



SJAF Magazine

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Giving up a birthday party for a weekend with the homeless

Young EJ Borg from Granite Bay, California, a relative of one of the Foundation's volunteers, decided some months ago that rather than inviting friends and relatives for a costly 16th birthday party where he would be lavished with gifts he probably could do without, he would give a gift to the least fortunate of the community.

He decided to spend a day with the homeless in Friendship Park in Sacramento.



Borg's adventure was part of a class project called "devoted to Christian service" where he and four other selected students pretended to be homeless. Borg and his high school student friends said that they had heard many stories about the difficulties and suffering faced by the homeless. "That really opened my mind," Borg said. "Many homeless people are people who have lost their jobs and had bad things happen to them in life."

During the weekend, Borg slept in a sleeping bag on the grass. He and his friends were watched over by security guards and Borg admitted that he wasn't scared, just bored since they weren't allowed any cell phones, TV or iPods. At 5 a.m. on Saturday, they were awakened and told to leave the park. They grabbed their sleeping bags and tried to sleep a bit more after finding a place on the sidewalk. This didn't last long due to the loud noise of all the people out on the streets. Borg decided to eat breakfast which consisted of two cookies and a pastry.

At 7 a.m. Friendship Park opened and Borg was given his ticket for lunch. "They only give out so many tickets and the homeless get in line early in the morning to make sure they get a ticket," he said.

Amongst the things that Borg could do to pass the day was to visit the nearby library. He arrived at around 10 a.m. and noticed that there were a lot of homeless asleep in the building. The library closed at 11:45am and Borg then found a park bench. There he noticed some of the homeless playing volleyball, and they invited him to play with them. "These homeless guys welcomed me with open arms to play," he said. "There weren't really any rules and no one was really that good a player but that didn't matter."

When it was time for lunch, Borg got in line with the rest of the homeless with his lunch ticket. The meal consisted of rice and beans and some kind of "mystery meat". After lunch, Borg went back to the bench and took a nap. Each of the participants was given a challenge to carry out. Borg's was to find somewhere that would allow him to use the restroom. At first he was rejected at a convenience store, and afterwards entered a bank office where he was only permitted to use the restroom after he talked about financial facts with one of the staff.

Throughout the 24 hours, Borg was astounded at the large number of homeless and his compassion only increased. His mother, even though admitting to being frightened, was proud of her son. "I worried about him," she said. "I knew it was a controlled environment but I was still scared. When he came home he said he really appreciated everything his father and I do for him."



Thus, before complaining about what we don't have, we should be thankful for what we have and that a bit of discomfort in our daily lives doesn't matter as long as we have what is needed to make it through to another day.

***"I had the blues because I had no shoes
until upon the street;
I met a man who had no feet."***

NEW VOLUNTEERS WITH SJAF

Gina Portelli – Reception

Bianca Maria Bugeja – Young Carers Project

Urieth Aquilina – Grandparent Education

(Urieth has switched from paid work to volunteering Thank You)

Marcyon Spiteri – Data-inputing

Stephanie Camilleri – Homework Support Service

Simon Said - Homework Support Service

Micheal Buhagiar - Homework Support Service

Thomas Zammit - Homework Support Service

Rebecca Farrugia - Homework Support Service

Lucas Farrugia - Homework Support Service

Christabel Vassallo - Homework Support Service

Melissa Zammit – Homework Support Service

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CRS Haiti Earthquake Response: For the most recent and up to date information on CRS' Haiti Earthquake Response please visit The CRS Blog: <http://crs-blog.org/>



HOME WORK SUPPORT SERVICE

The Homework support team re-started sessions on the 15th January. January was a very busy month for us. We have welcomed seven new team members - all Volunteer Tutors - the majority being young students who wish to plunge into the world of volunteering in support of vulnerable children and young persons. This new influx of volunteers is providential since in December we had identified the need for 7 new volunteer Tutors - and here they are! We are now providing learning support to 24 children. One of the new volunteers will be responsible for Circle Time every Wednesday afternoon. These are focused sessions through which all users meet before their session for a common activity before they join their personal Tutor. We are striving to make these children feel that they belong to a group.

