

# INTOUCH

ISSUE 58 - July 2023



## Foreword

Skolasajf 2023 has officially commenced!



We kick-started Skolasajf 2023 with a press conference attended by the Hon. Minister Dr. Clifton Grima, the FES Chairperson Ms Pamela Schembri, and the FES CEO Mr Michael Bondin. The event was a promising start to what FES promises to be an unforgettable summer of learning and discovery, as evidenced in the following pages of this newsletter.

The staff in our centres are working hard to offer children a summer of positive memories and new friendships. The Peace by Piece programme is well underway, complimented with additional whole centre activities, such as Fund Raising activities, celebration of village festas, collaboration with Local Councils, and preparation for the end of summer concert. This year FES has engaged a number of playworkers with the specific role of focusing on a discipline from the field of performing arts, who will be a great help for the organisation of the final performance.

One of the pillars of Skolasajf is also the synergy between FES and our valued partners. This year we are supported by 78 partners from different sectors (public, private, and NGOs), who all provide an insight into different learning opportunities and promoting life-skills so important in our daily lives. They are working hard to provide activities and engagements that enrich the Skolasajf programme. From thought-provoking talks and activities in the various centres, to thrilling outings that broaden the students' horizons, every moment is designed to ignite curiosity and enrich young minds.

However, while all this is happening, there are still other ongoing activities in the service areas run by the Foundation. These include preparation for the September Bridge Holidays and for the upcoming Klabb 3-16 service during the scholastic year 2023/24, planning for new programme related ventures and ongoing training of staff, updates and maintenance by technical support, and planning of procurement of resources. There are also ongoing matters where the Corporate Department of FES step-in to fix any failures found in the centres, such those brought by power outages, and finding alternative solutions for climatic control. Registrations for babies and toddlers are ongoing and one can find a step-by step direction on the application process on page 13 of this newsletter.

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# OFFICIAL OPENING OF SKOLASAJF 2023

Skolasajf 2023 was officially launched by Hon Minister **Dr Clifton Grima**. The event was held at Skolasajf Għargħur. The guests were shown around the different classrooms by the Centre Coordinator **Ms Rodianne Gatt**, where they could witness the different range of activities being employed by the children. This year Skolasajf is welcoming 12,030 children; is employing 2,200 staff members, of which 1833 are Playworkers and Child Support Workers; is operating in 54 centres; and working with over 60 partners.



# LOGO COMPETITION WINNERS

Congratulations to our Skolasajf Logo Competition Winners:

**1st Prize - Amy Aquilina Castagna**

**2nd Prize - Amelia Mizzi**

**3rd Prize - Aurora Vella**



You all truly deserve the recognition for your amazing artworks! Keep on designing!

A special thank you to our sponsors, **Copyclub Stationery and Photocopy Bureau**, and **Heritage Malta**, for providing the winners with vouchers and fantastic goody bags!



# WELCOME TO SKOLASAJF 2023!

On 12th July, our Skolasajf Centres started welcoming students for another summer journey full of activities, outings, and best of all...experiences and memories of fun and friendship. These pictures show the enthusiastic welcome prepared by our centres' staff for the students.

