

Head Office: Ċentru Antida
51, Tarxien Road. Tarxien TXN1090
Reception Desk Tel. 27672367; 21808981; 21809011
VO/0005/4th May 2008

Email: sjafngo@gmail.com
Website: www.antidemalta.org
Facebook: Fondazzjoni St Jeanne Antide

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BEING OF SERVICE TO THE POOR

Extracts from message of Pope Francis for the second world day of the poor on November 2018

“On this World Day of the Poor, we are called to make a serious examination of conscience, to see if we are truly capable of hearing the cry of the poor.”

“To hear their voice, what we need is the silence of people who are prepared to listen. If we speak too much ourselves, we will be unable to hear them. At times I fear that many initiatives, meritorious and necessary in themselves, are meant more to satisfy those who undertake them than to respond to the real cry of the poor. When this is the case, the cry of the poor resounds, but our reaction is inconsistent and we become unable to empathize with their condition. We are so trapped in a culture that induces us to look in the mirror and pamper ourselves, that we think that an altruistic gesture is enough, without the need to get directly involved.”

“The World Day of the Poor wishes to be a small answer that the Church throughout the world gives to the poor of every kind and in every land, lest they think that their cry has gone unheard. It may well be like a drop of water in the desert of poverty, yet it can serve as a sign of sharing with those in need, and enable them to sense the active presence of a brother or a sister. The poor do not need intermediaries, but the personal involvement of all those who hear their cry. The concern of believers in their regard can-



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not be limited to a kind of assistance – as useful and as providential as this may be in the beginning – but requires a “loving attentiveness” (Evangelii Gaudium, 199) that honours the person as such and seeks out his or her best interests.

“Poverty is not something that anyone desires, but is caused by selfishness, pride, greed and injustice. These are evils as old as the human race itself, but also sins in which the innocent are caught up, with tragic effects at the level of social life..... To offer the poor a “broad space” is to set them free from the “snare of the fowler” (Ps 91:3); it is to free them from the trap hidden on their path, so that they can move forward with serenity on the path of life. God’s salvation is a hand held out to the poor, a hand that welcomes, protects and enables them to experience the friendship they need. From this concrete and tangible proximity, a genuine path of liberation emerges. “Each individual Christian and every community is called to be an instrument of God for the liberation and promotion of the poor, and for enabling them to be fully a part of society. This demands that we be docile and attentive to the cry of the poor and to come to their aid” (Evangelii gaudium , 187).”

“I find it moving to know that many poor people identify with the blind beggar Bartimaeus mentioned by the evangelist Mark (cf. 10:46-52). Bartimaeus “was sitting by the roadside to beg” (v. 46); having heard that Jesus was passing by, “he began to cry out and say, ‘Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me’” (v. 47). “Many rebuked him, telling him to be silent; but he cried out all the more” (v. 48). The Son of God heard his plea and said: “What do you want me to do for you?” The blind man said to him, “Master, let me receive my sight” (v. 51). This Gospel story makes visible what the Psalm proclaims as a promise. Bartimaeus is a poor person who finds himself lacking things as essential as sight and the

ability to work for a living. How many people today feel in the same situation! Lack of basic means of subsistence, marginalization due to a reduced capacity for work, various forms of social enslavement, despite all our human progress... How many poor people today are like Bartimaeus, sitting on the roadside and looking for meaning in their lives! How many of them wonder why they have fallen so far and how they can escape! Sadly, the exact opposite often happens, and the poor hear voices scolding them, telling them to be quiet and to put up with their lot. These voices are harsh, often due



to fear of the poor, who are considered not only destitute but also a source of insecurity and unrest, an unwelcome distraction from life as usual and needing to be rejected and kept afar.”

“Countless initiatives are undertaken every day by the Christian community in order to offer closeness and a helping hand in the face of the many forms of poverty all around us. Often too, our cooperation with other initiatives inspired not by faith but by human solidarity, make it possible for us to provide help that otherwise we would have been unable to offer. The realization that in the face of so much poverty our capacity for action is limited, weak and insufficient, leads us to reach out to others so that, through mutual cooperation, we can attain our goals all the more effectively. We Christians are inspired by faith and by the imperative of charity, but we can also acknowledge other forms of assistance

and solidarity that aim in part for the same goals, provided that we do not downplay our specific role, which is to lead everyone to God and to holiness. Dialogue between different experiences, and humility in offering our cooperation without seeking the limelight, is a fitting and completely evangelical response that we can give.”