At the moment, therefore, the Homework Support Service is made up of:

- 1 Co-ordinator
- 1 Receptionist who welcomes families
- 1 back-up Tutor just in case someone cannot make it that evening
- 21 Tutors
- 24 children who are benefiting from the service

As you all know, all children are referred to the Service by the Social Workers of the Foundation. All children come from vulnerable families who tap into one or more services of the Foundation.

Jessie Spiteri

Co-ordinator (Homework Support Service)
Learning Support Programme

My Childhood neighbourhood in Valletta

Louise Cassar (Wens Group member)

Very recently was invited to a new group within the Foundation - a fellowship, prayer and creative writing group. Believe it or not, from the first meeting when we prayed and introduced each other, I had a feeling of satisfaction and fulfillment. The group facilitator asked each one of us to draw her childhood street while recounting how we lived and interacted with others there. We then wrote about our time as children in our childhood street. It was really a voyage down Memory Lane.

I was brought up by my aunts and lived for the first years as a toddler at Balzan during the last years of World War 2. I used to attend St. Joseph High School and when the war was over we moved to Valletta, where I continued to attend the School of the nuns of St. Joseph of the Apparition. In Valletta I lived in Old Theatre Street, just between the Manoel Theatre and Strait Street. My love for Operatic and Classical music was probably sowed there because together with my late relatives I can say that I hardly missed a Concert or an Opera.

Living next to Strait Street and in those days of Colonialism, Valletta was always filled with soldiers and sailors of various Nationalities but mostly English. The bars and shops in Strait Street were quite close to our house. Very often when there used to be dances at the "Egyptian Queen" a somewhat "famous" dance hall for those days I used to love to stay in our balcony to just watch the sailors and dames dancing and having fun. I was always snubbed and told off to my room without even an explanation why. On reaching womanhood I was always teased of living next to Strait Street and all I could actually say that all I remembered was some necking and 'fighting' lots of it.

Right in front of my bedroom I could communicate with a Dominican priest Fr. Edward Bezzina who used to teach at St. Albert the Great College. What a contrast! On one side a priest asking me from his balcony across the narrow street how I was getting on in school whilst a little further up a place where I was strictly forbidden not to look or even mention at home!

Time passed and even I learnt why I was so strictly warned not to even pass from Strait Street let alone look and have fun, watching the couples dancing.

I grew up to start my role in life as a grown up. When I finished my o-levels and sat for my piano exams, always with the intentions to continue piano lessons later after my school exams. My ideas soon changed because just a few months after I finished school I sat for a Civil Service examination and very luckily I started work with the Health Department. The first few months were not easy because I was still in the "world of the nuns" and school. I even asked my office mates how many Christmas and Easter Holidays we were going to have. I can still remember the late Mr. Grima who was my senior clerk at the time to try and put the school years at the back of my mind cause now I was a grown woman. Seven years passed at the Health Department and once again I sat for another Civil Service examination this time "Clerical Officer" in my time that is how they were called. Being successful I was transferred to the Social Services Dept. where I met my future husband. I stayed at the Dept for three years and on getting married I had to quit my job because married women were not allowed to continue working. Eventually I had two children, a girl and a boy. My children both attended the Immaculate Conception School run by the Sisters Of Charity. Later on Richard, my son, attended De La Salle College.

Maria, my daughter, is now married and has two adorable children. I looked after them from when they were three months old up to a while ago cause now Andrea the elder is going on to be 14 and Lisa 12 so I can say that they look after themselves after school.

I kept in touch with the English Language being a bookworm and giving a lot of Private Lessons. Recently I started to do some voluntary work at the St. Joan Antide Foundation where both my children attended school. Richard is also helping in some voluntary work but Maria is still a fulltime worker with the Civil Service.

