

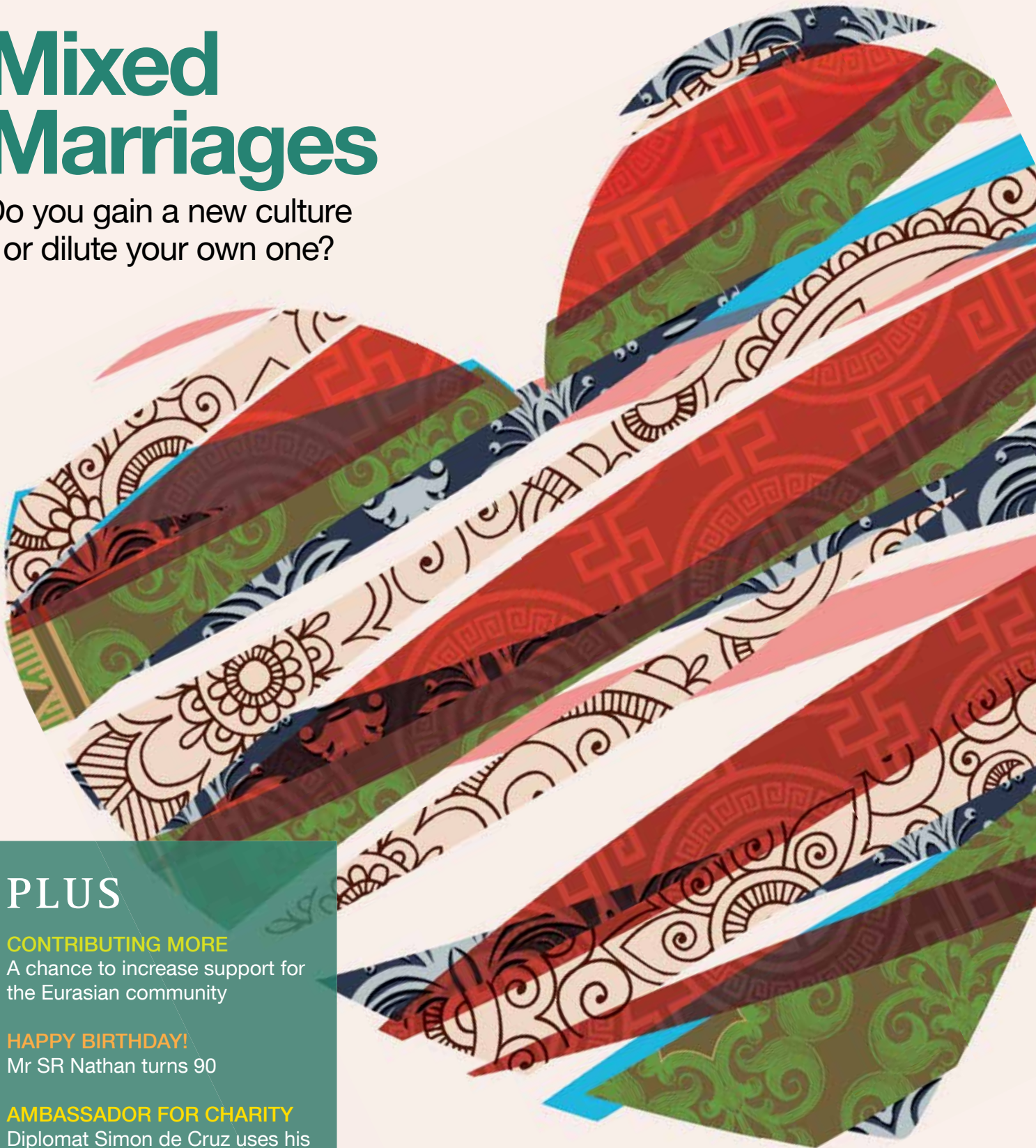
THE NEW EURASIAN

www.eurasians.org.sg

JULY – SEPTEMBER 2014

Mixed Marriages

Do you gain a new culture
- or dilute your own one?



PLUS

CONTRIBUTING MORE

A chance to increase support for
the Eurasian community

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Mr SR Nathan turns 90

AMBASSADOR FOR CHARITY

Diplomat Simon de Cruz uses his
talents close to home

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THE NEWEURASIAN

The magazine of The Eurasian Association, Singapore

The NewEurasian is published quarterly and read by more than 17,000 Eurasians in Singapore. It is also circulated to senior government offices, various ministries, statutory boards, community organisations and self-help groups.

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President's Message

I am honoured to have been re-elected as President for the Eurasian Association for the term 2014-2016 and would like to thank our Patrons, Trustees, EA members, my fellow Management Committee (MC) members and the Secretariat for their continued support. I am pleased to welcome three new MC members – Alexius Pereira, Kevin Aeria and Gerard Theseira and appreciate their enthusiasm in stepping forward to serve the community.

I'm grateful to Carla Barker, Yvonne Pereira, Geoff da Silva, Paul Leong, Francesca Eber and Angelina Fernandez for continuing to serve on the MC. In addition, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to the outgoing MC members from the prior term, Vincent Schoon, Michelle Tessensohn and Graham Ong-Webb for their contributions.

Apart from being a tremendous help to me and stepping in for me on various important matters when I was unavailable or overseas, Vincent represented EA on OnePeople.sg, an important platform for fostering cooperation with the three other self-help groups and promoting racial harmony. He also led the charity golf event a couple of years ago that raised approximately \$170,000 for the EA. Our community engagement efforts made great strides under Michelle's enthusiastic direction. The interesting Sunday lunches that she organised reached out to new people in the community. Michelle also led the community survey project last year which has given us good insights into how we can better serve the community in the next few years. Graham led our Young Eurasian Professionals initiative, which brought many younger Eurasians together through the various events that were organised. We hope to build on this to get more young Eurasians to take on leadership roles and participate actively in community service.

It is not easy to juggle career, family obligations and personal commitments with volunteer work for EA and the Eurasian community. The first reaction most people have when approached is that they have no time. So I am

very thankful for the MC members stepping up to serve the community because I know all too well that it is not easy.

In this issue, we share with you some very important news regarding the revision in the contribution rates to the Eurasian Community Fund (ECF) via the CPF check-off scheme. This is a matter that was discussed at the last couple of AGMs and I am pleased that the Government has given us its support for this revision. We are coordinating with the CPF Board for implementation of the new contribution levels, which will likely commence on 1 January 2015. This is a major breakthrough for EA as it will increase our annual donations raised through this scheme from approximately \$500,000 now to about \$700,000 per annum. We are indeed grateful to Minister S Iswaran for his tremendous assistance in helping us secure approval for the proposal. In addition, we have appealed to the MCCY for an increase in the matching grant from \$200,000 to \$400,000. We believe this request is being considered favorably in view of our plan to raise ECF contribution rates and we hope to receive positive news on this soon.

This is the first time the ECF contribution levels have been increased since inception almost 20 years ago in 1995 and we hope all working Eurasians will support the increase, which will impact primarily at those earning more. It is a small contribution every month but will go a long way to putting EA on a more stable financial footing to implement our community assistance programmes and to plan for the future.

In this issue, we also give you a glimpse of the many enriching events that took place during the quarter. I would like to thank Temasek Cares, the Tan Chin Tuan Foundation and the family of the late Coral de Cruz for their generosity in funding the education awards that were given out. Without their support, we would not be able to assist the numerous students who are performing well in



school but face financial challenges which may impact their ability to receive a good education.

The Tea With Neighbours session organised by the FSS provided useful information on the importance of making a will as well as a 'lasting power of attorney'. The latter was certainly a new concept for me and for many who attended.

