is-sotto Kumitat.

Is-sotto Kumitat għall-attivitajiet huwa magħmul mis-Sinjura Debbie Borg bhala Chairperson u s-Sinjura Esther Gauci, Jane Bonello, Patrick Umanah, Rita Fenech, Victoria Agius u jiena bhala l-membri tas-sotto Kumitat.

L-ewwel ħaġa li ħdimna fuqha kien it-fassil ta' kalendarju bl-attivitajiet li nixtiequ norganizzaw matul is-sena li ġejja. Ħdimna

fuq li ħdimna u ddiskutejna ħafna flimkien, mal-Kumitat u anke magħkom biex ħadna l-*feedback* ta' x'nixtiequ li l-Għaqda tagħna torganizza għalina lkoll. Fl-aħħar irnaxxilna noħorgu bil-kalendarju tal-attivitajiet li se jsiru matul is-sena 2015 għalina lkoll. Dan il-kalendarju diġà ġie ċċirkolat magħkom ilkoll.

Nittama ħafna u nitlobkom biex turu interess f'dak li qiegħda tagħmel l-Għaqda tagħna u tattendu bi ħgarkom għal dak kollu li fuq bażi volontarju qiegħda torganizza l-Għaqda. Inhegġgikom biex tnizzlu l-informazzjoni mibgħutha fil-kalendarji tagħkom biex tkunu tafu bil-quddiem liema dati tħallu liberi ħalli tingħaqdu magħna. Jekk forsi qabel inqasna għaliex forsi ma kienx ikollkom ħin biżżejjed bil-quddiem biex iżżommu l-ġurnata libera, nitlobkom tiskużawna. Issa żgur li mhuwiex il-każ!

Nawgura ħafna li l-kalendarju tal-attivitajiet jintlaqa' tajjeb ħafna minnkoll ilkoll u nappellalkom taċċettaw l-istedina tagħna għal kull attività. Min għal xi raġuni ma rċevix il-kalendarju msemmi jew tixtiequ titolbu aktar informazzjoni jew tgħaddu s-suġġerimenti tagħkom, tistgħu tagħmlu dan billi ċċempluli fuq 79521137 jew tibagħtu email fuq [esthergauci@hotmail.com](mailto:esthergauci@hotmail.com).

**Pio Fenech**  
**Viċi President**

# Neck Instability

**Parents and those supporting people with Down syndrome to take part in sporting activities sometimes contact the DSA and DSMIG because they have heard that people with Down's syndrome can have problems with neck instability. This issue has caused some confusion and controversy over the years. Although it can potentially be a serious problem, this is rare and most people will have mild symptoms before dislocation occurs.**

This article provides information to help parents and professionals to make informed judgements about risk and most important of all to recognize new, early warning signs that need further medical assessment. There must be a balance between encouraging people with Down syndrome to take part in and enjoy exercise whilst identifying those few individuals who may be at increased risk for dislocation so that timely investigation and if necessary, surgical intervention can be considered.

## **What is Neck instability?**

In people with Down syndrome the ligaments which stabilise the joints tend to be abnormally lax and this, combined with low muscle tone, results in an unusually wide range of movement at some joints. As well as affecting the ordinary limb joints, for instance hips and ankles, laxity can also affect the complex set of joints between the head and upper neck vertebrae. One of the functions of the vertebrae in the spine is to protect the spinal cord, a thick bundle of nerves, which runs inside the spine from the base of the brain to the pelvis. The main concern about neck instability is that this increases the risk of spinal cord damage, especially if vertebrae get misaligned.

This is sometimes referred to as atlantoaxial

instability or AAI to reflect the excessive movement which allows the top neck vertebra / first cervical vertebra or atlas, to slip forward over the second cervical vertebra, the axis, which has a central peg that is well placed to damage the spinal cord.

Instability and movement can also occur between the skull and first cervical vertebra so the terms neck instability, craniovertebral instability (CVI) or cervical spine instability (CSI) are now more commonly used.

## **Can routine neck X-rays help predict risk in those with no symptoms?**

Neck X-ray before taking part in vigorous activity has been recommended in the past (and still is in parts of the world and by Special Olympics for some sports). This advice was changed in UK in 1995 when research concluded that neck X-rays did not reliably predict risk to the spinal cord. Neck X-rays from the same person with Down syndrome at different times can score differently, very few of the people with X-ray evidence of neck instability ever develop any symptoms of spinal cord damage, and a normal X-ray does not mean problems due to spinal cord damage could not develop.