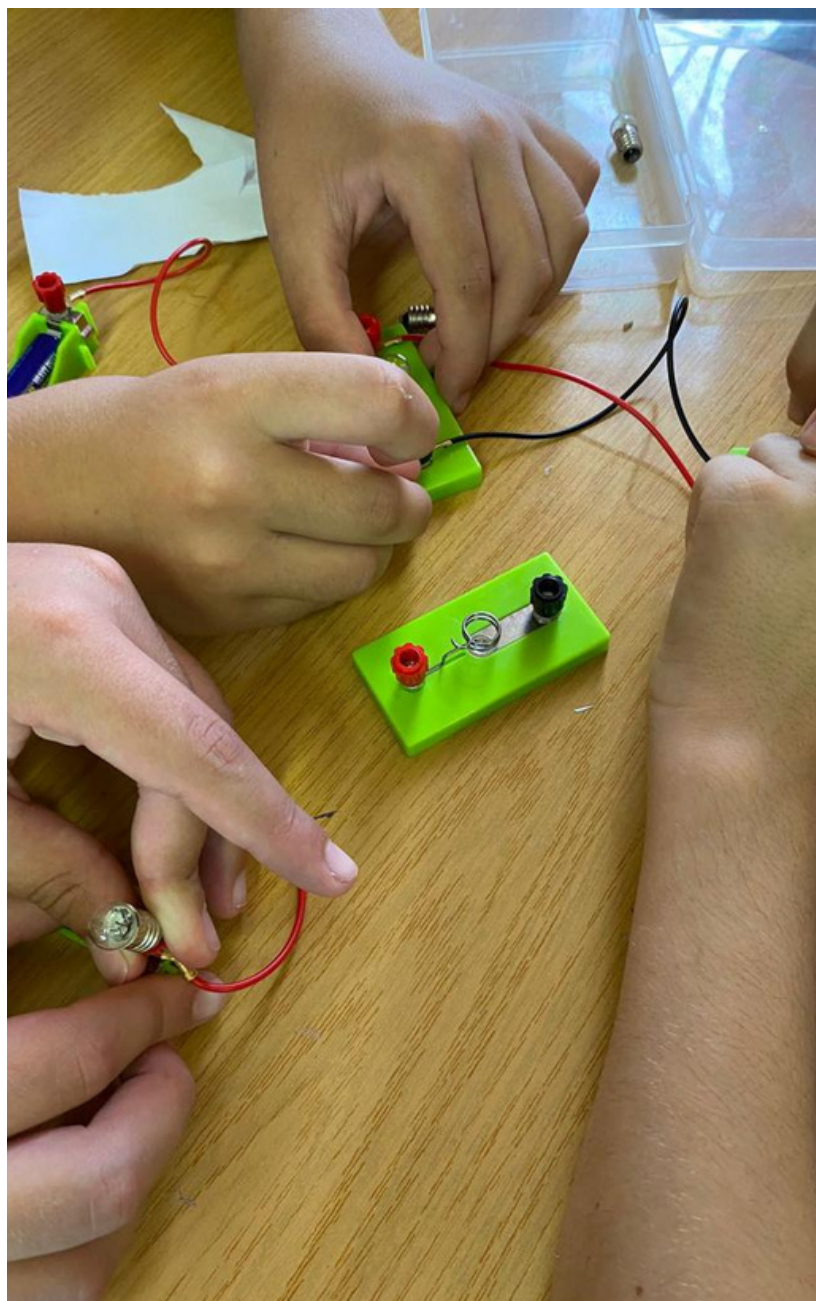


# ROBOTICS DURING SKOLASAJF

One of the partners of FES in the delivery of the Skolasajf Programme, is the **eSkills Malta Foundation**.

eSkills Malta Foundation is working tirelessly to contribute to the increase in digital skills and the development of the IT profession. To this aim, eSkills Malta Foundation is sponsoring for the second consecutive year, a robotics and coding programme in 30 Skolasajf Centres.

Delivered by Data Science Malta, these interactive classes have provided young students with an exceptional academic experience, fostering creativity and nurturing programming skills in a virtual robotic environment. Robotics is instrumental in cultivating critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, and bridging the gap between theory and application. Moreover, it encourages collaboration, nurtures a passion for STEM, and prepares students for the technological future. The overwhelming positive feedback from Skolasajf staff and students highlights the significance of robotics in empowering tomorrow's innovators and shaping a brighter, more technologically advanced future for Malta.



# THE MALTA FILM COMMISSION DURING SKOLASAJF

The Malta Film Commission had been on everyone's lips these past months for the sterling investment in education about the film industry, and the openings for people to explore the employment opportunities in the sector.

