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Editorial Note

Hope you enjoyed reading the special edition of the newsletter about National Operators Meeting. In this edition we will be highlighting the main activities that occurred during the first scholastic term. Besides the regular reports about school activities, in this issue we will be introducing a new feature called **Decide for Yourself**. As teachers you are frequently faced with questions and decisions about certain environmental issues about which you might not be very informed. This new feature will provide you with the relevant information that would allow you (and your class) to reach your own conclusions and take the necessary actions.

Annual FEE programmes seminars

Nature Trust has continued to provide schools with tangible ideas how to integrate ESD in the curriculum. This year this was done through interactive sessions, during which students and teachers alike were introduced to educational material available through the Alter Aqua Project, the YRE and LEAF programmes.



The Gozo Seminar was hosted at the Gozo College Nadur Primary on 20th November 2012 and was attended by 11 schools, that is 25 teachers and 35 students. The Minister for Gozo, Hon. Giovanna Debono distributed the



The Hon. Giovanna Debono, Minister for Gozo, awarding the Green Flag



Attendees for the Malta Seminar



Nature Trust (Malta)
PO Box 9
Valletta VLT1000
<http://www.naturetrustmalta.org/>



3rd Green Flag to Gozo College Xagħra Primary, the 2nd Green Flag to Gozo College Nadur Primary and the Silver Award to Gozo College Rabat Primary. The seminar was also attended by Gozo College Principal, Ms Anita Sciberras. The Malta Seminar was hosted at St Edward's College on 22nd November 2012 and was attended by 78 teachers and 95 students from 47 schools.

FEE Programmes Award-Giving ceremony

This year's FEE Programmes Award Ceremony was held on the 11th December 2011 at the St Monica School, Gżira. The event was mainly devoted to the giving of awards for the EkoSkola, LEAF and YRE programmes. Various distinguished guests congratulated the students, teachers and schools receiving the awards and the certificates of merit. A list of the awards is given on the following page. Well done for your achievements!

Ġnejnet Nicole Zahra at St Margaret College Kalkara Primary



Unveiling of the plaque

July 2010, aged 10. Nicole together with her peers dreamt of an area where children could play safely among endemic trees, breathing fresh air and embellishing the environment. The Kalkara Local Council, the School Council, Nature Trust Malta and HSBC all pitched in to help. The idea was to have a garden that serves as a recreational area for school children and ultimately for the Kalkara Community.

The children's design of benches made of recycled wood and old rubber tyres was realized by Local Council workers who helped in clearing the area. The colourful benches now adorn the area while informative boards such about climate change, solar energy and rubble walls are lit up by small lights using

A sustainable garden that enhances biodiversity and promotes renewable energy in a bid to combat climate change was inaugurated on the 10th December 2012 by Head of School Miriam Mallia and Kalkara Mayor Mr Michael Cohen. The idea to turn a derelict area of the school into a garden was that of the EkoSkola Committees over these past years. One particular student on the EkoSkola Committee was Nicole Zahra who died tragically in



Nicole Zahra – her love for the environment lives on



The commemorative plaque with Nicole's drawing on the left

solar energy. Mr and Mrs Zahra, Nicole's parents, unveiled the outside plaque bearing their daughter's name and planted a tree in commemoration of their daughter.

In his address, Aiden Brignone, the EkoSkola Committee President, urged the Local Council to continue realizing Nicole's and the children's dream further by making the garden accessible from inside the school. Nicole Zahra lives on in her garden – 'Ġnejnet Nicole Zahra'

Written by Ms Miriam Mallia - Head of School

List of Awards

EkoSkola Awards

4th Green Flag

St Joseph, Mater Boni Consilii School, Paola
St Joseph School, Blata l-Bajda

3rd Green Flag

Gozo College, Xagħra Primary
San Gorg Preca College, Paola Primary A
St Benedict College, Kirkop Primary C
St Ignatius College Siggiewi Primary School

2nd Green Flag

Gozo College, Nadur Primary
St Benedict College, Mqabba Primary
St Benedict College, Girls' Secondary, Tarxien
St Francis School, Birkirkara
St Francis School, Sliema
St Margaret College, Żejtun Primary A
St Nicholas College, Baħrija Primary
The Archbishop's Seminary, Rabat - Malta

1st Green Flag

Maria Regina College, Mosta Girls' Secondary
St Benedict College, Qrendi Primary
St Benedict College, Safi Primary
St Dorothy Senior School
St Edwards College
St Joseph Junior School, Sliema
St Joseph Senior School, Sliema
St Margaret College Girls' Secondary Cospicua
St Monica School, Gżira
St Therese College, Birkirkara Primary