## **What problems can be caused by neck instability?**

Damage to the spinal cord in the neck can happen to anyone with or without Down syndrome, and can cause a range of problems from mild pain or a stiff neck to paralysis in extreme cases. This can either happen suddenly as a result of a sudden shift within the joint (for example whiplash causing dislocation), or more gradually because of day-to-day pressure on the spinal cord as the neck moves. Gradual onset of symptoms due to long

term instability or degenerative arthritic changes is more common in adults with Down syndrome.

## **What to look out for**

Fortunately most people have mild warning symptoms of problems in the upper spine before dislocation and long term damage occurs. It is therefore important that ALL carers and professionals working with people with Down syndrome are educated about warning signs of neck instability so that preventative action can be taken.

If someone you care for is showing any of these signs, they may have a problem with neck instability and should be seen urgently by a doctor:

- Pain anywhere along the neck.
- A stiff neck with doesn't get better quickly.
- Unusual head posture ("wry neck" or torticollis).
- Alteration in the way a person walks so they may appear unsteady.
- Deterioration in a person's ability to manipulate things with his/her hands.
- Incontinence developing in a person who has previously had no problems.

If the onset of symptoms is sudden an emergency appointment is needed. If there is no obvious alternative explanation for these symptoms they may be related to neck instability causing nerve damage, and an X-ray and specialist referral to either an expert orthopaedic surgeon or a spinal neuro-surgeon may need to be arranged.

## **What treatment is available?**

If significant instability or dislocation is confirmed, and is thought to be causing problems, an operation can be done to stabilise the upper part of the spinal column and decompress any trapped nerves. The

operation is delicate and is not without risk, particularly in younger children. Surgery should be performed at a specialist centre by an experienced specialist in this field. In experienced hands increasingly good outcomes are being reported. In the past there was a high rate of failure to achieve long lasting spinal fusion, however with contemporary techniques fusion is achieved in over 90% of cases.

Some children with neck instability require a period of traction to realign the joints and reduce pressure on the spinal cord before proceeding to surgical fusion. Keeping the bones immobilized after surgery whilst they heal can be difficult in children and so surgeons may use a "halo-body jacket" to provide external support for the neck for a few weeks after surgery.

## **Should people with Down syndrome be restricted from taking part in some sports?**

The vast majority of people with Down syndrome do not have symptoms of neck instability and the question then is whether they should be excluded from certain activities which are associated with increased risk of neck injury?

It is clear that the very few neck injuries which have been recorded in people with Down syndrome whilst taking part in sporting activities were usually caused by tripping up or falling over, rather than by the sporting activity itself. In fact the injuries recorded would have been just as likely to occur in an ordinary person as a result of a similar fall or accident.

Increased exercise and fitness may increase muscle strength in the neck and be protective. On the other hand people with Down syndrome may be more at risk

# Diskors Amministrattiv tas-Segretarju Ġenerali Laqgħa Ġenerali Annwali – 9 ta' Mejju 2014

in some activities because they tend to be less well coordinated. These factors may well balance each other out. Therefore there should be no justification for special anxiety when people with Down syndrome are taking part in everyday routine sporting activities. There is no evidence that jumping on a mini-trampoline, early stages of horse riding or simple nursery forward rolls is any more risky for a child with Down syndrome than any of her peers.

However higher level sports such as trampolining, diving and boxing do carry an element of risk for anyone, not just for people with Down syndrome, and for those with Down syndrome simple pre-sport screening is advisable.

The British Gymnastics Association has developed a simple screening protocol for those with Down syndrome who want to take part in trampolining and other higher level gymnastics. This involves ensuring the person has good head control, full neck movement (able to “look up to the ceiling and down to floor to tie their shoes”) and has no evidence of spinal nerve damage or any of the above listed warning signs (download from [www.british-gymnastics.org](http://www.british-gymnastics.org) – Atlanto-Axial Information Pack). Very few have failed this screen and been excluded from sports at this level and it is encouraging to know that of the 400 or so people with Down syndrome who have passed this screen no neck injuries have been sustained whilst taking part in gymnastics even at a very high level of performance.

## What advice can be given about other activities which have increased risk of neck injury?

It is possible that because of a tendency to instability in the neck region people with

Down syndrome may have an increased risk of whip-lash injury following road traffic accidents. We are not sure about this, but at the moment it seems sensible to recommend that property positioned head-rests are always in place when a person with Down syndrome is travelling. Similarly, after a road traffic accident it is important to alert anyone involved at the scene to the fact that a person with Down syndrome may be more likely to have sustained a neck injury than another person.

Another point to be aware of is that doctors will need to take special care about positioning the neck during surgery requiring a general anaesthetic. There is virtually no risk of injury if the anaesthetist and recovery room staff are alerted beforehand to the fact that the person has Down syndrome.