These aspects are also being addressed at the foundation, as the Malta Film Commission has partnered with FES to offer Skolasajf students a totally complimentary 2-week intensive course about film. The students are being guided through the history of film, the work behind the scenes that leads to the production of a film, script writing and editing, and hands on experience in filming and editing. The different modules of the course are being delivered by Maltese educators who have been trained by American tutors with years of experience in film education.

Each group of children from the different centres are writing and acting in their own original film. The following pictures are just glimpses of the fun packed days that the students are experiencing as they are progressing from the theory stages to the filming and sound recording and editing of the film.



# PERFORMING ARTS DURING SKOLASAJF

This year FES embarked on a new project within its Skolasajf service, by employing a number of young adults in the role of **Performing Arts Playworkers**. This not served not only as a major injection of artistic forms in the summer service, but also gave a niche work opportunity to University and MCAST students following a course in Performing Arts. Eligible were also applicants who study a performing art as a separate artistic discipline on a personal initiative.

Though the service is being run as a pilot project in a selected number of centres, the feedback received so far has been indeed very positive and encouraging. The children are being engaged in dance, drama, and music, according to the preferred artistic form of the selected playworkers. These sessions are serving to not only allow the children to explore different art form which they may never have the chance to experience, but are also an outlet of self-expression. Children who may tend to shy away from such form of group and expressive interactions, and changing their attitude and are slowly but surely showing an enhanced confidence level and a desire to shine just like their friends.



# SKOLASAJF ACTIVITIES



Rabat - planting sunflower and chia seeds



Żurrieq - Crazy Hair Day in aid of Malta Community Chest Fund



San Miguel RC - Making a smoothie



Siġġiewi - Peace begins with a smile



Hamrun SS - The world and peace



Għarghur - Team building activities



Marsaxlokk - Dancing activities



Attard - Dino Fossils



Helen Keller RC - Cooking activities



Marsa - Sports activities



# OUR PARTNERS IN SKOLASAJF



Żurrieq - Community Police



Rabat - Ambjent Malta



Għajnsielem - ERRC



Żebbug Gozo - Dental Health



Fgura - Eskills



Victoria - Nature Trust FEE Malta



St Julians - Malta Tourism Authority



Haż-Żebbuġ - Be Smart Online



Valletta - TCTC  
Sponsored by the Valletta Local Council



Għarghur - National Museum of Natural History



Tarxien - Servizzi Ewropej Malta

# CHILDCARE ACTIVITIES

At **Il-Merill Childcare Centre**, the children enjoyed a fun-filled activity pretending to be at a BBQ.

The dedicated staff created a beach setting, set up a tent, and creatively crafted props using recycled materials. They also set up a delightful array of toy food for the children to engage with and pretend to cook. This imaginative play fostered creativity and social interaction. It also encouraged fine motor skills development and problem-solving, as the children took on different roles and explored the world of cooking together.

Thanks to all the staff at Il-Merill Childcare Centre for organizing and facilitating this wonderful activity that fuelled the ongoing learning process of the children.



# A WINDOW TO THE CREATIVE MINDS

*I have an only child and he does not get to meet any children his age. How can I help him to socialise?*

*I do not work, so I do not need a full day of childcare. Can I use just some hours in the day?*

*How can I help prepare my child for Kindergarten?*

These are all too common questions that we hear from concerned parents. The FES Childcare service is the optimum solution to address these concerns.

The **10am to 2pm** time window is the perfect opportunity to introduce children to social groups, learn about social boundaries, and learn about acceptable behaviour towards other people.

It is also the time that allows them to wonder and explore, as they develop physical and cognitive skills with a range of child-led learning opportunities.

If the above questions are similar to your concerns, call FES on 22586829 to learn more about our competitive rates of the centres, or send us a WhatsApp message on 79523501 .

Vacancies for your child are available especially at **Floriana, San Gwann and Birgu**.

Make the most of these hours by calling:

Floriana - It-Tgħanniqa Childcare Centre on 25982611  
San Gwann - Is-Sardinella Childcare Centre on 21372851  
Birgu - Il-Kuluri Childcare Centre on 21809285

NEED JUST A FEW HOURS  
OF CHILDCARE?