Silver Award

Gozo College, Rabat Primary
Maria Regina College, Mellieħa Primary
St Benedict College, Birżebbuġia Primary
St Claire College, Gżira Primary
St Ignatius College, Luqa Primary
St Ignatius College, Qormi - San Ġorġ Primary

Bronze Award

Sacred Heart Senior School, St Julians
St Thomas More College, Girls' Secondary, Żejtun

Eco-Code Poster Competition

Junior Section

Jade and Julia Bonello from Maria Regina College,
Naxxar Primary

Senior Section

Daena Marie Constantine from St Benedict
College, Tarxien Girls' Secondary

LEAF Award

San Anton School, Imsejjet

YRE Awards

Article Entries 11-14 years category

1st prize: Caroline Vassallo & Marta Cachia (St Joseph School, Sliema) ... also came 1st in the International Award

2nd prize: Paula Gambin, Cherise Grech, Shannon Pace, Megan Galea & Cherise Chetcuti (St Margaret College, Girls' Secondary School, Żejtun)

3rd prize: Celine Camilleri (St Margaret College, Girls' Secondary School, Żejtun)

Article Entries 15-18 years category

1st prize: Georgie Zahra & Nicholas Attard (San Anton School, Imsejjet) ... also came 2nd in the International Award

2nd prize: Hertian Vassallo (St. Margaret College, Boys' Secondary School, Verdala)

3rd prize: Rebecca Mercieca (Junior College, Msida)

Photo Entries 11-14 years category

1st prize: Jonathan Joseph Barbara (The Archbishop's Seminary School, Rabat)

2nd prize: Yasmin Joy Attard (Our Lady Immaculate School, Ħamrun)

3rd prize: Rachel Marie Farrugia (St. Clare's College Girls' Secondary)

Photo Entries 15-18 years category

1st prize: Shanise Micallef (St Benedict College, Girls' Secondary School, Tarxien)

2nd prize: Joslyn Falzon (St Benedict College, Girls' Secondary School, Tarxien)

3rd prize: Joslyn Falzon (St Benedict College, Girls' Secondary, Tarxien)

Video Entry 11-14 years category

1st prize: Grace Anne Muscat (St Margaret College, Girls' Secondary School, Żejtun)

2nd prize: Andre Abela & Liam Darmanin (De La Salle College)

Video Entry 15-18 years category

1st prize: Steve Zammit Lupi (Junior College, Msida)

Video Entry 19-21 years category

1st prize: Roderick Baldacchino, Johann Camilleri, Joseph Degabriele, David Ellul, Tonio Farrugia & Jean Claude Schembri, (Eco-Centre, Żejtun Parish, Żejtun)

Focusing on waste reduction

On the 7th November, 2012, the EkoSkola Committee of the Gozo College Girls Secondary School, organised an outing for us, Form 1 students. We went to the Civic Amenity Centre which is located in Tal-Kus, Xewkija. Civic Amenity Sites are places where members of the public can dispose of large household waste. As soon as we



arrived, a WasteServ official gave us a brief description of what goes on at this centre. We were taken around the Centre for a detailed description of what goes on in this site. The area is divided into different sections according to the waste material. There are sections for: White Goods (Washing machines, geezers); Mattresses; Tyres; Cardboard and Clothing.

The purpose of these centres is to collect and reuse certain types of waste. The Civic Amenity Centre is open every day including public holidays. This visit was very interesting as I not only learned new things about waste and how it can be used again and again if we decide to recycle it, but it gave us useful information to share at home and with friends. This way my family and friends can start using this convenient site and together we will be helping and keeping our environment cleaner and greener.

Article written by Monique Camilleri (1 Sempreviva)

The EkoSkola Committee celebrated the European Week for Waste Reduction from the 19th – 23rd November, 2012 at our school. All Form 1 students had the opportunity to visit the Civic Amenity Site at Tal-Kus, Xewkija where the students were guided throughout the site by a WasteServ representative. Students were able to ask questions regarding the site and its use. Following this visit, the EkoSkola committee organised a power point presentation for all Form 1 students on recycling. Students found this presentation very interesting and a number of questions were asked by the students following the presentation. Since the first week of school, a school based competition was organised for all the school population. Criteria for winning the competition were based on the best clean class, most efficient class regarding the use of energy, proper and frequent use of recycling bins in classes and the class that had the most waste-free lunches during the European Week for Waste Reduction. The competition was won by Form 1 Sempreviva and a re-usable bag was given to all the students of this class as a token for taking part and winning this competition. This competition will be repeated each term.