Time is really flying and now I am 71 years old and a widow for four years. Thanks to the foundation, groups and new friends that I have made I just feel that I have a place and friends to turn when some of my days are dull and cloudy.

Thank you all for your help and understanding.

(thank you David Mercieca for typing creative writing texts of the Wens Group members!)

I-strina



Kif tafu, il-Fondazzjoni Santa Giovanna Antida hija waħda minn 18-il organizzazzjoni li ser tibbenefika mill-flus miġbura fl-iStrina organizzata mill-Malta Community Chest Fund. Dakinhar ta' l-iStrina, grupp ta' voluntiera mill-Fondazzjoni mar jirrispondi it-telefon. Kienet esperjenza sabiħa. Għal bosta minnha kienet l-ewwel darba li ھا sehem f'din l-attività iżda hemm min ilu jattendi kemm ilha tiġi organizzata.



Dawn huma xi kummenti mingħand xi wħud li attendew din l-attività.....

L-Istrina ta' din is-sena kienet sfida għall-poplu Malti għax ma kienx ser jirċievi rigali għad-donazzjonijiet. Il-poplu laqa' l-isfida. Tajjeb li, sew lill-poplu, sew lil gruppi u sew lil individwi ma nibzghux inpoġġulhom sfida quddiemhom. L-importanti hu li jkunu sfidi li huma jifilhu għalihom.

Jiena ھاssejtni li kont qiegħda nagħti l-kontribut tiegħi, bħala cittadina, f'din l-attività ta' ġbir ta' fondi b'risq il-persuni fil-bżonn tas-sapport finazjarju waqt li jkunu għaddejnin minn żminjiet diffiċli fil-ħajja tagħhom. Din hija ġustizzja li min għandu x'jaqsam ma' min m'għandux. Din hija solidarjetà! Alla ھاlaq il-ġid fid-dinja sabiex ikun gawdut mill-umanità u mhux minn min jonfoq eluf għal libsa waħda u min ma' għandux x'jiekol. Fraternità, imħabba bejn il-bnedmin jasl u johlqu dinja sabiħa u fil-paċi.

Sr Salvina Bezzina soc

Kienet esperjenza ġdida għalija. Jien mort hemm biex ngħin fit-telefonati. Ghalkemm il-cameras u t-telefons iddejquni pero ridt ngħin. Vera li dak inhar ta' l-istrina ma daqqx it-telefon tiegħi. Kienet esperjenza u atmosfera sabiħa dak inhar.

Christopher Debattista

L-ewwelnett niringrazzjakhom talli tajtuni din l-opportunità biex inkun waħda mit-tim ta' voluntiera. Kienet esperjenza sabiħa u ta' sodisfazzjon li tajna s-sehem tagħna għal għan nobbli. Nispera li 'l quddiem ikollna aktar esperjenzi.

Mary Theuma

Kull ma nista' ngħid hu li jien skantajt kif in-nies baqgħu jċemplu "non stop" sal-11.30pm.

Hawn ھاfna ھاfna nies ġenerużi!!!

Sr Teresa Tonna soc

Kienet esperjenza ھاewa li komplet imlietli z-żmien tal-Milied b'affarijiet sempliċi imma mill-aktar sinifikanti. Bħal ھاfna oħrajn, f'dan iż-żmien inkun qed niġġieled miegħi nnfsi sabiex ma nintasabx iżżejjed fix-xibka tal-kummerċ u l-istrina kienet waħda minn dawk l-affarijiet sempliċi u sinifikanti li kelli flimkien mal-familja li għenu sabiex l-effett tat-tlellix ta' l-affarijiet materjali ġie kwazi fix-xejn.

