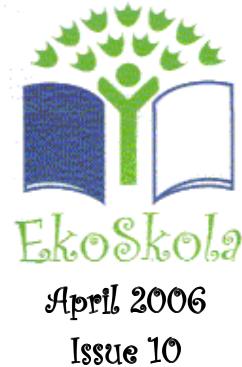


EkoSkola Network Newsletter

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An Easter thought



At times when we watch documentaries or read the news, we tend to get discouraged with what is happening to the environment around us. It seems that no matter how hard we try to protect our Earth and all the living things in it, there is always a new problem that we have to deal with.

At times these environmental problems seem too big for us to handle and beyond our control. But Easter is a time when we are reminded that even when things seem really bad and we feel disheartened there is always hope beyond death ... a solution for every problem. Listen to what the Apostle Paul had to say:

Creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. (Rom 8: 19-21)

This is the kind of Easter greeting that we of EkoSkola would like to wish you. Keep on working to improve the environment around you hoping, or rather believing, that WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

The EkoSkola 2006 Seminar

February 9th marked this scholastic year's annual EkoSkola Seminar. Attended by 119 teachers and students from 50 different schools, this seminar was truly the most special event to date in the history of EkoSkola. The first two Green Flags, ever to be awarded in the Maltese Islands, were presented to St Joseph Junior and Senior School of Blata l-Bajda and to St Joseph School of Paola. The feeling was electrifying!

The event was opened by Nature Trust's president, Mr Vince Attard, who briefly outlined EkoSkola's success over the past years. The authors of this success were really the students who together with their teachers



Nature Trust (Malta)
PO Box 9
Valletta CMR 01
<http://www.naturetrustmalta.org>



have committed themselves to actively improve the quality of life in their respective schools. This same theme was also echoed by Mr Raymond Camilleri, Director for Curriculum Management, who reiterated his department's commitment towards fostering the principles of the EkoSkola programme that reflect the spirit of the principles underlying the National Curriculum.

The Minister for Rural Affairs and the Environment, Hon George Pullicino, pointed out that besides being a prestigious achievement, winning the Green Flag is also a public token of environmental responsibility. Students from the awarded schools will now have the added task of "*showing the way to other children so that slowly but surely we can build an environmentally responsible society*". The event was also attended by Ms Sonia Camilleri, the Commissioner for Children, who praised all the children for their active involvement in the management of their schools.

Another important guest attending the seminar was Xummiemu, Wasteserv's environmental mascot, who pledged full support for any EkoSkola initiative. For this involvement in the programme, the minister gave Xummiemu an EkoSkola T-Shirt and appointed him official mascot of EkoSkola.

The award ceremony did not just involve the schools ... but Nature Trust decided to award Mr Raymond Attard, Mayor of Paola, for his incessant support for the EkoSkola programme. The NT president pointed out that Paola has three schools that are participating in the programme and he hoped that other mayors and local councils would imitate Mr Attard's dedication to the fostering of environmental education in the community.



The Minister for Rural Affairs and the Environment, Hon. George Pullicino, awarding the Green Flags to the EkoSkola Committee members of St Joseph – Mater Boni Consilii Paola (left) and St Joseph – Blata I-Bajda (right)



Mr Raymond Attard, Mayor of Paola receiving an award for his outstanding support for the EkoSkola programme in his locality

Xummiemu receiving his official EkoSkola T-Shirt from the Minister and the EkoSkola National Co-ordinator

Children from Leli Camilleri - Zurrieq Primary School A explaining one of their EkoSkola initiatives through drama

This year's presentation about the EkoSkola programme was given by the children themselves who shared their first hand experiences with the other schools through photos and a PowerPoint presentation. The EkoSkola 2006 Seminar was concluded with a brief skit, organised by the EkoSkola committee of Leli Camilleri - Zurrieq Primary School A, that symbolised the positive impact their initiatives were having on the school environment.

Green Flag hoisting ceremonies

Being awarded the Green Flag is already a special occasion ... imagine what it would mean hoisting the flag for the first time in your school. Below are two accounts of these ceremonies sent in by children from the respective award winning schools.



I am proud to say that my school is one of the first to have been given the prestigious "Green Flag"! We, the entire Junior school and Senior school, have been working hard for several years and finally, we are overjoyed that our efforts have been recognised.

On the morning of March 14th we were honoured

with the presence of the Minister for the Environment, Dr George Pullicino, Dr Paul Pace, National EkoSkola Coordinator, and Mr Vincent Attard, President of Nature Trust Malta. All the students from Pre Grade to Form V, together with all our teachers and the domestic staff, assembled around the flagpole on the school roof, to witness the official hoisting of our Green Flag!



The ceremony started with Year 5 pupils singing Julian Lennon's song, "Saltwater Lyrics", a wonderful song with meaningful lyrics which were most appropriate for the occasion. The President and the Vice President of the EkoSkola committee, Angelique Bonello and Rebecca Stivala then spoke to us about our commitment and responsibility towards the Environment. This was followed by two short speeches from Mr Pullicino and Dr Pace, in which they explained the importance of caring for the environment and praised us for our efforts towards improving it.