Our cover story for this issue focuses on inter-racial marriage. During the Singapore-Eurasian Conversation held in 2013, a recurring concern was the dilution of the Eurasian identity as a result of intermarriage with other ethnic groups. Many couples shared their experience of inter-racial marriage and how the Eurasian culture and heritage is being preserved in their families. They teach us that some of the best experiences lie in participating in and learning about different cultures and what better way to do that than in a healthy relationship?

In closing, I would like to express my sincere thanks to all our volunteers and donors who have given us unstinting support in the areas of education, family support services and community development. There is still much more to be done to strengthen the Eurasian community and I hope more Eurasians will answer the call to help us with this important mission.

I have much faith that the continuing strong partnership between EA, the community and our Government will help ensure a more vibrant future for the Eurasian community in Singapore.

Benett Theseira
President



Yvonne Pereira with SK John



The balut team take their chances

Highs and Lows for the EA Baluteers

Fortunes have ebbed and flowed in the battle for balut supremacy in the last three months' games.

In April, Derrick Filmer continued his previous month's good fortune by emerging again as the champion for the month, with a high aggregate score of 626 points. Close behind was last year's champion, Philomena Nonis, with 620 points, while Rosemary Tessensohn scored a hefty 162 points to overtake Christina Theseira on the leader board as a high individual scorer (single game).

Derrick's hopes of a hat trick in May were dashed as SK John took the top spot with 677 points, overtaking him on the leader board for the high individual aggregate score. Before starting the game, the contestants sang *Happy Birthday* to veteran member, Auntie Helen Joseph, who turned 85 that night.

There were more surprises in June when Aloysius Fernandez proved to be almost invincible by swiping everyone off the leader board. It will be a huge challenge for anyone to catch up with him. Trailing Aloysius are SK John and Rosemary Tessensohn.

With four more rounds of play, can anyone make changes to the leader board? Newcomers are still welcome to join!

The EA Welcomes Three New Management Committee Members



The new management committee (from left to right): front row – Geoffrey da Silva, Yvonne Pereira, Benett Theseira, Paul Leong; middle row – Angelina Fernandez, Francesca Eber, Carla Barker; back row – Kevin Aeria, Gerard Theseira and Alexius Pereira

The EA held its annual meeting on 12 April when Benett Theseira was re-elected President. Yvonne Pereira and Paul Leong were re-elected as 2nd Vice-President and Honorary Treasurer respectively, and the re-elected Carla Barker was made 1st Vice President. The EA welcomed back Geoffrey da Silva, a former Education Sub-Committee chairman, as Honorary Secretary.

Francesca Eber and Angelina Fernandez were re-elected to the management committee. There are three new members: Alexius Pereira and Kevin Aeria; plus Gerard Theseira, who has been co-opted.


Alexius is a senior assistant director at the Gambling Safeguards Division in the Ministry of Social and Family Development. He has served on the EA's Education Sub-Committee since 2001. Kevin is the local implementation lead for airfreight at Panalpina World Transport (S) Pte Ltd, and is a member of the Peranakan Association. Gerard works at Sembawang Shipyard as commercial & operations manager and hopes to help improve community engagement at the EA.

Rewarding Singapore's Pioneer Generation

Singapore's 'pioneers' – the generation who are 65 or older this year, or who obtained citizenship before 1987 – are to be rewarded by the Government with a range of special healthcare benefits. The Pioneer Generation Package, to honour those who have made Singapore what it is today, will benefit some 450,000 citizens.

Over the next few issues of *The NewEurasian* we will be explaining how the changes can help; the chart opposite shows some of the healthcare advantages available under the new scheme. The package is slated to come into force in August, but final details are yet to be confirmed.

The Pioneer Generation Package recognises the unique contributions of the generation who built up Singapore. We will provide our Pioneer Generation with additional healthcare benefits covering outpatient treatment, Medisave top-ups and medical insurance for life. About 450,000 Singaporeans will benefit.



Outpatient Care

- Additional 50% off subsidised bills at Specialist Outpatient Clinics and polyclinics
- Enhanced benefits under CHAS
- Disability Assistance of \$1,200 a year in cash for those with moderate to severe functional disabilities
- Components come into effect from Sep 2014

Medisave Top-Ups

- Annual Medisave top-ups, from Jul 2014
- More for older cohorts

Born 1934 and earlier	\$800
Born 1935 – 1939	\$600
Born 1940 – 1944	\$400
Born 1945 – 1949	\$200

MediShield Life Subsidy

- Special subsidies for MediShield Life premiums starting from 40% at age 65, rising to 60% at age 90
- Effective in 2015

Courtesy of Ministry of Finance, Singapore

Share Your Eurasian Souvenirs

As part of the nation's 50th birthday celebrations next year, the EA plans to share its unique Eurasian culture with the wider society.

The association is asking for members of the Eurasian community to loan artefacts or heirlooms to the project, to be showcased in an exhibition and published in a commemorative book next April at the Heritage Festival. These items could be old photographs, medals, uniforms, certificates, kitchenware (*grenseng*), porcelain, jewellery, furniture, musical instruments or clothing (*baju panjang*). They could also pertain to ritual rites (wedding invitations, letters, gowns and more). **For more details, please contact Jacqueline at jacqueline@eurasians.org or 6447 1578.**

Increasing Your Help to *Fellow Eurasians*

When the Eurasian Association became a self-help group 20 years ago and registered as a charity, it set up the Eurasian Community Fund (ECF) to receive monthly contributions deducted automatically from the wages of working Singapore Eurasians and supported further by the Government.

This fund directly supports the needs of Eurasians, from providing welfare for those in need, educational help to provide youngsters with the best possible start in life and to support community bonding and an appreciation of the Eurasian culture and heritage.

Since the ECF's inception, contribution rates have not been revised, although the needs of the less fortunate in the community have been on the rise. The EA, along with CDAC and SINDA, have proposed to raise contribution rates to boost their respective funds.

The revised SHG contribution rates will make a huge difference to what the EA can provide for the Eurasian community. They will largely affect only higher earners, but will potentially raise an additional \$150,000 to \$180,000 annually.

The proposed increase in SHG contribution rates was first raised at the 2013 AGM and again at the recent AGM by EA President Benett Theseira. He points out that even small contributions can add up to significant amounts for the minority Eurasian community and is appealing to members to increase their SHG contributions so that their donations go twice as far with the matched Government funding.

In response to people's willingness to help build their communities, Acting Minister for Culture, Community and Youth Lawrence Wong announced that the Government plans to increase its contributions to self-help groups

CDAC, SINDA and the EA to match the contributions raised by each group.

A number of Eurasians have already expressed support for the extra funding. Edmund Rodrigues says: "I think that contributions to EA especially from those who are working must be increased. A sum of \$9 is reasonable for a working adult. Those who wish to contribute more, especially retirees, can always use the GIRO form enclosed with the magazine." Another contributor, Gary Vierra, agrees: "A few additional dollars, especially from those with a higher income, will be appreciated by everyone in the Eurasian community."

The increase in SHG contribution rates will be announced to employers by the Central Provident Fund Board in September and November. The increment will be deducted from salaries in the usual way and will come into effect next January.