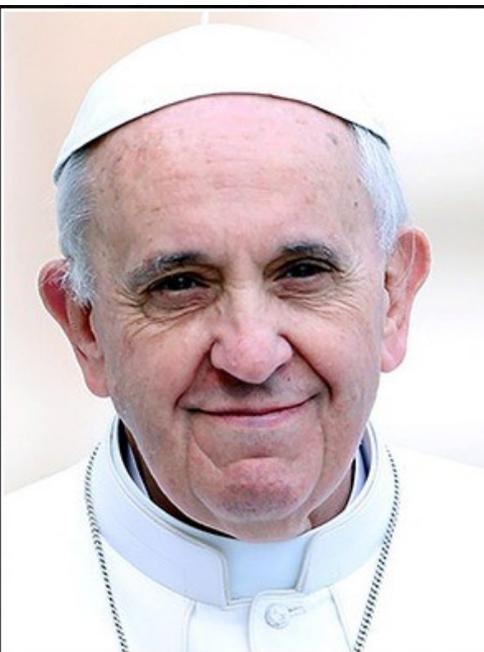
“In the service of the poor, there is no room for competition. Rather, we should humbly recognize that the Spirit is the source of our actions that reveal God’s closeness and his answer to our prayers. When we find ways of drawing near to the poor, we know that the primacy belongs to God, who opens our eyes and hearts to conversion. The poor do not need self-promoters, but a love that knows how to remain hidden and not think about all the good it has been able to do.”

“(St) Paul offers a basic teaching about the attitude the community should have, in the light of the Gospel, towards its weaker and needier members. Far be it from Christ’s disciples to nurture feelings of disdain or pity towards the poor. Instead, we are called to honour the poor and to give them precedence, out of the conviction that they are a true presence of Jesus in our midst.”

“Poverty comprises many virtues. It is a vast domain. I tell you, whoever despises all earthly goods is master of them all.” (St Teresa of Avila: The Way of Perfection, 2:5) It is in the measure in which we are able to discern authentic good that we become rich before God and wise in our own eyes and in those of others. It is truly so. To the extent that we come to understand the true meaning of riches, we grow in humanity and become capable of sharing.”

“I invite and all those lay faithful – men and women – who in parishes, associations and ecclesial movements make tangible the Church’s response to the cry of the poor, to experience this World Day as a privileged moment of new evangelization. The poor evangelize us and help us each day to discover the beauty of the Gospel. Let us not squander this grace-filled opportunity. On this day, may all of us feel that we are in debt to the poor, because, in hands outstretched to one another, a salvific encounter can take place to strengthen our faith, inspire our charity and enable our hope to advance securely on our path towards the Lord who is to come.”

From the Vatican, 13 June 2018



Poverty calls us to sow hope....
Poverty is the flesh of the poor
Jesus, in that child who is hungry, in
the one who is sick, in those unjust
social structures.

— Pope Francis —

I AM A VOLUNTEER MENTOR

By Mark Micallef

I've always wanted to do voluntary work and, thanks to SJAF, I was given the opportunity to take up the role of a Volunteer Mentor. My Mentee is a young and very cheerful person who really wished to have a friend of his own in life.

My Mentee and I try to meet a couple of times a month. We agree on activities to do together in advance. We go to the cinema, to exhibitions... Once we went to a musical; another time we spent a day in Gozo. Given that my Mentee loves to eat out, we often conclude our outing with a meal together. He absolutely loves this.

I always look forward to meeting him. Thanks to this mentoring relationship, I have a break from my daily routine to enjoy the time we spend together. I see my role of a Volunteer Mentor as quality time to provide my Mentee with the following supports:

- ◆ Provide him support in order Understanding more about friendship and be more able to move forward in life; SSS
- ◆ Identify goals to strive towards;
- ◆ Learn to make decisions;
- ◆ Gain different perspectives of the world around us;
- ◆ Contributing to his wellbeing.



Mentoring is a shared opportunity for learning and growth. Both of us learn. Both of us grow from the shared experience of friendship. This voluntary work has enabled me to:

- ◆ Have fun in a different, meaningful way;
- ◆ Develop new skills;
- ◆ Achieve personal growth and learn more about myself;
- ◆ I feel that I am making a difference in someone else's life; it is very rewarding;
- ◆ I learn a lot from my Mentee and I appreciate the little things in life; others may find it difficult to imagine how much one can learn from being a Volunteer Mentor.

From my experience of voluntary work so far, I can say that Mentoring is much more worth the time and effort than one can possibly imagine. Giving freely of one's time and talents for a good cause is a very special feeling.