Further references and information can be found in the Guidelines section at [www.dsmig.org.uk](http://www.dsmig.org.uk) – Information resources/ Cervical Spine Disorders and in DSA Health Booklet on Neck instability available to download at [www.downs-syndrome.org.uk](http://www.downs-syndrome.org.uk)

**Pat Charleton, MB ChB, MRCPCH, MRCPG. Pat is Chair of DSMIG (UK) and Associate Specialist Paediatrician and Clinical Lead for Down's Syndrome, Department of Community Child Health, Royal Aberdeen Children's Hospital.**

## Reference

Journal 130 Autumn/Winter 2014

Għaddew sentejn mill-ħatra ta' dan il-Kumitat. Dan ifisser li t-terminu tal-Kumitat preżenti wasal fl-aħħar. Dan ifisser ukoll li l-Għaqda qed terġa' tistieden lill-membri kollha biex ikunu aktar attivi u jieħdu aktar interess f'dak kollu li qiegħed isir biex naraw l-Għaqda timxi aktar 'il quddiem għall-benefiċċju ta' kulhadd.

Waqf din l-laqgħa se jrin nisimgħu dettalji tal-hidma li saret is-sena li għaddiet u l-qagħda finanzjarja tal-Għaqda, barra li nivvutaw għall-membri ġodda biex jieħdu posthom fil-kumitat. Forsi naraw uċuh ġodda fil-kumitat li jkunu f'pożizzjoni li jikkontribwixxu ideat ġodda ta' ċertu valur għall-avvanz tal-Għaqda u gwadan għat-tfal tagħna li għandhom Down syndrome.

Inkunu qed nonqsu jekk ma nappellawx lill-membri preżenti u anki dawk li mhumiex, biex ħadd ma jibqa' lura milli jressaq xi sugġerimenti jew problemi li jolqtu lill-persuni Down syndrome u li jhossu li l-kumitat jista' jaħdem fuqhom.

## E-mail addresses

Il-Kumitat kien nieda kampanja biex jaġġorna d-data base tal-Għaqda billi jiġbor, fejn kien possibli, l-e-mail addresses tal-membri. Dan ikun utli ħafna għall-Għaqda biex tkun f'pożizzjoni li tista' tikkommunika fl-iqsar żmien possibli mal-membri b'xi talba jew informazzjoni li tkun ta' interess għal kull wieħed u waħda minna. Dan il-proċess għadu għaddej. Nitolbu l-kooperazzjoni tal-membri kollha biex naraw din id-'data' miġbura u l-proċess konkluz. L-informazzjoni miġbura sal-lum qiegħda tiġi aġġornata fid-'data base' tal-Għaqda minn tliet membri volontiera Stephanie Camilleri, Maria Gauci, u Maria Mifsud taħt il-gwida ta' Ms Esther Gauci u Gino Galea.

## Youth in Action Programme - Radio Valo

L-Għaqda tagħna daħlet fi proġett ma' Lyhty mill-Fillandja. Żewġ membri tagħna Gayle Mugliette u Maria Mifsud kienu ġew akkumpanjati ġewwa l-Fillandja f'April 2013 għal għaxart ijiem ta' taħriġ. Permezz ta' dawn iż-żewġ membri, l-Għaqda bdiet timplimenta dan il-proġett mal-membri. Illum hemm sitt membri tal-Għaqda li jiffurmaw parti mill-grupp li qiegħdin jiltaqgħu għal taħriġ u hidma f'dan il-proġett. Preżentament il-membri qiegħdin jiltaqgħu fiċ-Ċentru tal-Għaqda u qiegħed isir ħafna xogħol biex il-membri tagħna jibbenefikaw minn dan il-proġett.

Wara li sar l-ewwel video minn dawn iż-żgħażaġh, ġie muri lill-membri tal-Għaqda, lill-kumitat u lill-familjari fil-ftuħ uffiċjali ta' Radju Valo Malta. L-Eċċellenza Tiegħu l-President ta' Malta Ġorg Abela attenda dan l-avveniment. Grazi għall-għajnuna li kellna mingħand il-MEUSAC u l-EUPA, l-Għaqda ġiet mgħejjuna finanzjarjament biex tixtri tagħmir għal dan il-proġett.

L-għan finali huwa li l-partecipanti jittgħallmu jittkellmu għalihom nfushom u dwarhom infushom permezz ta' stazzjonijiet ġurnalistiċi u attivitajiet għall-membri tagħna simili kif hemm fil-Finlandja.