The new contribution rates will be:

CURRENT CONTRIBUTION		REVISED CONTRIBUTION	
Total amount of an employee's wages for the calendar month	Contributions payable by an employee for the calendar month	Total amount of an employee's wages for the calendar month	Contributions payable by an employee for the calendar month
Not exceeding \$1,000	\$2	Not exceeding \$1,000	\$2 – no change
Exceeding \$1,000 but not exceeding \$1,500	\$4	Exceeding \$1,000 but not exceeding \$1,500	\$4 – no change
Exceeding \$1,500 but not exceeding \$2,500	\$6	Exceeding \$1,500 but not exceeding \$2,500	\$6 – no change
Exceeding \$2,500 but not exceeding \$4,000	\$8	Exceeding \$2,500 but not exceeding \$4,000	\$9 – \$1 more
Exceeding \$4,000	\$10	Exceeding \$4,000 but not exceeding \$7,000	\$12 – \$2 more
		Exceeding \$7,000 but not exceeding \$10,000	\$16 – \$6 more
		Exceeding \$10,000	\$20 – \$10 more

Where the Money Goes

The EA currently helps an average of 900 households a year with cash grants, food vouchers and dry food rations. About 400 students receive assistance in the form of books or transport vouchers, bursaries, awards and scholarships. Here's an estimate of how your contributions are making a difference. With increased contributions, we can improve the lives of many more Eurasians in Singapore!



\$100

A month's food vouchers for a family



\$6,000

Annual study fees for 10 ITE students



\$51

Annual transport voucher for one student



\$200

A month's cash grant for a needy family



\$400

A year's academic books for 2 primary students



A movement supported by over 200 voluntary welfare organisations



For 2014, the EA is under the Care & Share matching grant. Any donations received by 31 Dec 2014 will be doubled. "A drop of water can make a powerful ripple effect and change lives." Thank you for caring and helping the less fortunate in our community.

Learning from Experience

It must have been intentionally ironic that the subject of the improvised 'table topic' at the recent Toastmasters' contest – 'Real learning doesn't occur in the classroom' – took place in an academic establishment: the Tan Chin Tuan lecture theatre at Nanyang Technological University, which was hosting the Toastmasters' Division D event.

But the EA Toastmasters' representative Vernon Lim – winner of the previous Area D2 table topics contest – was up to the challenge, delivering a convincing speech arguing that "real learning happens everywhere, when you are ready to learn".

The tricky topic was selected by contest chairman Lynden Pung, and Vernon faced tough challenges from veteran competitors Yeow Chern Chou, Kala Sundram, Lua Bee Ling and Joel Goh. After deliberating for half an hour, the judging panel, headed by Chia Choon Kiat, awarded Vernon Lim the trophy for first-runner up.

If you would like to join the Toastmasters and improve your speaking skills and confidence, contact Revathhi at revathhi@eurasians.org for further information.



All smiles with his 1st runner-up placing: Vernon Lim (right) and Area D2 governor Peter Rodrigues

Mr SR Nathan Marks His 90th Birthday

The cream of Singapore society, including President Tony Tan and Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, family and friends gathered for a party at the Shangri-La Hotel to celebrate former President SR Nathan's 90th birthday on 3 July.

Members of the EA Management Committee were also among the guests as Mr Nathan is a patron of the association. In addition to a glowing tribute from the Prime Minister, the former president received numerous good wishes from Singaporeans, including the following from the Eurasian community:

"Birthday wishes for former President SR Nathan. On behalf of the Eurasian community, I wish him a happy day of celebrations, continued good health and prosperity." *Benett Theseira, EA President.*



Mr SR Nathan and his wife, Urmila, with President Tony Tan and PM Lee Hsien Loong (above) and Ho Kwon Ping, chairman of Banyan Tree Holdings (left)

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"I wish you peace, happy relationships and good health." *Joe Conceicao (EA Trustee).*

"Happy Birthday, Mr Nathan. May you live long and prosper through your golden years." *Angileo Kelly Pereira, 17 (recipient of SR Nathan Education Award).*



The line dancers keep on moving

Joining the Line

More than 80 guests danced continuously for four hours when the Country Line Dance Association, Singapore joined forces with the EA recently for a sell-out line dance jamming session.

To find out about future events, visit <http://www.eurasians.org.sg/events/come-dance-with-me/>

Driving Forward

The EA's recently formed golf society (EAGS) is continuing its winning ways as it beat nine other clubs and emerged as champions in the 2nd league game held at Jurong Country Club on 16 May.

Team captain Gary Nonis and vice captain Anthony Maniam put together a winning strategy which also saw EAGS winning in each category:

- Div A, 2nd place on count back
- Div B, 1st place on count back
- Div C, 3rd place
- Overall champions of the 2nd league game

EAGS now stands in second position in overall points for the league championship, just a single point behind Singapore Recreation Club.



Red alert! The EAGS golfers score another victory

The crucial third leg will be held at Warren Golf & Country Club on 22 August, where EAGS hopes to take the lead in the overall points standing, moving them one step closer to bringing home the challenge trophy.

The EAGS committee would like to thank all 16 golfers for their time, determination, focus and hard work. "We wish for many more rounds of winnings and bringing home the Challenge Trophy."



EA President Benett Theseira and Yap Su-Yin with Tan Chin Tuan Foundation award secondary school recipients

Banking on the Next Generation

Student Rachel Victoria explains how the Tan Chin Tuan Foundation is helping her to excel at school

More than 35 Eurasian primary and secondary students recently attended an education ceremony where they received cash awards to help them study. Thanks to the Tan Chin Tuan Foundation, needy students in Singapore are provided with funds to help them pay for educational costs such as school fees, uniforms and transport.

The foundation was established in 1976 by the late banker and philanthropist Tan Sri (Dr) Tan Chin Tuan, who cherished education as a way to transform people's lives. The foundation's CEO, Yap Su-Yin, explained how Tan Sri Tan lost his father in his early teens. The death of the family's breadwinner created financial hardship for the family. But because of caring teachers and the headmaster at the Anglo-Chinese School, who took time to counsel and privately tutor him, he pulled through his exams during his time of personal crisis. Remembering his benefactors, the first scholarships he created when he became successful were named after those educators who helped him.

Since then, the foundation has supported hundreds of students through bursaries or scholarships to help tide them over their difficulties and to encourage them to persevere in their education.

At the award ceremony for Eurasian students, held on 14 June, together with Temasek Cares education bursaries and Coral de Cruz Memorial fund awards, Ms Yap, the guest of

honour, stressed the role of education as an enabler for change. She said: "Education is a powerful tool to transform your lives for the better. Whatever your talents, do your best. We help you today; in future you will be in a position to help others."

The foundation has supported the cause of needy single families and presented education awards at the Eurasian Association since 2010, helping nearly 70 of the association's students over the years.

“Education is a powerful tool to transform your lives”

Rachel Victoria, 15, a recipient of the Tan Chin Tuan education award who is diabetic and lives in a one-parent family, says that every bit of help goes a long way given her medical condition and family's circumstances. The photography enthusiast adds that she is thankful for the support as she is keen to lessen the burden that her family of four currently faces. She uses the award for tuition fees, workshops held by her school and also daily pocket money and says that her award makes life easier for everyone in their family. Her mother, Yvonne, says: "Rachel makes me feel very proud and I would also like to thank the EA and Tan Chin Tuan Foundation for providing my daughter with opportunities to excel."



Above: Benett Theseira and Yap Su-Yin meet Rachel and her family
Right: Yap Su-Yin presents Rachel Victoria with her award



In addition to her academic studies, Rachel is enthusiastic about soccer, netball and track and field events and aims to become a physical education teacher. She enjoys dancing and also volunteers with the EA.