Message from the Mentee's mother

I feel that these outings between Mark and my son have been very beneficial to my 19-year-old son. My son considers Mark to be his great friend and always looks forward to their meetings.

Both of them have done various different things together, including going to watch a musical, a couple of films, a model exhibition, etc. all of which my son enjoyed very much. They have also been out for meals together with is my son's hobby. So, obviously, he enjoyed that very much.

I very much appreciate the fact that Mark gives my son the choice of things to do which makes him feel important and grown-up. I feel that this has been very beneficial to my son as is the fact that Mark helps him in counting out money when they are out (since this was a limitation of his).

I cannot thank you enough for this opportunity given to us and a massive thanks to Mark for his patience.



Young Volunteers with SJAF

Erica—I have been volunteering at St. Jeanne Antide Foundation since the end of October. This experience is something that I would have probably never done if I had not been pushed to do so from school. Today I look forward to Fridays because I get to help out such wonderful children. At the end of each session I feel a great sense of fulfilment, especially if the child comes and hugs me or if the child draws me something in order to say thank you. The staff working at the foundation is welcoming they are sweet and understanding. If it were not for them the centre would not be the welcoming place it is. I am truly grateful for this experience.

Ariana—Despite having started my voluntary work at SJAF this scholastic year, as part of my Social Responsibility Programme at my sixth form, I must admit that the experience has changed me irrevocably. What I thought would be part of my weekly routine has now been ingrained in me and helped me not only to see potential in my subjects but also to burgeon several values which had been little known to me before.

Usually, my duties consist of helping the children complete their homework successfully, reading with them, as well as ensuring that they understand its rudiments and improve their linguistic and phonetic abilities, whilst solving other problems that may come along the way such as study work and other interesting activities such as minor projects; some of which have made me reminisce some of my childhood memories. However, even though this may all sound like a piece of cake at first glance, it requires a lot of patience and dedication to manage to keep order and discipline whilst making sure that they get the best of the learning experience. Hence, I must show a tonne of appreciation to all the people part of the children's support system such as parents as well as tutors.

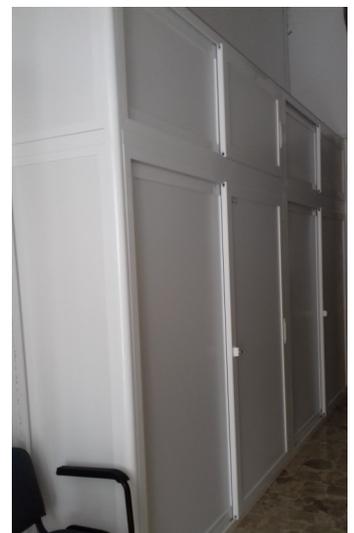
Nonetheless, the homework club was not only a chance for the kids to learn more but also for me. In spite of having some experience working with my younger cousins, thanks to this opportunity I have realised how green I was in this area. In fact, I have gained more confidence in dealing with children in a way that they do not find doing their work monotonous as by the art of motivation by for example organising mini-competitions. Also, I became exposed to people with different backgrounds, not only racially but also socially, and this may have helped me as a person understand common aspects between various people as well as eliminate certain stereotypes which we as Maltese may grow up with.

Most of the people here at SJAF, I only see once a week, however I must say that the time I spend here has helped me to form not only a bond with the children I have by my side but also with the other voluntary workers of the SJAF family and staff, especially Martha and Marthese, who really make an effort to clarify any problems I may incur.

Anthea—The voluntary work that I am doing here is making me feel more useful and giving me an inner satisfaction. The looks on the children's faces when they understand something you explain to them gives me a nice feeling and makes me want to help even more. Since I started coming here, I have understood even more and saw more closely that there are certain people who need more help than others, and it is nice to help them and make them feel that they can get the help that they need. Overall, my experience volunteering here has been a very positive one and I am very happy that even though what I am doing is little to help, it is still something positive that can still impact the children.

PROĠETT A4U

Permezz tal-fondi mill-iskema A4U tal-Aġenzija Żgħażaġh, Segretarjat Parlamentari għar-Riċerka, l-Innovazzjoni, iż-Żgħażaġh u l-Isport, inxtat għamara fejn jinħażnu r-rizorsi użati mill-voluntiera żgħażaġh li jagħmlu xogħol edukattiv siewi ħafna mat-tfal tal-familji li jużaw is-servizz tal-Fondazzjoni.