**10AM TO 2PM**

**fes**  
Foundation for Educational Services

COMPETITIVE RATES!  
CALL US 22586829

SOCIALISATION  
&  
EXPLORATION

22586800

fes@gov.mt

www.fes.gov.mt

# CHILDCARE

## REGISTRATIONS AND EXTENDED HOURS

### Extended Childcare Hours

Monday - Friday  
06:00-18:00

Birgu	Tel: +356 2180 9285
Birkirkara	Tel: +356 2598 5561
Naxxar	Tel: +356 2598 6820
Pembroke	Tel: +356 2137 6644
Haż-Żebbuġ	Tel: +356 2598 7681
Qawra	Tel: +356 2598 6996

FES Head Office TEL: +356 22586829



The FES Childcare Centres are offering the service **over a longer period of hours** in six centres.

The centers at **Birgu, Birkirkara, Naxxar, Pembroke, Haż-Żebbuġ** and **Qawra**, are now accepting children between **6am and 6pm, from Monday to Friday**.

Parents interested in using this service are encouraged to contact FES, or any of the chosen centres, or visit the **service.gov hubs**, for more information.

**Registrations are also open** for the remaining FES Childcare Centres at:  
**Bormla, Siggiewi, St Venera, San Gwann, Marsa, and Floriana.**

A full list of the FES centres with all the contact details can be found at:  
<https://fes.gov.mt/childcare-centres/>

Queries to FES can be asked on telephone **22586829** or via email to [fes@gov.mt](mailto:fes@gov.mt)

# HOW TO APPLY FOR OUR CHILDCARE SERVICES

**1. Choose your preferred centre from the list found at:**

<https://fes.gov.mt/childcare-centres/>

You can also have a look inside of the centres, by watching the videos at:

<https://fes.gov.mt/en/Pages/Child%20Care/Videos.aspx>.

**2. You can download an application form from:**

<https://fes.gov.mt/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Childcare-Registration-Form.pdf>

You can also contact the chosen centre directly, ask for a tour of the place, and get the application directly from there.



Children can be registered at the centre by handing over to the Centre Coordinator, the filled-in application form together with the necessary documents. Only one application per child is to be submitted.

The Centre Coordinators and the FES FB Messenger service are always available to answer your queries. The Centre Coordinators will also be available to help you fill in the application form.

The childcare service is offered to children until they are eligible to move on to the government Kindergarten on the 1st of February, while children who are three years of age by the end of December are eligible for Kindergarten on the 1st of October, of that same calendar year.

# MEET OUR EMPLOYEES

Name: **Wayne Borg**

Role: **Programme Coordinator (Technical Support)**



## How long have you been working in your role at FES?

I have been working as a Programme Coordinator (Technical Support) since November of 2020, so for nearly 3 years. I also worked as a Coordinator Administration for a year and a half before my current role. Coming to think of it, this is actually my seventh Skolasajf at FES as a student and full-timer. All my roles at the FES have been in the Corporate Services Section.

## Do you remember your first day in this role? Were you nervous or excited?

Yes, I actually do! Given that I already had a role as a Coordinator Administration, it wasn't as daunting. I definitely remember I was excited when I changed my email signature to include my new role. My role as a Programme Coordinator Technical support had been something that I had definitely been working towards and I was delighted to embark on this role.

## Now that Skolasajf has officially started, how has this impacted your responsibilities and workload?

Skolasajf inadvertently brings up a multitude of new challenges, an immensely increased workload and extra responsibilities. The number of centres that we have to cater for during Summer this year is around 55 Skolasajf centres, together with around 12 childcare centres that still need assistance and support from the FES Head Office.

Specifically for my role, Skolasajf brings about new challenges with CORP accounts for Skolasajf staff, preparation of laptops for the increased number of personnel working at FES, printer installations at centres, network and telephone difficulties, mobile sim card activations, distribution of mobile phones and digital cameras to all centres, among other things.