Although parts of her life have been tough, Rachel is determined to succeed. Recently, discovering that she was not coping well with science lessons, she found herself one-to-one tuition. Even though science remains one of her weaker subjects, she ensures that she communicates with her teacher in advance in order to get tips and study strategies. For example, she says: "I try not to study at night as I believe that we all need adequate sleep. I am able to learn better in the morning."

Rachel also believes strongly in contributing to the Eurasian community once she has completed her education and plans to donate both money and her time. The struggles she has been through have acted as a motivation to succeed: "Tough times are only a small phase in your life. Always remember that struggles are stepping stones to future achievements," she says.

Jaren Has Numerous Talents

Sixteen-year-old pupil Jaren Sta Maria loves to have a number of problems to solve...



The Sta Maria family on a trip to Hong Kong (from left to right): Jansen; Jaren; mum, Dorothea and dad, Francis

NUS High School student Jaren Sta Maria was presented with a gold award at a recent ceremony at the National University of Singapore following his success at the Singapore Junior Physics Olympiad 2013.

Jaren comes from a family of four and is inspired by his elder brother, Jansen, who is currently studying at Raffles Institution and has himself represented RI at several maths competitions in China. Since he was young, Jaren has loved to solve problems involving figures. He says: "I love anything and everything to do with numbers!" He also enjoys chess and computer games and almost anything that provides him with a challenge that taxes his brain.

“I love anything and everything to do with numbers”

It was a proud moment for Jaren and his family when he collected his prize. Of the 1,454 contestants, only 24 received a gold award. Jaren says: "I was very happy and I thank my physics teacher, Mr Ricardo. I will definitely join again as I enjoy competitions greatly."

Since his Olympiad success, Jaren has taken part in the American Mathematical Competition 12 and qualified for the American Invitational Mathematics Examination. At the time of writing, he was due to take part in the Singapore Mathematical Olympiad 2014 in June and is looking forward to the Singapore Physics Olympiad 2014 later this year. The national competition, organised by the Institute of Physics Singapore for Junior College students, also serves as a selection round for the Asian Physics Olympiad and the International Physics Olympiad.

Jaren's advice for tackling numbers is: "Pay attention in class and never be shy to ask questions. If others can do it, you can do it too."



Cool logic: Jaren calculates the velocity of his snowball on a school trip to Hungary

Off the Shelf

Eurasian students from low-income families received book vouchers to spend on educational books and materials during the Singapore Book Fair held at Suntec City Convention Centre in June.

The 100 Eurasian youngsters benefitted from the support of Kwan Im Thong Hood Cho Temple, which provided \$50,000 worth of charity book vouchers to 1,146 needy children nationwide.



Wedded to a Different Culture

When people of different cultures marry, do they each lose part of their own culture – or are they enriched by gaining a new one?

The nature and make-up of the Eurasian community has changed immensely since the first European settlers in Asia married local women and birthed mixed-race children. The word 'Eurasian' was originally coined by the British during their rule in India and referred to people born to a British and an Indian parent. In South-east Asia, Eurasians are more often descendants of Europeans who arrived during the colonial eras of the Portuguese, Dutch and British and the community has developed its own distinct culture.

Today, the term refers to anyone of mixed European and Asian parentage. And as marriages between different races and religions take place, they create their own new culture. Inter-racial relationships are becoming increasingly common. According to figures from the Department of Statistics Singapore, inter-racial civil marriages (i.e. marriages contracted under the Women's Charter) hovered around three per cent in the early years of independence, rising more or less steadily until the last year available, 2012, which recorded a high of 18.08 per cent of civil marriages.

EA President Benett Theseira pointed out during an interview with Channel News Asia: "Many Eurasians do marry outside the community; in fact the majority do. And so with each generation, the family unit gets more diluted from the Eurasian perspective because where one parent is non-Eurasian the ability to pass down traditions, cultures and history gets diluted over time."

Many Eurasians share this concern. But – perhaps not surprisingly from a culture which in itself is inherently diverse – many others believe that inter-marriage means both gaining a new culture while sharing your own.

Marriage is hard work, however much a couple love each other, and marrying someone from a different race and religion throws extra components into the mix. We speak to three Eurasians whose spouse is from a different ethnic group and discover how a marriage of two cultures works at a personal level. Were there any barriers to their marriage? Is there a dominate culture in their union? And what challenges – and benefits – do they face as a mixed-race family?



*“As inter-racial parents,
we create an environment
where the children respect
both cultures”*

Angelia Morier and James Teo Teck Leong

Eurasian Angelia (Angie) Morier is married to James Teo Teck Leong PBM, a Chinese Singaporean. James works as a sales manager, Angie is an administrator and they live in Sengkang. They're a regular couple who enjoy watching movies, sightseeing and travelling.

Although their relationship may seem easy-going now, they faced a battle in having their union accepted. Angie's parents were open to an inter-racial marriage as her parents were part of an inter-racial marriage themselves. However, James faced the possibility of his family's rejection. It took a lot of persuading to convince his parents that they could make the relationship work. Now, after 18 years of marriage, his parents' concerns are in the past. James and Angie had to work through their differences and are now proud that they overcame the challenges with hard work and effort.

Initially, they faced difficulties in understanding each other's religious beliefs and culture. Angie found it challenging to accept the rites performed in a temple as she was familiar with going to church. "It took me some time to get used to it," she says. "Now, times have changed and we have introduced our children to two religions." Over time, both of them were able to communicate effectively about their views and learned that compromise is crucial for any relationship to flourish regardless of race or religion. James says: "It's important to learn and respect each other's beliefs and differences."

James and Angie both spend time educating their children, Ransley, 16, and Rosabel, 10, about the Eurasian and Chinese cultures. James teaches them about filial piety and greeting elders at the dinner table before eating, practices associated with Buddhism. Angie focuses on treating her children with the occasional devil's curry and sugee cake, traditional Eurasian food.

The children say they enjoy being part of an inter-racial family – not least of all because they get to celebrate both Chinese New Year and Christmas. Ransley and Rosabel appreciate their parents' efforts to teach them about their heritage and how to appreciate their mixed identity.

Angie acknowledges that the already small Eurasian community might shrink further with mixed weddings. However, she also believes strongly that it is the responsibility of each individual to ensure that their culture is passed on to future generations. A Catholic, like most Eurasians, she says: "I feel a deeper connection with my Eurasian self when I teach my children about baptism and Holy Communion."

James, asked about his favourite aspect of the Eurasian culture, doesn't hesitate: "Family gatherings!" He enjoys the company of Eurasians, their fun nature, music and food.

James and Angie with Ransley and Rosabel during a family photo shoot



Paul Ponusamy and Jennifer Paul

Indian Paul Ponusamy, a logistics supervisor, and Eurasian Jennifer Paul, a clinic administrator, met at a gathering of mutual friends, where they discovered that Paul was a good friend of Jennifer's brother and that they had actually known each other during their youth.

They started dating and soon realised that this was a relationship that they wanted to last. Their plans to marry, however, came up against parental resistance. Paul's family felt that his Indian culture and traditions would disappear with the relationship and he struggled to convince them that Jennifer was the right person for him.

Despite several disagreements with his family, Paul and Jennifer decided to go ahead with their marriage – and have never regretted it. They have now been married for 16 years and live in a tranquil home in Havelock Road, which they share with their two sons, Ryan, 15, and Sean, 12. They say that love happens to random people irrespective of distance, religion and culture.

Jennifer was not without her own problems in the inter-racial marriage. Her biggest challenge was to follow the strict customs and traditions of the Hindu religion, such as the regular practice of Hindus to get the blessings of their elders by kneeling down and touching their feet. She says: "It was very difficult during my wedding ceremony as I had to do this in a sari, which I had not worn in my entire life!"