Environmental Initiatives

Being the main school ESD network in Malta, EkoSkola receives a lot of requests from local and foreign organisations to circulate among our member schools information about environmental initiatives that they are organising. We have decided to dedicate part of our newsletter specifically for this purpose. Feel free to participate in any of these

activities. However, kindly keep in mind that participation in these activities is not compulsory nor is it a requirement for your efforts to achieve the Green Flag. **You** decide whether you want to participate or not. If you intend to present any of the activities listed, you should ensure that it is included in your Action Plan as part of your strategy to address the issues identified in your environmental Review ... not as a stand alone.

(a) Book Box



Book Box is a non-profit organisation whose main aim is to promote reading in Maltese localities. This is done through the use of swap-libraries found inside the traditional red telephone box. The system works as follows: Persons visiting the Book Box exchange their book with a book from the Box. Before leaving, they make a note of what they have taken and what they have left on a notebook found inside the Book Box. This ensures an ever-replenished stock. Anyone can make use of it as there are books targeting all ages and genres suiting every taste. We have received various positive responses from local councils and are sure of at least two Book Boxes opening in the near future.

We are appealing to all the schools as well as the public in general to donate books which they have already read, thus recycling them and making them available for free. We believe this initiative will foster a greater love for books as it is an unconventional and fun way to borrow and lend books. For more information phone 99454829 info@bookbox.com.mt or visit www.bookbox.com.mt. For donations write donate@bookbox.com.mt.

(b) Support from Student Interns

AIIESEC is the world's largest student organisation present in 113 countries and territories. Its primary objective is to offer students leadership and exchange opportunities of a voluntary or internship nature.



AIIESEC is currently working on a project called C3, which stands for 'Clean x Conserve x Contribute'. This is an environmental project based on 6 weeks from January to February targeted at foreign students who would like to come to Malta in order to participate in this project. We intend to have 8-10 interns working on this project who would be allotted into different activities. Activities would include cleanups, helping in the conservation of reserves and being of an inspiration to students by educating them through their experience. We are offering our support to schools by helping out with their ongoing

environmental projects related to EkoSkola, LEAF and YRE environmental projects. These interns could also share their experiences with primary and secondary students. For more information contact; info.malta@aiesec.net, access the following links: www.aiesecmalta.org, www.facebook.com/aiesecmalta, twitter.com/AIESECMalta, or read our newsletter: <http://issuu.com/nic21/docs/aiesecmalta>.

Teaching Resources

Continuing with our list of useful websites ideal for lesson planning and project work related to environmental education.

(a) Reuse.com.mt

Malta's Waste Management has made a great step forward. Reusing has never been this simple! This website provides users with the opportunity to donate stuff that they no longer