Sculpture by a Service User with Schizophrenia
by Martha Dimech, Social Worker



There exists in Malta a huge need for families to understand common symptoms of mental illness. There is also the need for families to consult professionals about unusual behaviours so as to be in a position to access support as early as possible. Such a readiness to consult a professional about unusual symptoms is a sign of strength rather than weakness. Brushing things under the carpet denies the relative with such symptoms to access help and avoid having to bear years of pain and hardship.

The picture below illustrates this point. It is a sculpture created by a 40 year old service user of ours when she was 15 years old. This person was only diagnosed with schizophrenia 2 years ago. We have been supporting this person's family for 2 years. Recently, as we concluded yet another home visit to determine whether there were other issues that required support for her and her family, her mother showed us this work of art. She explained that her daughter had done it herself 25 years ago to express how she was feeling at the time. She had told her mother that she heard books speaking to her, putting unwanted thoughts into her mind.

The sculpture she created represented the unwanted thoughts transmitted to her mind that she desperately wanted to crush and squash. This experience highlights the fact that, although the family has been struggling for so many years to understand the daughter, they weren't aware that such symptoms could be a sign of a mental condition. Seeking advice at the outset is a win-win for both the sufferer and family members. As capable we all are already to turn to a GP for help, we can extend this readiness to consult a mental health practitioner for an effective diagnosis and treatment regimen. Shame and fear need to be shed.

On the 23rd of May, His Excellency Archbishop Alessandro D'Errico, Apostolic Nuncio of Malta and Libya and Titular Archbishop of Carini visited the St Jeanne Antide Foundation.



Christianity and Depression - it is complicated

<https://edition.cnn.com/2018/05/20/health/christianity-faith-depression-essay/index.html>

It's FREE!

It is free to join most of these courses.

See list on this website.....

<https://www.futurelearn.com/courses>



<https://www.gov.mt/en/Services-And-Information/Business-Areas/Education%20and%20Learning/Pages/Lifelong-Learning.aspx>

rokna poezija

Is-Suq

Inti ma kontx maħluqa sabiex tinqabad
u s-suq jagħmlek kapuljat

Int' inħloqt biex tħożż girfa fid-dinja
jew tħalli ċaqleqa...
li tintilef fost ċikluni, uragan
- jew forsi ma tintilifx?

Seħbitek il-moħbija taqbad truf qalbha
u tiġbed, sakemm tiċċarrat,
u l-ispazju tnixxi u tqattar

Bla ebda rimors; bla ebda nsigurta'
- m'hawnx ħin għal f'oqbra l-irqad

Is-suq jistenna, makakk,
jispera li taqa' fin-nassa
iżda... x'qatt jista' jaqbad?

tony macelli 1988

VACANCIES - SOCIAL WORKERS

Applications are invited for the posts of full-time and part-time community social workers.

The selected applicants will be managing a generic caseload in the catchment localities in which the NGO is active and will co-work with a specialist in family learning support, and with a specialist in the mental health field in cases of distressed family caregivers. Selected applicants will be expected to pro-actively engage in collaborative work with practitioners from family service agencies across key sectors at local and national levels.

The vacancies are open for qualified social workers.

Further information contact Melanie on sjafngo@gmail.com.

Application letter and CV can be emailed or sent by post.

Closing date: Friday 10 August, 2018.



The UMAMA Project of the SOAR Service

The UMAMA project is an initiative that offers creative therapy to mothers and children who have been and continue to be affected by domestic violence despite separation from the abuser. In what is termed 'domestic violence by proxy', mothers are facing situations where their children are being manipulated by the abusive father, erased from the life of the mother (with the use of legal tools such as false reports of neglect and abuse) to the point that they lose contact with their children. By the time they are found innocent, the damage has been done, the time has been lost and the relationship has disintegrated. The devastating impact of this loss is equal to the loss felt upon the passing away of a child. In this case, the mother (and her family) mourns the loss of a child who is still alive but unreachable.



In the work that SOAR undertakes to support survivors of domestic violence, a worrying trend is emerging: these cases are growing in number. With the support of the President's Award for Creativity, managed by the Arts Council Malta, the UMAMA project is reaching out to mothers and children who use its services to offer them a safe space for creative therapy. Sometimes there are no words for the pain. Art Therapy helps those suffering to find alternative methods of self-expression. These are some of the paintings from the mother's group. One easily sees the sadness, the loss and the quest for healing in the images.