L-atmosfera kienet dik ta' "ejja ھا nagħmlu xi ھاġa flimkien". Il-kobor tal-post kien jidher ideali, u meta konna nistennew fil-"Green Room" nistqarr li bdejt nippreferi li kont id-dar mat-tfal għal fatt li kien qed jidher li ma tantx kien hemm bżonna peress li t-telefons kienu kollha attenduti. Illum ngħid li forsi stajt gdimt ilsieni u kkumentajt bil-fatt li kont hemm biex ngħati l-parti tiegħi mingħajr aspetattivi ta' xejn.

Meta għajtulna sabiex nieħdu postna mat-telefons, ھاibt li xogħoli se jkun li nrispondi t-telefonati biss imma saqsewni biex niġi ntervistata għal xi sekondi żgħar u għalkemm ippreparawni minn qabel fuq dak li kienet se ssaqsini l-prezentatrici, xorta ھاssejtni mfixkla dak il-ħin u l-anqas biss naf x'għid....."mhux soltu tiegħi!".

Il-ħin fuq it-telefons ھاssejtu qasir ھاfna għaliex tant tkun tinħass ir-rieda tajba mil-persuna li tkun qiegħda ċċempel li ma jkollokx aptit tqum minn hemm. Forsi kienet tkun idea tajba kieku t-telefons ikunu appartati b'xi mod li s-"sound" li jkun ġej minn naħa ta' l-ispettaklu ma jtellifx lil min jirrispondi milli jisma' sew lil min ikun qed iċċempel. Mill-bqijja nerġa' ngħid li kienet esperjenza sabiħa u li x-xogħol li tara għaddej madwarek jimlik b'hegga u entuzjażmu. Okkażjoni sabiħa wkoll għal min għandu ċ-ċans li jagħti daqqa t'id f'dawn iż-żminijiet.

Claire Farrugia

Harġa Kulturali ġewwa Għawdex


Iż-żgħażaġh tal-Programm Bridge imorru Għawdex għall-ewwel darba u jżuru siti storiċi u kulturali akkumpanjati minn żewġ social workers mill-Fondazzjoni.

Is-Sorijiet tal-Karità ġentilment silfuna l-vann tagħhom.





from the Foundation

- 4 & 15th & 21st: Took part in the executive committee meetings of the Mental Health Association
- 7th: Co-presentation of a Radju Marija series of radio programmes entitled *Lejn Hajja Mimlija* planned by the Province of the Sisters of Charity. The series runs until June this year and focuses on the work of the Sisters of Charity in Malta and overseas including the work of the St Jeanne Antide Foundation. The programme runs every Thursday between 3.30 and 4.00pm
- 7th: Meeting with Consultant Psychiatrist Dr J.P. Giorgio regarding youths with learning disabilities and mental health problems who have never been diagnosed
- 8th: Homework Support Service Tutors' evening out at the Waterfront, Valletta
- 11th: SJAF presented a workshop on *Poverty in Malta* for 2nd year 6th Formers of St Aloysius College during a 2-day programme at the Paradise Bay Hotel, Cirkewwa.
- 13th: SJAF made a presentation on *Il-Faqar f'Malta u l-Hidma tal-Fondazzjoni fuq livell Parrokkjali* to Parish Priests during their annual Live-In at the Seminary, Rabat.
- 15th: Sr Rose & Nora took part at a Certification ceremony organised by the Mental Health Association for persons who completed a 13-session course on Mental Health.
- 15th: Sr Salvina, Sr Rose and Nora visited the Gzira residential community of the Fondazzjoni Suret il-Bniedem to learn about the residential programme offered to homeless men. 
- 18th: Final evaluation meeting regarding Lucianne Psaila's University Social Work Placement A (300 hours).
- 18th: Planning meeting with the Parish Priest, volunteer social worker and grandparents for a new Nannakola Club at the Fleur-de-Lys Parish.
- 19th: Meeting with Josef Debono from the **ZAK** central office to determine ways in which both organisation can collaborate to integrate disadvantaged youths in parish ZAK groups.
- 22nd and 23rd: 9 SJAF members took part in the national Conference on the theme *Il-Familja – il-bierah, illum u ghada* organised by the Ministry for Social Policy at the Dolmen Hotel, Qawra.
- 25th: Training meeting for volunteers followed by a progress review discussion.
- 27th: Meeting with a Youth in Action Programme Officer from the European Union Programmes Agency in Malta to identify ways in which SJAF can tap into programme activities.
- 28th: Meeting with the Tarxien Parish Priest Fr Reuben Deguara and Tarxien Kummissjoni Djakonija President Dr Stephen Zammit to identify areas of focus for 2010.
- 28th: Meeting at SJAF with the Chief Executive of Agenzija Sapport to discuss each other's service provision.
- 28th: Mid-term review of the Bridge Programme and progress review of each youth following the programme.
- 28th: New **Self-Esteem** group started for young mothers who are service users.