## Klinika tal-Adulti

Wara snin ta' laqgħat u ħafna pressjoni, dan is-servizz ġie varat uffiċjalment il-Ħamis 23 ta' Frar 2012 u beda jopera s-Sibt 11 t'Awwissu 2012. Din il-Klinika qed taħdem kull nhar ta' Sibt mill-Poliklinika ta' Birkirkara għall-benefiċċju tal-persuni kollha Down syndrome. L-iskop ewlieni tal-klinika hu li jsir screening mediku lil kull individwu Down syndrome mill-età ta' 16-il sena 'l fuq, fuq bażi annwali jew aktar spiss, skont il-bżonn tal-individwu. Għan ieħor

hu li l-bżonnijiet tal-ġenituri u tal-*carers* ikunu identifikati u jingħata s-sapport meħtieġ. Il-Klinika qed tidhol ukoll fuq aspetti soċjali tal-klijent Down syndrome u qed iniedu sensiela ta' attivitajiet edukattivi fuq is-saħħa u l-iġene u dieta għall-familji u membri Down syndrome. It-tabiba Dr. Dorothy Zammit u t-*team* ta' nurses tal-klinika qed jagħtu servizz professjonali u b'dedikazzjoni. Il-*feedback* mill-ġenituri li jibbenifikaw minn dan is-servizz baqa' inkoraġġanti. Il-moniterazzjoni ta' wliedna hu ferm importanti u ta' benefiċċju. Għalhekk inheggu lil dawk kollha li għandhom persuni Down syndrome fil-familji biex ma jonqsux milli jagħmlu użu mill-program. Irridu naraw il-Klinika tilhaq l-għanijiet ta' kull wieħed u waħda minna, li nserrhu rasna li saħħet uliedna ser tibqa' tiġi segwita matul haġġithom kollha biex jekk ikun hemm bidu ta' problemi jinqabdu minn kmieni halli b'hekk nikkurawhom bla telf ta' żmien.

### **MAGAZINE**

L-magażin, b'determinazzjoni kbira, joħroġ darba fis-sena għall-habta tal-aħħar tas-sena. Nixtieq infakkar fil-bżonn kbir li jeżisti biex nirċievu xi esperjenzi, ritratti u jew xi artikli sabiex jiġu ppubblikati fil-magażin. Jekk ikollkom bżonn ta' xi għajnuna, il-membri tal-kumitat ikunu lesti jgħinukom b'xi kitba u jew intervista - jekk hemm bżonn, fid-dar tagħkom stess.

Il-magażin jiġi stampat darba fis-sena u għal kull ħarġa nippubblikaw 1500. Nofs in-nefqa ta' pustaġġ, wara applikazzjoni lill-KNPD, jiġu mogħtija lura. Il-flus biex jithallas dan il-magażin iridu jiġu mill-ġbir ta' fondi għax reklami biex intaffu l-ispejjeż tiegħu m'għadniex insibu.

### **Proġetti**

#### **Social Club**

Il-kumitat huwa kommiss li b'xi mod jew

ieħor isir *club* għall-membri tagħna, fejn ikun jistgħu jissoċjalizzaw ma' xulxin u jibdew isiru *disco parties* f'dan il-post. Saru diversi laqgħat kemm mal-Prim Ministru, Ministri tal-Gvern, u dirigenti għoljin tal-Gvern kif ukoll ma' uffiċjali fid-Dipartiment tal-Artijiet biex jinstab post adekwat li jkun kbir biżżejjed u aċċessibbli. Wara ħafna sforzi, jidher, li ġie identifikat post adekwat u nfethu negozjati biex l-Għaqda takkwista dan il-post. Jidher ukoll, li hemm Għaqda li lesta tgħinna biex malli l-post jgħaddi għand l-Għaqda, jiġi rinovat, mhux biss, imma lesti wkoll jgħinu fit-tmexxija tal-post.

### **Jum Dinji tad-Down Syndrome – 21 ta' Marzu**

L-Għaqda għal dan il-jum ħadmet biex tqajjem kuxjenza dwar il-kundizzjoni Down syndrome permezz ta' partecipazzjoni ta' xi ħadd mill-membri tal-kumitat fuq il-mezzi tax-xandir u l-media l-oħra fost oħrajn. Membri tagħna wkoll ħadu sehem attiv fl-attivitajiet imtelligħa mill-Inspire għal ġimgħa ddedikata għad-Down syndrome.

### **Attivitajiet**

L-Għaqda għamlet dawn l-attivitajiet għall-membri tagħna:

Għall-Karnival organizzat disco li sar għand it-Tramici, Triq in-Naxxar, Birkirkara.