In July, a second programme is due to start that will involve targeted mothers and their children. These will be invited to spend time together to strengthen and rebuild their relationships in the face of relentless DV by proxy. This programme is an attempt to prevent relationships from deteriorating by using creative therapy to enable children and mothers to express their feelings, fears and hopes for each other, using different media.



IL-PREMJU TAL-PRESIDENT
GHALL-KREATTIVITÀ



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<https://www.facebook.com/SjafAntideCentre?fref=ts>



BAZAAR Tarxien u Birżebbuġa

b'risq il-Fondazzjoni

Miftuħ kull nhar ta' Tnejn u nhar ta' Erbgħa - Tarxien

Kull nhar ta' Tlieta - Birżebbuġa

mid-9:00 sa 12:00

DONATIONS

Your donation is truly appreciated. It enables us to sustain our services to vulnerable and poor individuals and families.

Donation to the St Jeanne Antide Foundation can be made as follows:

Cheque issued to The St Jeanne Antide Foundation and posted to the Foundation: 51 Tarxien Road, Tarxien TXN 1092

For **local bank transfers**: **APS** 2000 0681 886 **HSBC** 013175021001
BOV 4002003379-0 **BANIF** 00210404101

If you are a Go/Vodafone/Redtouch subscriber you can donate by sending a **blank SMS** (SMS tariffs applicable):

€2.33 – 50617371 €4.66 – 50618095

€6.99 – 50618909 €11.65 - 50619217

You will receive a text message of thanks and acknowledgement

For **bank transfers from overseas**: APS Bank, 146/147, Antoine De Paul Square, Paola PLA1260

Bank Code (Swift) APSBMTMT IBAN No: MT03 APSB 7708 0005 5047 2000 0681 886 (last 11 digits are the account number).

HOW YOU CAN HELP US - OTHER OPTIONS

- If you are getting married: make a donation instead of buying wedding souvenirs.
- If you are having a birthday party: ask friends to make a donation instead of buying a gift.
- If you are having a wedding anniversary celebration: convince your guests to make a donation instead of buying a gift.
- For funerals: you may wish to make a donation instead of buying flowers.
- Get Together: organise a spontaneous collection.
- You may wish to send us a monthly or annual donation, whatever the amount.
- You can encourage others to consider donating to the Foundation.
- Ask your employer for a matching scheme which will make your contribution go even further!

Become a HELP-SJAF Champion and ask friends and family to make a donation.

CONTACT US: sjafngo@gmail.com

Foundation SERVICES

1. Family Resource Centres:

- **Ċentru Antida** Family Resource Centre, 51, Tarxien Road, Tarxien. Open from 7.30am to 5 pm daily in winter time (sometimes later as well).; up to 1pm in summer Serves localities of Tarxien, Paola, Fgura and Santa Lucia. Social Work, community outreach, advocacy, referral, information, emotional support, support groups.

Volunteering opportunities, included inclusive volunteering for service users.

Volunteer Handymen in support of vulnerable and poor families.

Learning Support for vulnerable persons supported by Foundation Social Workers. Includes: *For Children*: weekly learning support for primary level students; *For adults*: non-formal learning opportunities such as self-esteem groups & literacy.

Volunteer Befriending for lonely, home-bound elderly persons **Counselling**;

Bazaar in Tarxien (recycling and fundraising).

- **Ċentru Enrichetta** Family Resource Centre, Triq San Tumas, Birżebbuġa. Open Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 8am to 2pm. Social Work service; Family Literacy Support Programme; MCCF service on Tuesdays from 8am to 11am. Tel No. 21652038—99960381.

2. LWIEN Service – support for family carers of persons with mental health problems. Includes family consultations, counselling, support groups, home-visits, social work.

3. SOAR Service: advocacy and support for victims and survivors of domestic violence. Includes workshops on dating and domestic violence for young persons. Tel No. 99927872 from 9:30am to 5pm.

Email: soarmalta@gmail.com.

4. Dar Esther for vulnerable young pregnant women and young mothers: accommodation, educational programme, mentoring. Commissioned by The President's Trust.

5. Emotional Freedom Service for persons wanting to be free from their anger, fear or other emotional distress.

6. Overseas Development Projects: SJAF works with partners in developing countries to formulate anti-poverty projects. It has also arranged for public funding of such projects in Pakistan, Central African Republic, South Sudan and Malawi.

7. Centering Prayer Group for contemplative prayer practice.

NOTE Dar Hosea: day centre for women involved in prostitution. This service has become autonomous and is now self-managed.

All back issues of the SJAF Magazine and other publications are downloadable from:

www.antidemalta.org