MEDIA

- The Foundation will feature in two magazine articles in February 2010 – Sunday Circle and Child.
- The Foundation is taking part in the Sisters' of Charity radio programme series – Lejn Hajja Mimlija, broadcasted every Thursday between 3.30 and 4.00pm on Radju Marija.

L-Altruizmu antidote għall-iStress text bil-Malti - ta' Lucianne Psaila

Xahar wara li żżewġet, Cami Walker, li dak iż-żmien kellha tlieta u tletin senġha, qalulha li kienet qed issofri mill- marda 'multiple sclerosis' u ħajjitha nbidlet drastikament. Cami bdiet tidhol l-emerġenza ta' spiss minħabba din il-kundizzjoni li ħallietha bilkemm tiflaħ timxi u anke kkawżatilha stress qawwi fuq iż- żwieġ tagħha. Kuljum bdew jizdidulha ħsibijiet negattivi, bħal: li ħa jitlaqa r- raġel, li ħa tispiċċa ħajjitha f'wheel chair, li ħajjitha spicċat u bdiet tisaqsi wkoll 'għaliex jien?'

Darba waħda Cami kienet qed titkellem ma ħabiba tagħha dwar id-dwejjaq li kellha minħabba din il- marda. Ħabibitha qaltilha li qiegħda taħseb wisq fuqha nnifisha u li għandha bżonn tnaqqas dawn il-ħsibijiet. Cami kienet sorpriża b'dan il- kliem ta' ħabibitha għax dak il- ħin żgur ma kellhiex moħħ taħseb fuq ħaddieħor. Ħabibitha tatha preskrizzjoni xi ftit jew wisq stramba, fejn qaltilha biex tagħti disġha u għoxrin rigal f'disġha u għoxrin ġurnata. Qaltilha li mhux importanti xi jkun r-rigali basta li jkun fihom ħsieb u awtenticità u minn ta' l- inqas wieħed mir-rigali jrid ikun xi ħaġa li hija skarsa f' ħajjitha.

Cami, li illum il-ġurnata għandha sitta u tletin sena, niżżlet din l-idea fid-djarju tagħha iżda ma kellha l-ebda intenzjoni li tagħti kasha. Madanakollu, wara ġimġhat ta' skumdità u uġieġħ, iddeċidiet li tprova din il-preskrizzjoni.

Fost ir-rigali li Cami kienet tagħti kien hemm biċċa ċikkulata lir-raġel tagħha, telefonata lil xi persuna li kellha bżonn appoġġ. Ovjament, l-għoti tar- rigali ma fejqilhiex il- marda iżda għinha biex tkun aktar kapaci tgħix biha. Illum il- ġurnata kapaci tiċċaqlaq iktar u m'għadhiex dipendenti fuq il-medicina kontra l- uġieġħ. Iż-żajjar lejn l-emerġenza waqqfu u mit-testijiet li għamlet irriżulta li l-marda waqqfet milli tikber.