I sincerely believe that for Skolasajf, planning ahead is very crucial to ensure a successful one. Under the exemplary leadership of Amanda Mifsud, our Corporate Services Manager, our section starts planning for Skolasajf at least 10 months prior. We start by discussing all challenges that we faced during that particular Skolasajf and acknowledge how these can be addressed the following year as most difficulties can be mitigated with proper planning. Additionally, we share a timeline where we can track our progress and help us keep accountable with meeting our deadlines. We still experience a great number of issues during the day-to-day running of Skolasajf yet we always manage to deal with them in an effective and efficient manner.

## Which person has made the biggest impact on you in your career? How so?

I would certainly say that our manager Amanda has helped me the most and had the biggest impact in my career thus far. She took me under her wing when I was a student and mentored me, teaching me invaluable lessons to this day. Even during difficult personal times, she always showed empathy and went out of her way to help in any way she could. Through Amanda, I wholeheartedly believe that one of the greatest qualities a person and more importantly a leader could have is firm kindness. Being kind, yet firm in both the workplace and everyday life shows a great deal of respect to other people and oneself, which sometimes I personally neglect. Amanda's work ethic and positive attitude towards difficulties we encounter everyday at FES have deeply impacted and inspired me, while being something I try my best to emulate.

## What is your proudest personal achievement?

I do not have a specific personal achievement that I am proud of, that I can pinpoint. I am more of a person to be proud of my general work and qualities, which I actively try to do my best in and improve each and every day. I believe that this fuels and motivates me to further better myself both in my work and personal life.

# MEET OUR EMPLOYEES

Name: **Hailey Jones**

Role: **Playworker at Sliema Skolasajf Centre**



## **What attracted you to the role of a Playworker?**

I have always wanted to work with children, to help them and make sure that they are being supported well. These are factors that will for sure contribute and be an important part of their growth. The role of a Playworker is the perfect opportunity to help me achieve my dream of working with children. When I finished my Diploma in Health and Social Care, I felt that the educational path that I had embarked on had armed me with the knowledge and experience to work as a playworker.

## **How do you organize your days at the centre in charge of a class?**

Being prepared is key. Planning not only facilitates my work, but is also a fulfilment of my responsibility towards the children that I would be in charge of for the day. I would have already have a plan of the activities from the Programme Manual, so then I check on the number of children who will be in class and collect the right amount of resources from the Klabb 3-16 office. All this helps me to keep the children occupied while being entertained at the same time. When I meet the children of my group, I make sure that they have their lunch break. This is followed by HW (depending on the age group), and then different activities such as arts and crafts, science experiments, story-telling, and also outdoor physical activities. During these activities, the children are also socialising by talking to their friends, and both their parents and we have the peace of mind that they are in a safe environment. I also like to focus on promoting good self-esteem among my students with lots of praise and involvement in all the activities.

## **Summer is associated also with relaxing at the beach. How do you manage the balance between work and your social life?**

In previous jobs, I have always been constantly overworked which led to a neglect of my personal life, burnout, and lack of self-care. After that experience I promised myself that this will not happen again. Now I learnt how to balance my work and social life, by making sure that I spend time with myself, friends, and family. I also learned how to manage time and stress in order not to have an overload, by planning and setting boundaries. The role of a playworkers allows me to strike this balance as I can plan from before, have a schedule, and the hours still allow me time to carry out other personal initiatives.

## **What is your proudest personal achievement?**

There are two proudest moment in my life so far. These are finishing my Diploma in Health and Social Care. as well as becoming a Learning Support Educator (LSE). Another thing that I did recently, which I consider a personal achievement as it was something out of my comfort zone, was that I managed to travel solo to Valencia last May.

## **What's something on your bucket list?**

Since I was young, I always loved to make a list on my diary, of things that I would like to do when I grew up, and always loved to tick them off. Although I ticked off lots of wishes, I still have a lot to do! A few of the things on my bucket list are volunteering abroad, visiting Bali, and going to Disney World.

# Photo of the month



Photo by: Martha Cutajar Penza







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