Then – the moment we had all been waiting for finally came – up went the "Green Flag" whilst we all sang "Heal the World". What a



thrill it was to watch it go higher and higher and what a thrill it still is to be greeted by it every morning when we go to school!

I am extremely grateful for having been able to achieve the "Green Flag" and I am sure that all students, including myself, are keen to keep renewing this effort. On behalf of all the students, I would like to thank Ms J Cauchi, Ms A. Mifsud, Ms E. Micallef, the EkoSkola Coordinators and all the Administration for helping us to make this possible.

(*This article was sent by Ms Victoria Calleja - (EkoSkola Committee - St. Joseph, Blata l-Bajda)*)



On the 29th of March, our school, St.Joseph, Mater Boni Consilii, Paola, organised a special ceremony in which we hoisted the most awaited prestigious award, the Green



Flag. This event took place in our school yard and was attended by a lot of parents. Special guests were invited including the Hon. Minister George Pullicino, the Opposition Spokesperson for Education Mr Carmelo Abela, Mr. Ray Attard, Mayor of Paola, Dr. Paul Pace, the EkoSkola national co-ordinator, Mr. Vince Attard, NatureTrust president, the well-known Maltese author Mr. Trevor Zahra, and Ms. Therese Cremona, co-ordinator of Ninja Waħda.

The ceremony started at 9:15a.m with the introductory speeches of the chairperson and the vice chairperson who shared with us what EkoSkola and the Green Flag meant to them. This was followed by the school choir who sang a wonderful song called "Another Day in Paradise". The solo part was sung by Mandy Randon who sang gracefully!!



Then it was time for Grade 4 to perform the play in Maltese "Is-Sejħa" which was written by Trevor Zahra. The message in this play was very direct and encouraged us all not to ruin the few natural habitats we have left on our island. Later on, the choir sang another song called "Allerġija ghall-bnedmin" together with a very special guest, Mark Tonna. His presence was also appreciated by all of us and we enjoyed joining in the chorus of this song which won 'L-Għanja tal-Poplu' 1996. It was really fun and the chorus is still ringing in my head! At about 10:00 Francesca Ebejer of Grade 6 read a poem called 'Waste' written by myself.



Xummiemu was invited along as well, but unfortunately he was very sick and couldn't make it. But the school choir sang his song instead "Ta' min hu l-ambjent?" All the students were anxious to know the winners of the Four Friends Competition which was held as part of the Ninja Wahda Activities. This competition required the design of a bookmark about one of the four animals: the painted frog, the butterfly, the ladybird and the water crab and add a slogan to it. All the designs were very beautiful and we, the

EkoSkola Committee had a hard time to choose the winners. Elena Mallia came first, followed by Theresa Mallia and Katya Betts. Ms. Therese Cremona presented the winners wonderful books which were kindly donated by **Bookends in Gallarija, Fgura**.

As our school consistently promotes Physical Education, a gymnastic routine was displayed by children with ages ranging from 4 to 12 years. They performed to the song "Crazy Frog" under the guidance of their gymnastics teacher, Ms. Stefania Dalli and they did really well. Then it was time for all the distinguished guests to deliver their speeches which were short but straight to the point.

Finally, the most awaited moment arrived, the HOISTING OF THE GREEN FLAG. It was a magical moment! Me and my other three friends, as members of the EkoSkola



Committee hoisted the flag together while everybody was clapping and some of the students even shouted with joy. While we were hoisting the flag the school choir sang the song "When you believe" which is closely related to our School's motto "Believe and Achieve". Actually our school believed in the EkoSkola programme and worked very hard to achieve this award.

This great celebration ended up with the National Anthem. However, this celebration wouldn't have a meaning if we do not carry on with our hard work so as to improve the environment in our school, at home, in our village and of course in our island. If every one of us tries to do his small part, we will surely have a more beautiful, cleaner, safer and a better Malta.

(This article was sent by Ms Sarah Spiteri – Secretary EkoSkola Committee - St. Joseph, Paola)



EkoSkola Parliament 2006

Those who had the opportunity to attend last year's edition of the EkoSkola Parliament know full well the impact that school children left on the members of parliament with their sincere and committed reports about the work they were doing at school and in the surrounding community through the EkoSkola programme. MPs, particularly the Minister for Rural Affairs and the Environment, have asked Nature Trust to repeat the experience. So for the second consecutive year NT will organise another session of the EkoSkola Parliament, in collaboration with the Ministry and the Malta Environment and Planning Authority (MEPA).

During last year's session EkoSkola children tabled a motion that was approved by both sides of the House of Representatives. This motion was instrumental for the placing of environmental education issues on the political agenda of our country. Through their comments and discussions EkoSkola children have also actively participated in the improvement of the state of environmental education. With this national commitment as a backdrop, the organisers wanted to go a step further this year! With the recent publication of the State of the Environment Report



(SOER), we felt that this year's EkoSkola Parliament session should target this important document. The main aim is that of exposing school children to SOER and asking them to rewrite it in **their** own language and to present **their** own concerns about the environmental issues expressed in the document. Considering the time frames available this is not an easy task ... but on the other hand EkoSkola children (and their teachers) are renowned for overcoming challenges!