But over time, the couple learned how to appreciate each others' cultures. They formed a mutual understanding, especially when it came to religion, and did not force each other to convert.

Both Paul and Jennifer agree that raising inter-racial children is no easy feat. Often, they find themselves trying to create an equal balance between both their cultures Paul says: "As inter-racial parents, we put in additional effort to create an environment where they learn and respect both cultures."



Paul & Jennifer with Ryan and Sean in their Havelock apartment



“We must not get demoralised over the shrinking Eurasian community”

There is healthy mix of the Indian and Eurasian culture in their home. Paul has taught his children how to eat using their hands. Jennifer has introduced traditional Eurasian dishes such as devil's curry and shepherd's pie. She says: “These recipes were passed down from my great grandmother, to my grandmother, to my mother and finally to me.”

The couple both agree that the inter-racial relationships are diluting the Eurasian culture. Paul feels that there are not many Eurasians around. Jennifer believes that important aspects such as surnames are lost over time. She says: “For our kids, it is a must to follow the father's surname. On top of that, I feel that kids today are not curious to find out about their culture and heritage. These attitudes must be changed and they should develop a healthy curiosity to understand their roots.”

Muhammad Firdaus Abdullah Holmberg Ronnie Michael and Manisah Binti Saclan

Firdaus Holmberg and Manisah Binti Saclan have also been married nearly 20 years and live in Marsiling with their three children, Frankie Firdanis, 18, Francis Firman, 16, and Fiona Firmanis, 14.

Firdaus' father was German and his mother was Peranakan. He works as a chef and spends his free time rearing birds and fish. Manisah's family originates from Java.

The happy-go-lucky couple agree that that the best part of an inter-racial relationship is learning about the everyday life of someone from a different culture. Firdaus jokes: “I've learnt the Javanese way of speaking. Now, I can understand all the secrets that my wife shares with her family!” Manisah is quick to add: “I can also understand and speak basic Hokkien!” She picked up the language from her mother-in-law.

There was no parental opposition to the couple's marriage as the two families were neighbours who already knew each other. Manisah recalls that Firdaus used to stare at her before he finally plucked up the courage and asked her if she knew how to speak English; and that was the start of their relationship. Manisah says she was lucky to have tips from her mother-in-law even before their marriage. “My mother-in-law told me that if Firdaus and I had a fight, all I had to do was to make him a cup of coffee to calm him down. It has worked like a charm 'til today!”

Manisah likes the fact that Eurasians tend to play an active role in their family's well-being and are very honest with their views. She says that these are some of the qualities that attracted her to her husband.



Firdaus & Manisah with Fiona, Frankie and Francis in their Marsiling home

Food, however, was a contentious issue. At the beginning of their relationship, Manisah cooked Javanese food. However, both her husband – and their children – prefer Chinese food. So Firdaus took over the household cooking and the family menus includes soup, noodles and devil's curry, which their children love. It is the children's joke that “Only baba's food has value in this house.” But Manisah doesn't mind as it gives her more time for other household chores.

Their children are all proud of their unique heritage and especially their unique surname, which comprises both Eurasian and Malay names. They are also able to understand conversational Javanese.

Firdaus believes that it is important for Eurasians to accept that their community is shrinking and that inter-racial families should make an extra effort to pass on their traditions and values to their children. “We must not get demoralised over the shrinking Eurasian community. Instead, let's focus on creating awareness about our culture and heritage,” he says.

Charity Ends at Home

Diplomat Simon de Cruz brings his skills to the EA's welfare arm



Simon de Cruz addresses an EA event

After a globe-trotting career in the Foreign Service, Simon Tensing de Cruz is bringing a lifetime of experience closer to home.

The diplomat, who took early retirement but still acts as non-resident Ambassador to Ukraine, sits on the EA's FSS Sub-Committee, working on ways to help less fortunate Eurasians in Singapore. He is also involved with other volunteer welfare organisations.

When asked why he chose the FSS Sub-Committee, he jokes: "FSS chairperson Francesca Eber was very persuasive!"

He strongly believes that the FSS team at the EA works hard to serve the Eurasian community and feels that having a passionate and dynamic FSS chairperson has prodded the team to think constantly of more effective ways to help those in need. He also believes that more volunteers with an active interest in helping the less fortunate are needed.

Simon has numerous FSS events etched in his memory. He recalls last year's Tea With Neighbours session where everyone learned laughter therapy. "It was a hilarious experience and apparently it's good for the health!" He also enjoyed the FSS Christmas Lunch where he met many dynamic elderly Eurasians.

Simon travels to Ukraine a few times a year and was planning a visit after its recent elections, and he has also joined the board of a Singapore-based company with business interests in Myanmar, to which he was previously posted.

"I try to strike a balance between doing something meaningful and having time to pursue my personal interests"

He adds: "I try my best to strike a balance between doing something meaningful during retirement and also having time to pursue my personal interests."

"I've always wanted to know much more about historical events and how these have impacted on the world today or on individuals, and I want to know more about Singapore's history. Now I have time for in-depth reading on these issues."

Where There's A Will...

At the EA's recent Tea With Neighbours session, guests learned valuable advice about how to protect their financial assets for their loved ones

Have you ever wondered what would happen to your children's education if you were debilitated by illness? Or who would own your home if you lost the ability to make your own decisions?

More than 50 FSS recipients learned the answers to such questions when they attended the EA's Tea With Neighbours session in April, where the speakers were Tay Teng Pong, director of Will and Legacy Pte Ltd, and Khoo Aik Yeow, an advocate and solicitor at AY Khoo of Law Chambers.

Many guests were surprised to learn that without a will, the state decides on the distribution of one's assets; and that the law can make decisions about people's property and other finances. They discovered that by making a will you can leave clear instructions about how your assets are to be distributed and that a lasting power of attorney allows you to appoint people to act on your behalf should you lose your mental capacity in the future.

The session was conducted in collaboration with the Office of the Public Guardian, RSVP Singapore and Rockwills International Pte Ltd, and the EA offers sincere thanks to them.

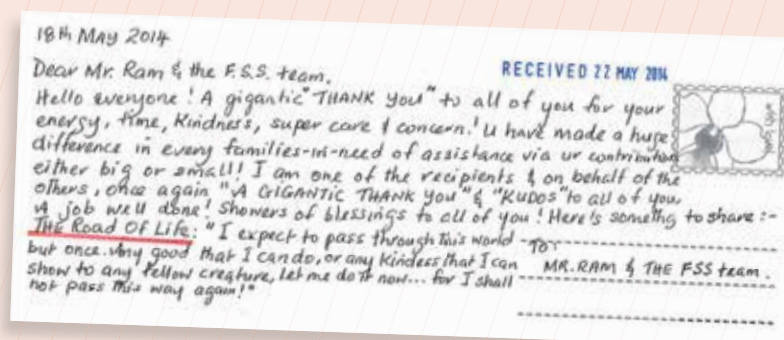
Kudos to the FSS!

How does the EA know that its work to help the Eurasian community is reaching its targets? Because grateful recipients are kind enough to take the time to write and tell us

When Patrick & Rosalind Mowe learned that the EA's Tea With Neighbours session was to include a talk on making a will, they expected a dull but dutiful afternoon. But, as can be seen in this extract from their email of thanks to the EA, they left wanting more...

"When I received the invite for myself and Rosalind to attend the TWN session, I was dubious about the interest in either subjects on wills or the lasting power of attorney," wrote Patrick.