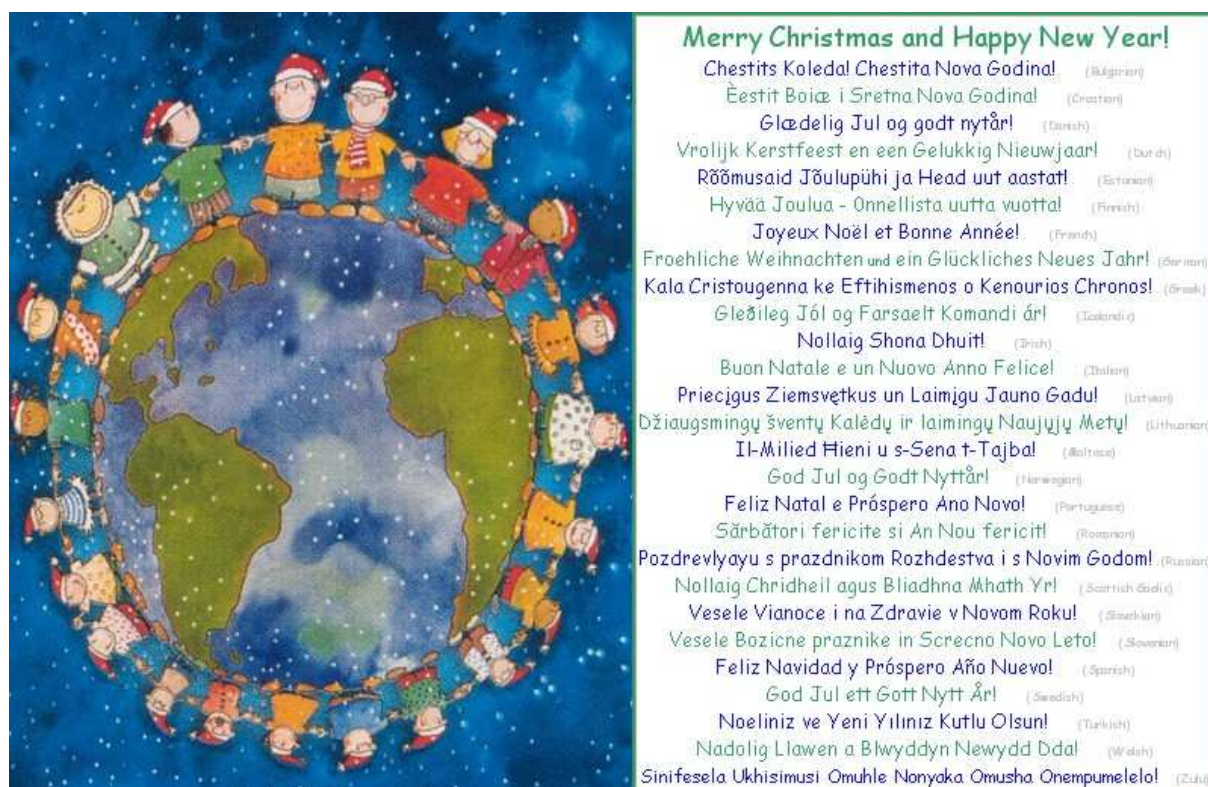


need and obtain objects that they might need. This EU sponsored service is provided free of charge by WasteServ and users are encouraged to make a small donation to charity. The objects are organised in the following categories for easier access: Phones & Electronics; Computers & Office; Household Appliances; Furniture; DIY & Tools; Toys, Children & Baby; Fashion & Accessories; Books, Film & Music; Arts & Crafts; Sports & Leisure; Pet & Garden and Other Items. Spread the word! Start reusing and encourage your friends to do the same!

(b) Tox Town



This website is a treasure trove of resources related to environmental health. It provides information about toxic chemicals and environmental health risks we might encounter in our everyday life, in everyday places. Although the site is US based, most of the chemicals and situations described are quite relevant to our situation. The teachers' page can be found here: http://www.toxtown.nlm.nih.gov/text_version/teachers.php.



If you would like to contribute to this newsletter please contact Prof Paul Pace, National EkoSkola Co-ordinator, on paul.j.pace@um.edu.mt.

Visit our website on <http://ekoskola.org.mt/> or facebook on www.facebook.com/ekoskola.

Balloon Releases

Decide for yourself



What is wrong with balloon releases?

Organizations, communities, families and individuals from all over the world release millions of helium filled balloons into the air each year to celebrate or publicize some special occasion.

Are all balloons the same? There are two types of toy balloons: (a) "latex" balloons which are made either from natural or synthetic rubber, and (b) "foil" or "mylar" balloons which are made from a metal coated plastic such as polyethylene (PE) or nylon. Balloon releases almost always involve the release of the rubber latex balloons rather than the foil balloons mainly because the latter are more expensive.

What happens to the balloons after they are released?

About 10% of released balloons don't burst; they float back down to earth. The rest rise up in the atmosphere where they tend to expand because the atmospheric pressure decreases. At a height of about 8km the volume increases to the point where the elastic limit of the rubber is reached. Moreover, the temperature (-25°C at this height) makes the balloon rubber brittle. The balloon fractures into several small pieces of rubber that float back down to earth and are scattered over a wide area with most of them ending in the seas.

Why are stranded balloons dangerous? Floating balloons are often mistaken for food by sea turtles, sea birds and marine mammals (i.e. whales, dolphins and seals). Once swallowed the balloon will block the digestive tract if swallowed and eventually lead to death by starvation. Strings, ribbons or other materials tied to the balloons are an added hazard as they can wrap around fins, flippers, and limbs, causing infection, amputation, or drowning.

Do balloons ever go away? Sunlight and weathering, exposure to water and exposure to soil degrade latex balloons in about 6 months when exposed to air but may take up to 12 months in seawater. In both cases that is still long enough to claim animals' lives and to litter the environment. The situation is made worse by any ribbons and cards attached to the balloons. Synthetic rubber and "foil" or "mylar" balloons are the worst as they do not degrade and remain in the environment. For these reasons, certain communities have enacted laws against balloon releases based on the fact that these releases are an act of littering and a threat to wildlife.

Visit <http://balloonsblow.org/> for more information about the issue, resources for the classroom and environmentally-friendly alternatives to balloon releases



This sea bird, entangled in a balloon ribbon, will die because it cannot fly, hunt for food and avoid predators. Visit <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6E3TggqKjUY> to watch a video clip on balloon releases.

**Celebrate responsibly!
Avoid hazardous
waste!**



What goes
up ...

... must
come down