In the coming days, schools will receive the complete SOER report. Schools wanting to participate in this event are kindly asked to choose **one** SOER theme that they feel is particularly relevant to them. The SOER themes are: Air; Climate Change; Land; Soil; Landscape; Waters; Waste; and Biodiversity. Together with their co-ordinating teacher, the EkoSkola Committee (and other students) will explore the chosen theme in detail and think about issues that they would like to talk about and communicate to the other children of Malta. Each school will then receive professional help to express their ideas through any one of the following: Printed media, Video Production, Radio Production, Web authoring and Performing Arts.

All the productions made by the students will then be collated into a single publication that will be presented to and discussed with the MPs attending the EkoSkola Parliament 2006 session. These children's inputs will also be presented during the Environment Fair organised as part of the Environment Week celebrations, and the publication will also be distributed in schools.

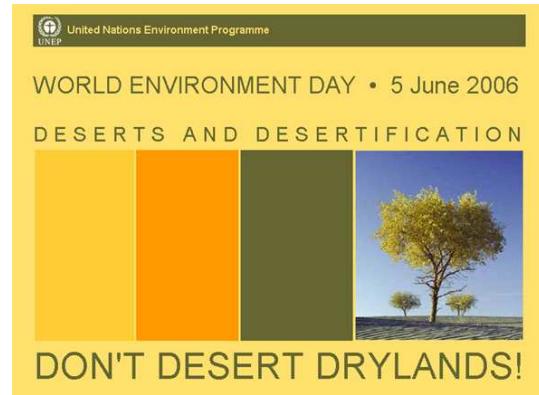
Enclosed with this circular please find SOER and an application form to participate in this initiative. We would like to kindly invite you to participate in this year's session so that we can keep the momentum started by last year's event going.

Although the activity is mainly targeted at students between the ages of 10-14 years, younger and older students who feel that they can give a valid input are most welcomed to participate. Should you require any further information and assistance, please do not hesitate to contact Dr Paul Pace on paul.j.pace@um.edu.mt.

UNEP – World Environment Day (WED)

World Environment Day 2006 will be commemorated on Monday 5 June. The theme for this year is Deserts and Desertification and the slogan is "Don't Desert Drylands!"

To commemorate this important day, UNEP, is inviting partners, organizations and friends from around the world to undertake environmental activities to mark this day. In this respect, we would like to suggest that you select a WED activity that would enable you create awareness on environmental concerns in your country, community, or school. If possible, the activity should relate to the 2006 WED theme. Examples of previous activities include; painting competitions, tree planting, clean-ups, recycling efforts. For more examples please visit the UNEP website: <http://www.unep.org/wed/2006/>



International Children's Exhibition Competition

The theme of this painting competition is "Children draw flowers, the sea, the world". The purpose of this initiative is to stimulate the development of children's creativity and imagination and to give possibilities for their creative individuality. The competition is open to children **up to 12 years** of age. Competitors can send no more than 3 paintings.

They are free to choose the form, methods and materials they want to use for their creation. All paintings should be sent to the following address:

Municipal Children's Complex
Tzar Asen Str. 2
8200 Pomorie
Bulgaria

Participants need to ensure that the following information is attached at the back of each of their paintings (entries without this information won't be accepted):

Name:
Second name:
Surname:
Age:
Full address and phone number:
School:
Name of the work/ painting/:

The jury will consist of three prominent Bulgarian artists who will nominate the best works. The best works will receive special prizes and other participants will receive diplomas for participation.

Participants will be informed of the contest results till 20th September 2006 and the results will be publicly announced at the opening of a big exhibition on 2nd October 2006 in Children's Complex at Pomorie, Bulgaria. The paintings won't be returned. They'll remain a permanent property for artistic archives in Pomorie Municipality and Children's Complex and will be used for publication of postcards, posters and catalogues.

For more information please contact the following as soon as possible:

Tanya Taleva: 00359 596 22129; 00359 596 22909

Aneta Danailova: 00359 899 923020 / aneta_danailova@yahoo.com/

The initiative is organised by the Municipality of Pomorie, the Municipal Children's Complex and the Bulgarian Blue Flag Movement.

Green Week

The GREEN WEEK will be organised once again at the Malta Trade Fair grounds from Wednesday 19th till Sunday 23rd April from 6.00pm till 10.00pm.

The Ministry of Rural Affairs and the environment will be participating and will have a whole hall (Hall F) to display some of the work being done.

Schools wanting to organise groups in the morning can do so by contacting Mr Oliver Lautier at the Ministry through oliver.lautier@gov.mt.

Stands include: Afforestation, Wasteserv, Organic Farming, a Salt display and there will also be the sale of fruit trees.

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

Visit our website on www.ekoskolamalta.com