"To my great surprise, the two speakers shared with us informative topics that proved our time worthwhile! Their presentations were very clear, logical and interesting. We have actually made up our minds to revise our wills with Mr Tay Teng Pong shortly.



"My suggestion will be to extend the talks into three-part series in order for it to be more beneficial. Congratulations to all concerned with the organisation of this event!

Yours sincerely,
Patrick & Rosalind Mowe"

In addition, the FSS team received an enthusiastic endorsement of its work by a grateful recipient (whose name we've withheld), who took the time to pen the postcard above.

A Life in Dance

Lisha Chin has known almost all her life that she would become a ballet dancer



Lisha Chin (left) as a child with her sister, Kara



Lisha (fourth dancer from right) in 'Waltz of the Flowers' in The Nutcracker



Lisha (second from right) in Giselle as Bathilde, Albrecht's fiancée

It seems that Lisha Chin had barely learned to walk when she began to dance. She was just three when she started ballet classes. Born in Singapore to a Chinese father and British mother, Lisha moved to the UK at the age of five, growing up in the historic city of Chester in the north-west. By the age of seven, she had decided that dancing would be her career.

“Discipline and determination are imperative”

She made an active choice to attend schools where dance was a critical part of the curriculum. When she was 10, she began full-time dance training and progressed to the Central School of Ballet at the age of

16, where she completed her BA (Hons) in Professional Dance and Performance three years later. After graduating, she moved back to Singapore and began work with Singapore Dance Theatre (SDT).

Her interest in SDT stemmed from its reputation for an extensive repertoire and impressive technical standard. While still at school, she had the opportunity of performing with the English National Ballet in *Coppélia* and the Royal Ballet in *The Nutcracker*. She was able to work with renowned choreographers such as Christopher Bruce, Christopher Hampson, Darshan Singh Bhuller and Christopher Marney and says: “It was an extremely valuable experience.”

Lisha, now 22, has come a long way since her graduation. She has performed in numerous ballets, including *Serenade* during SDT's

tour to Kuala Lumpur and again for the company's 25th anniversary. “Tchaikovsky's score is beautiful”, she says.

A passion for dance is not enough to succeed, says Lisha. Behind the elegance of the stage performance is a cast of dancers who are physically and mentally strong enough to cope with the fatigue of long, daily rehearsals that make enormous demands of the body. And dancers need to be careful to avoid getting an injury that could jeopardise their career. Lisha says firmly: “Discipline and determination are imperative factors in maintaining the correct etiquette in a ballet class.”

You can catch Lisha at SDT's upcoming Ballet Under the Stars on 18-20 July & 25-27 July. Tickets can be purchased through Sistic.

Keeper of Memories

As football fever gripped fans the world over in June when the world's finest national teams battled in Brazil for the World Cup, ex-professional Tiong Bahru FC goalkeeper Ernest Kessler reminisced on glories closer to home



President Cup Champion: Ernest (fifth from right at the back) with the Tiong Bahru team, 1988 winners of the President's Cup Championship



Ernest Kessler (at the back in red) with the national team after the Asean Cup

At 59 years old, Ernest Kessler has spent more than 50 years as an ardent football fan – as well as a number of them as one of Singapore's top-flight players.

The eldest son in a family of eight children, he started playing at the age of seven. “I believe that football is in my blood and I was born to play it. My dad was a football player and my biggest inspiration and influence. From the age of seven 'til 45, I played for Kay Siang United, which was a 'kampong' (home) team. It was my neighbourhood team and filled with many memorable and exciting moments,” he says.

While still a teenager he worked as a sailor, visiting many exotic locations; and during the times when he didn't have to sail, he was a reclamation land diver. He married his

Lord of the Rings

By day, like many of us, Kenneth Thexeira makes his living sitting in front of a computer. Away from the desk job, however, his other career is considerably more lively...

On the very day that Kenneth Thexeira finished his training as a soldier, he barely had time to celebrate before he had to fight for real.

His opponent was not an enemy of the state, thankfully, or even somebody who meant him serious harm; Kenneth was attending an opening trial in the hope of beginning a career as a professional wrestler. “My debut was on the day that I completed my two years of National Service – 12 October 2012. It was truly an emotional day for me as I transitioned from a proud soldier to living out my childhood dream as a pro wrestler,” he recalls.

Singapore Pro Wrestling (SPW) was officially launched in February that year to train aspiring wrestlers to practise their craft. Within a few months, SPW’s pioneer batch of students had provided their family and friends with a taste of live pro wrestling entertainment. This year was a momentous one for the organisation as it held its first international events.

Kenneth, now 25, performs under the name, ‘The Eurasian Dragon (TED)’. He started off as a classic good guy and slowly evolved into an unconventional hero with his trademark offbeat, hilarious antics.

He first got hooked on the sport when he chanced upon a TV channel broadcasting World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE) Raw and saw pro wrestler-turned-movie star Dwayne Johnson, also known as ‘The Rock’ captivating fans with his skills. “I knew from that instant that I wanted to be a professional wrestler,” says Kenneth. “Soon after, I found out about SPW and they were holding an opening trial.”

He explains: “Professional wrestling is sports fused with entertainment. I always try to get rid of nagging fears or insecurities by telling myself to go out through the curtain and have fun. I’ve noticed that as long



Kenneth brings down wrestler ‘Clothesline’

as I am having fun in the ring during my matches, the excitement I feel permeates the crowd; it is contagious and the fans start having fun too! Win, lose or draw, the spectators get their money’s worth and have a great time.”

“Pro wrestling is the best form of escapism”

Kenneth also has a day job, which could not be more of a contrast. He earns his living as a writer and aims to excel in journalism, too.

He adds: “Like any other wrestler, I also hope to be a part of the World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE) some day. My long-term goal is to perform on mainstream platforms in America or Japan. I sincerely believe that pro wrestling is the best form of escapism.”

Visit Kenneth on his Facebook page www.facebook.com/eurasiandragon. If you’re interested join SPW, contact operations director, Andruew Tang at 9068 5213, or head trainer, Vadim Koryagin at 8535 3710 or visit www.facebook.com/sinprowrestling.

childhood sweetheart Jill and quit sailing, and at 31 became Singapore’s youngest chief security officer, working at a five-star hotel on Orchard Road.

“During my teenage years, I also had the golden opportunity of joining the Cold Storage team in the Business House League as a goalkeeper. The league was a group of big companies which had football teams to represent them. The league started during the days when Singapore was under the British rule. Although the league was discontinued in the 1980s, in its prime only the best players were chosen to play.

“I played with them for three seasons and recall winning the second position during one of them. In 1985, I started playing for Tiong Bahru Football Club (now Tanjong

Pagar FC). I retired professionally when I was 34 years old and had to undergo a knee operation, which prevented me from being able to jump high. Nevertheless, I continued playing for Kay Siang United,” he says.

“I believe that football is in my blood and I was born to play it”

“The year 1988 in particular was most memorable as Tiong Bahru FC won the League Championship and President’s Cup Championship. We represented Singapore in the Asean Cup in Bandung, Indonesia. I don’t think any team was that successful during that era!” he recalls.

“The Asean Cup was an amazing experience as we played with the top teams in Asia. We had already won games against Brunei and Malaysia. However, we lost the fight against top Indonesian team Tiga Bilian. It was quite disappointing as we missed out by a slim margin from entering the next stage. But it was an amazing experience as many people had thought that we would be trashed. We came home proudly and knew that their mindsets were changed. Our victories were splashed all over the news! It was also my last game as I had to go for the knee operation.