L-ikla tal-Milied saret fil-Lukanda Bella Vista fis-6 ta' Diċembru, 2013. L-ikla kienet *buffet* u l-mużika kienet f'idejn *Commanderjay Music Entertainment*. L-Għaqda ħallset hija stess għall-membri kollha li għandhom Down syndrome u tfal taħt il-ħames snin.

Id-*disco* tal-Milied, li huwa tant mistenni mill-membri tagħna, sar fil-Lukanda Qawra Palace fis-27 ta' Diċembru 2014. Il-mużika waqt din l-attività wkoll kienet f'idejn *Commanderjay Music Entertainment*.

Bla dubju ta' xejn dawn iż-żewġ attivitajiet ma jhallu ebda ntrojt għall-Għaqda. Kieku l-Għaqda ma ddaħħalx ftit flus mil-lotteriji li torganizza waqt l-attivitajiet, kieku l-Għaqda toħroġ minn taħt minn dawn iż-żewġ attivitajiet.

Il-*Liverpool FC Community Coaching Team*, grazzi għall-interess minn James Vella segretarju tal-*Liverpool Supporters Club* ta' Malta, reġa' nieda *training cam*. Dan sar fit-13 ta' Marzu 2014 fil-ground tal-football tal-Imġarr għat-tfal b'diżabilità intellettuali. Membri tal-Għaqda ħadu sehem f'din l-attività.

### **Taħdita f'Għawdex**

Fil-25 ta' Mejju 2013 l-Għaqda organizzat *work shop* għall-membri Għawxin biex tiġi diskussa s-sitwazzjoni tal-persuni Down syndrome f'Għawdex u d-diffikultajiet li jiltaqgħu magħhom. L-Onor Dr Anton Refalo u l-Onor Dr Franco Mercieca kienu preżenti biex jiddiskutu mal-membri l-problemi u l-ilmenti li tressqu. Grazzi għal dan il-workshop, il-Ministru ta' Għawdex hegġeġ lill-membri Għawdxin biex jiffurmaw Għaqda biex jtkellmu b'lehen wieħed u jkun ta' appoġġ għal xulxin.

### **Servizzi tal-Għaqda**

#### **Lezzjonijiet fil-Computers**

Il-lezzjonijiet qed isiru regolari darba fil-ġimgħa.

#### **Lezzjonijiet ta' Aerobics**

Il-lezzjonijiet qed isiru fil-*Platinum Fitness Centre* B'Kara kull nhar ta' Tlieta u huma miftuħin għall-membri kollha.

#### **Il-Quddies tal-Ewwel Ġimgħa tax-Xahar**

Il-Quddies issir fiċ-Ċentru tal-Għaqda filgħodu. Wara l-Quddies jkun hemm te

u kafè u tintlagħab it-tombla. L-attendenza hija rrapportata bħala inkoraġġanti.

### **Proġetti oħra**

L-Għaqda bħalissa qed taħdem fuq '*Supported Employment*' flimkien mal-Federazzjoni Matija ta' Organizzazzjonijiet Persuni b'Diżabilità biex titwaqqaf Għaqda Nazzjonali tas-Supported Employment. Hemm entitajiet governattivi, NGO's u *service providers* li ġa wrew interess li jingħaqdu flimkien għal dan l-għan.

Proġett ieħor maħsub huwa li jittella' Kalendarju ta' attivitajiet fil-bidu tas-sena biex il-membri jkun jistgħu jippjanaw bil-quddiem għall-attivitajiet tagħna.

### **Laqgħat tal-President:**

Matul is-sena l-President u membri oħra tal-Kumitat ħadu parti jew attendew għall-laqgħat ma' diversi awtoritajiet – mal-Prim Ministru, ma' Ministri, ma' delegati u uffiċjali tal-Gvern fuq sugġetti varji li kienu jikkoncernaw il-proġetti u l-ħidma tal-Għaqda, u l-bżonnijiet tal-membri tagħna. Dan minbarra s-sehem attiv li l-Għaqda ħadet f'*talk shows* fuq il-media u l-*press releases* li ħarġet.

### **Konklużjoni**

Nixtieq nagħlaq billi nringrazzja lilkom preżenti talli ġejtu illum u lill-membri kollha tal-Kumitat u lill-familji tagħhom għall-paċenzja li jieħdu u s-sapport tagħhom, lill-*helpers* għall-ħidma tagħhom fi ħdan l-Għaqda u għall-benefatturi kollha tal-Għaqda li mingħajrhom ma nkunux nistgħu niffinanzjaw proġetti u nħallsu l-ispejjeż ta' kuljum biex immexxu l-Għaqda 'l quddiem.

**Antoine Gauci  
Segretarju**



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