Minn riċerka xjentifika, ġie ppruvat li dak kollu li tgħid Cami huwa minnu. Stephen G. Post, id- direttur ta' 'Centre for Humanities' u l- awtur tal-ktieb 'Why Good Things Happen to Good People' jgħid li 'M'hemmx dubju li l-ħajja jkollha aktar tifsira meta niffokaw aktar fuq ħaddieħor u nkunu anqas preokkupati bina nfusna u bil- problemi tagħna.

Ħafna studji ddokumentaw dan l-effett. Eżempju: fis- senġha 2002 sar studju fil- kullegġ ta' Boston fejn instab li pazjenti li jsofru minn mard kroniku, marru aħjar meta għinu lil pazjenti oħrajn bħalhom għax esperjenzaw inqas mard mentali, uġieġħ u diżabilità.

Kif l-għoti tar-rigali jwassal għal bidla fizika u mentali għadu mhux ċar, iżda studji jisuggerixxu li l-altruizmu jista' jkun ta' antidotu għall-istress. Studju li sar f'Miami fuq pazjenti li jbatu mill-marda HIV, irriżulta li dawk il-persuni li kellhom karattru altruist kellhom livell baxx ta' ormoni ta' stress.

Għal-kuntrarju, meta persuna jkun mehdi bih innifsu, dan jista' jagħmel ħafna ħsara lis- saħħa tiegħu. Studju li sar fuq mija u ħamsin pazjent li jbatu bil-mard tal-qalb, sab li persuni li kienu jagħmlu ammont ta' ħin twil jitekellmu fuqhom innfushom għabu riżultati baxxi fit-testijiet tat- treadmill u kellhom mard tal-qalb aktar sever.

U simili ta' Cami kien hemm bosta nies li rrapurtaw li ħassewhom aħjar wara li għinu lil ħaddieħor. Fl-1988, artiklu fil- 'Psychology Today' wera l-effett tal- 'helper's high'. Dan l- artiklu analizza żewġ sezzjonijiet min stħarrig separat, ta' total ta' 3,200 mara li regolarment jagħmlu xogħol volontarju. Dan l-artiklu jiddeskrivi u jqabbal l-effett li jħalli x- xogħol volontarju fuq il-fizika ma' l- effett li tħalli il-meditazzjoni jew eżerċizzju vigoruż. L-aqwa effett deher meta l-att ta' altruizmu involva kuntatt dirett ma' nies oħra.

Wara l-ewwel disġha u għoxrin ġurnata, Cami reġġet bdiet ciklu ieħor u komplet sejra hekk sakemm l-għoti tar-rigali sar parti mir-rutina ta' ħajjitha. Għaliha l- għoti tar-rigali sar kruċjali ħafna u tqisu bħala parti mit-trattament tagħha daqs li kieku medicina. Cami waqqfet sit eletroniku – www.29gifts.org - fejn fih tinkoraggixxi lin-nies biex jagħtu rigali sabiex itejbu s- saħħa tagħhom. Hija anke kitbet ktieb bl-isem ta' '29 Gifts – How a month of giving can change your life'.

Cami Walker tgħid li 'l- għoti tar-rigali għal disġha u għoxrin ġurnata mhux qed tissuggerixxi li ħa jfejjaq l-ebda marda, iżda jista' jservi bħala mod kif tiffaċja l- marda. Jista' wkoll jgħinek biex tbiddel il- ħsieb dwar kulinkwa ħaġa li għandek għaddejja f'ħajtek. Meta tbiddel il- ħsieb, tbiddel l- esperjenza.'

Dr. Post, minn Stony Brook, jaqbel u jgħid li 'biex teħles minn emozzjonijiet negattivi trid tissostitwixxihom b' emozzjonijiet pożittivi'. Dr. Post iżid jgħid li 'l- iktar mod sempliċi biex tagħmel dan huwa billi tkun ta' għajnuna għal xi ħadd ieħor'.