Outside of the S. League, Ernest has been a Manchester United fan since the ‘60s, following his dad, who was also a huge fan. And he was rooting for England in the World Cup – although his top three predictions were for Germany, Holland and Spain.

Cooking, Dancing, **Laughing**

Helen Joseph would make the perfect poster girl for active ageing. The octogenarian grandmother has a zest for life that is contagious



Left to right: Helen Joseph; receiving an EA volunteer's certificate of appreciation from EA President Benett Theseira; leading the crowd onto the dance floor at an EA event

If retirement is supposed to be the time for slowing down and watching while the younger set get in on the action, nobody has told Helen Joseph. A stalwart of the Eurasian community, she can be guaranteed to be first on her feet when the dancing starts at an EA event. For Helen, life is for living to the full – and at 85 years old, she should know what's she's talking about.

Hailed as 'The Dancing Queen' by her friends, Helen admits that she was a tomboy in her youth, spending her childhood days climbing trees and playing 'rounders' (now known as softball) in what was then an empty field in Balestier Road, where she grew up.

“I hope to see both the young and old coming together to keep the Eurasian culture alive”

She joined Robinsons in 1951, working on the shop floor and becoming an assistant supervisor. She continued working there for 40 years. “I almost never took any sick leave. Even when I was sick, I will rub on some Tiger Balm and luckily it always worked!” she chuckles. She says her colleagues were always impressed by her upbeat attitude towards work and life.

What's the secret behind her youth and health? She believes that spending time with her family, friends and enjoying herself has always helped. Whenever the music plays, she'll be in the centre of crowd on the dance floor. She enjoys all types of dancing and especially likes Portuguese folk dance.

She is also an excellent cook, as many visitors to the EA's Sunday lunches in the past will recall. Before the arrival of the ECH and Quentin's restaurant in Ceylon Road, Helen was one of a band of women who took turns to spend all Saturday toiling in their kitchen at home to prepare food for the several dozen Sunday diners at the EA's former premises in Mountbatten Road. There was sure to be a huge turnout when people heard that 'Aunty Helen' was cooking that week. Her favourite dish is Eurasian feng curry, a pork organ curry that is traditionally eaten by Eurasians on Christmas and New Year's Day.

Helen is mother to Noel, Audrey and Derick and has seven grandchildren. She says: “My children are all married. I was married to an Indian. They are married to an American, Chinese and Japanese. We are truly a multi-cultural family and enjoy learning about each other's cultures!”

As she ages, she says she is grateful for the Government's recently announced Pioneer Package, which will help the elderly with their medical bills: “We need to take care of our own health and appreciate the new programmes that are being introduced for us to lead better lives.”

Helen's message to the Eurasian community is to see more young people participating in the EA's activities. She feels that parents are committing their children solely to school-related activities. “Their mindsets should change. We all are Eurasians and must make time to assist the community in any way possible. I hope to see both the young and old coming together to keep the Eurasian culture alive,” she says.

Stepping Out

Talented dancer Manuella Scully puts her skills to good use by volunteering with the EA

Light-footed Manuella Scully put on her dancing shoes at the tender age of seven when she took up jazz and tap dancing, and since then she's added figure skating and Portuguese-Eurasian folk dancing to her repertoire.

Now 18, she has performed at numerous Eurasian heritage events, entertaining audiences with lively and passionate dance routines that are usually accompanied by a fast beat of hand-clapping and reflect distinctive, traditional Portuguese movements. "It was my pleasure learning folk dance from Lanette and Humphrey Conceicao," she says, adding that one of her proudest moments was representing the Eurasian community for the pledge-taking at a National Day dinner.

“We shared our ups and downs together and created unforgettable memories”

She has been assisting the EA with events since she was 11 but has become a far more active volunteer over the last year and was part of this year's EA contingent in the Chingay Parade, attending dance practices twice a week at St Joseph's Institution International and during the December school holidays last year. She



Manuella Scully (far right) with EA dancers and EA Assistant Manager, Education & Heritage Jacqueline Peiris

admits it was challenging but ensured that her class work was completed during weekdays so that she could allocate time for dance practice and relaxation at weekends.

She says volunteering at the EA has been a great opportunity to make new friends. During dance rehearsals, "We shared our ups and downs together and created unforgettable memories, especially during the rehearsals at the F1 pit." Manuella was not only a dancer but also assisted the team with make-up for all 28 girls.

She's hoping to take part in next year's Chingay Parade and encourages other Eurasian youngsters to join the EA contingent. Meanwhile Manuella is currently working for her 'A' level examinations at Meridian Junior College and aims to study Architecture at National University of Singapore next year.

Happy Birthday to You, and You, and You



Family members gather for the triple birthday bash



Three generations of birthdays: Ullis Kein, Bryan Bohn and Rebecca-Mae Bohn

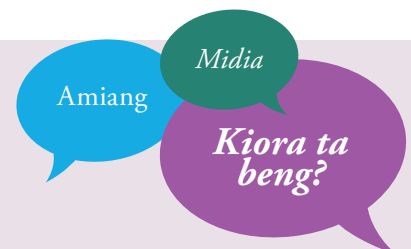
A grand celebration was in order to mark the May birthdays of three generations of family members.

Ullis Kein turned 84 years on 6 May and shared the celebrations with her grandson Bryan Bohn, who was 32 on 3 May, and great-grand-daughter, Rebecca-Mae Bohn, who had her first birthday on 7 May.

Members of the extended family – 50 adults and 30 children – enjoyed a big bash at Quentin's restaurant on 3 May, with a photo booth, candy floss machine and an ice cream machine. A splendid, memorable experience – the Eurasian way!

Kristang Corner

Continuing our Kristang series, here are some words and phrases about times – and comings and goings



Kristang	English Pronunciation	Meaning
Yo ta bai fora	Yeo ta by for-rer	I am going out
Ozi	O-ze	Today
Onti	On-tea	Yesterday
Amiang	Ah-me-ang	Tomorrow
Ondi ta bai	Ovn-de ter by	Where are you going?
Pamiang	Pa-me-ang	Morning

Kristang	English Pronunciation	Meaning
Midia	Me-dear	Afternoon
Kiora ta beng	Key-ora ter beng	When are you coming?
Atardi	Ah-tar-de	Evening
Anoti	Ah-no-tea	Night
Agora	Ah-gor-rer	Now
Antis	Un-tis	Before

With thanks to Valerie Scully and Catherine Zuzarte, authors of the *Eurasian Heritage Dictionary*. Copies of the dictionary are available at the EA, price \$28.00.

Keeping In Touch

Samantha Aloysius works to improve the lives of diabetics – and is a dedicated volunteer for the underprivileged in her spare time

Samantha Aloysius graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Psychology, but decided to pursue her passion for healthcare and went on to take a Masters in International Public Health, which she recently completed at the University of Sydney.

Five months ago, the 25-year-old joined TOUCH Community Services, a non-profit charitable organisation which is part of the National Council of Social Service. Here, she works with TOUCH Diabetes Support (TDS), a healthcare service group that aims to care, support and create hope for people who are living with Type 1 and 2 diabetes.

Samantha organises events that are held at TDS and is responsible for its *Diabetes Lifestyle* magazine that offers advice from healthcare professionals and features personal experiences of people living with diabetes. She says: "I am proud to be working on a magazine that serves as a significant platform for diabetes awareness."

She is also actively involved in the monthly walking trails for TDS members, which, she says, "are one of the best opportunities to interact with members and get to know them on a personal level" as well as making exercising an enjoyable experience.

Besides her day job, Samantha is an active volunteer. Her mother is Chinese and father of Eurasian-Portuguese descent and she spent her childhood living in China where she was exposed to volunteering at high school.



Samantha (far right) with TDS staff and members attending a Certificate in Basic Diabetes Education course

Over the past eight years, she has volunteered in many South-east Asian countries. She has vast experience teaching English to youngsters in schools and orphanages. Her most recent experience was in Kep Province in Cambodia, where she spent three months as a health worker. She describes the overseas volunteering experiences as being very different from Singapore: "Overseas, volunteers have the opportunity to assist and develop communities by building infrastructure such as toilets and wells."

Samantha is currently involved in a fundraising project set up to provide students in Cambodia with partial scholarships for their university education. It's an ongoing project that keeps her busy during her free time. "With everything, the key is to prioritise!" she says. She believes that nobody is too young or old to volunteer and believes everybody should volunteer in a cause of their choice.

To find out more about volunteering opportunities, visit www.touch.org.sg

Saving Lives is All in a Day's Work

Singapore celebrates Nurses Day on 1 August, which marks the day in 1985 when the development of nursing began in Singapore. We talk to two Eurasian nurses about their career



Rachel Towle, 39 has been a nurse for more than 17 years. She completed her Master of Nursing at the National University of Singapore in 2010 and specialises in managing patients with chronic diseases at Singapore General Hospital.

Why did you choose nursing?

My aunt was a nurse and she inspired me to join the field. She thought that my gentle and calm nature was appropriate for nursing. It was a decision that I've never regretted.

What is the biggest misconception about the nursing profession?

I often read on social media that nurses are 'handmaidens', and nursing involves doing 'dirty work' and is 'not a professional job'. This is not a true statement. Sometimes, such comments dampen my spirit. I'm glad to have family and friends who are supportive of my nursing journey. Nothing can replace the satisfaction that nurses get when their patients get better and say, "thank you!"

I think it's important to create positive images for the nursing profession. It's important to share the various nursing roles and career paths available. Most people are unaware that some of our hospitals and polyclinics now have clinics led by Advanced Practice Nurses (APNs). I hope more read about the nursing role on our website (<http://www.sgh.com.sg/clinical-departments-centers/nursing/nursingprofession/pages/nursing-profession-overview.aspx>) and join us.

What's one unforgettable memory for you as a nurse?

My most memorable experience was when I first started as a nursing student. I was nursing an elderly patient who looked exactly like my grandmother. When she passed away, I found myself crying more than the family members. It took me some time to accept my patients' passing on. It's especially difficult when we have built a close rapport with them. I like

Rachel's tips for Nurses!

- Be patient and understanding
- Remember that patients might be in pain and they will be grateful in the end
- Don't take it personally when times get tough; remember you are doing your best and always ask for help when in doubt
- Always stay calm and try to understand where patients and their caregivers are coming from.

Music to Believe In

Christopher Lesslar is a singer-songwriter, guitarist, drummer, keyboard player and teacher. Here, the boyish-looking 41-year-old explains what music means to him and how family and friends have helped him in his career

When did you first get interested in music?

It started when I was five years old. My father taught me a few chords and my mum, Nauklung Prakong, was always supportive of my new-found tunes. Once the passion started, I couldn't stop. I started to learn how to play the guitar and drums. My brother, Oliver, taught me to play the keyboard.

My first live performance was at the Esplanade Library when I was about 31. It was my first time performing professionally and I was nervous and excited at the same time. I played and sang some of my favourites from The Eagles and Creedence Clearwater Revival.

Who and what do you teach?

When I first started out in 2004, it was at Le Classique Music Studio, which is also where I attained my Grade 8 certification in drums, electric and bass guitar. Currently, I teach drums, acoustic, electric and bass guitar

classes at Flute and Music Academy (FAMA). It's an exciting experience being able to teach students aged six all the way to 66! I usually conduct lessons with individuals or in a group of two to four.

Tell us more about your recent debut single.

Because I Believe was written 15 years ago. I wanted to write about believing in myself and realising my dream of becoming a musician. I never actually thought of recording it 'til a close friend of mine, George Chang, persuaded me to release it as a single. It was a motivational song for me and I hope it's the same for everyone else too!

What are your plans for the future?

I am currently rehearsing for a performance at the Esplanade called An Evening with Chris Lesslar. It's a showcase of my originals. I have also written a new single, *Where I Wanna Be*,

which is about wanting my family, friends and fans to come together and celebrate. It's a song for all occasions and best suits our National Day themes. My ultimate aim is to get my album recorded.

You can purchase Chris's tunes for \$1.28 on iTunes or for \$5 at FAMA in Parkway Centre. Part of the proceeds go to a charitable organisation for homeless and adopted children in Singapore. If you are keen to join his classes, please contact FAMA, tel: 6345 2993 or email Chris at chrislesslar@yahoo.com.sg



Chris with his wife Monica, a piano teacher, and children Craigston and Camille



Chris Lesslar

happy endings, where people get well and return home.

Describe your daily routine as nurse?

I work in the Department of Family Medicine and Continuing Care, which handles frail patients with multiple chronic diseases both in the hospital and at their home. As an Advanced Practice Nurse, I check on our patients' census in the morning and plan with my team of nurses and doctors the schedule of home visits and tasks for the day.

Why did you choose this department?

I find satisfaction in seeing patients recover through the care continuum. Our mission is to ensure safe transition of care for all our patients as they discharge back into the community, through integrated care and continuous support.

Is there any message you have for the community?

Nursing has evolved. There are many avenues in the profession that you can explore. The knowledge and skills you acquire will also help you to appreciate life and health. To succeed and be happy as a nurse, you need to have the desire to care for others.



Sheena Hardie, 26, has been working as nurse since graduating from Nanyang Polytechnic. She felt that nursing was a calling as she had received several nursing brochures even before completing her GCE 'O' level examinations. She has since completed

her advanced diploma in Critical Care and subsequently her Bachelor's degree at The University of Adelaide and is currently working in the Surgical Intensive Care Unit in Changi General Hospital.

What are the challenges that you face as a nurse?

When I first started out, I felt that speaking to the family was the toughest as we had to have all the information at our fingertips. Knowing how to answer their questions was not easy. Currently, my challenge is to guide new nurses and carry out audits.

Describe your role as a nurse?

Firstly, I chose to work in the Intensive Care Unit as I wanted to be part of a fast-paced

environment. It's challenging and gets you thinking on your feet most of the time. My daily routine is to check the patients that I am assigned to – we check for anything that is due for change, feeding tubes, dressings and more. I follow up with the patient's history and ensure that their treatment plan is being followed.

What are the most important qualities for a nurse?

Care and passion is crucial. If you are not passionate about your job, you will feel dreadful at the thought of going to work and the care for the patient will be compromised."

Nursing is an art: and if it is to be made an art, it requires an exclusive devotion as hard a preparation, as any painter's or sculptor's work; for what is the having to do with dead canvas or dead marble, compared with having to do with the living body, the temple of God's spirit? It is one of the Fine Arts: I had almost said, the finest of Fine Arts.

– Florence Nightingale.



Eurasian Association
CHARITY GOLF
2014

Wednesday, 17th September | Sentosa Golf Club, Serapong Course

TIME

Registration - 12pm
Shotgun - 1pm
Event dinner - 7pm

SPONSORSHIP PACKAGE

(Team of 4)

1. \$3,500
2. \$6,000
3. \$8,000
4. \$10,000 and above

PER GOLFER

\$1,000

Package includes 18 holes of golf (incl. buggy), lunch, dinner and goodie bag.

To register, please contact Daniel Chong at 6447 1578 or email to daniel@eurasians.org