

THE neweurasian

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JULY - SEPTEMBER 2017

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KRISTANG GETS COOL

Our heritage language has its very own celebration

SAVING LIVES EVERY DAY

Melody Bellido, peri-operative staff nurse

EURASIAN FESTIVAL 2017

MAKING OUR MARK



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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.

Advertising Rates

Prime positions (full colour)
Bleed size: 215mm x 280mm
Type area: 185mm x 255mm

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How to place your ad

Call the EA at 6447 1578 or email Revathhi at revathhi@eurasians.org

Deadline

Copy must be submitted two weeks before publication date



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President's Message

Over the last two years, the EA has been stepping up its efforts to strengthen the Eurasian identity in Singapore. We have done this through engaging both the Eurasian community and other communities in Singapore through various book projects and events to promote greater awareness of the Eurasian heritage and culture and our community's contributions to the nation.

Our highlight for this past quarter was the Eurasian Festival 2017, one of the biggest festivities that the EA has organised in recent years. We were honoured that Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong graced the event and mingled with the many volunteers and visitors. PM Lee highlighted in his speech a few key Eurasian personalities and the many contributions Eurasians have made to Singapore. He also mentioned the Eurasian community's strong sense of family, warm hospitality and openness to other cultures. I felt that these remarks were certainly key elements of our Eurasian identity and very much in line with the tagline for the festival – 'Making our Mark'. The festival is the cover story for this issue (see page 9).

While the festival was a tremendous success in capturing the attention of many Singaporeans both inside and beyond the Eurasian community, perhaps the greatest success was the many volunteers who came forward to help. I would like to thank the organising team led by Julia D'Silva and her heritage committee, who worked hard for months to ensure that the festival was enriching and exciting, and the more than 100 volunteers who ensured that the festival ran smoothly on the day. This, to me, is the essence of Making our Mark, which requires everyone to play a part.

Building on the theme of showcasing Eurasian heritage and culture, we supported the Kristang Language Festival in May, organised by the Kodrah Kristang group (page 18). While not all Eurasians identify with Kristang, it is the heritage language of the Malacca-Portuguese Eurasian community, from which many of us can trace our roots. I am heartened by the efforts of Kevin Martens Wong and the Kodrah Kristang team to revive the Kristang language and it is fantastic to see that the younger generation is working to keep our heritage alive. It was also great to have Deputy Prime Minister Teo Chee Hean join the festival gala dinner as the guest of honour, where he shared some kind words about the Eurasian community and sampled some Kristang phrases.

Both the Eurasian Festival and Kristang Language Festival were wonderful opportunities to showcase our unique Eurasian culture and heritage to the wider society and we will continue

to do more in the months ahead. On page 6, you can learn more about our collaboration with the National Archives of Singapore to record interesting personal historical experiences of Eurasians. We also collaborated with OnePeople.sg and the Ministry of Education in the Racial Harmony Forum as well as with the National Heritage Board on the Eurasian Heritage Bus Tour during the HeritageFest 2017 (page 17). Work is also under way on the revamp of our Eurasian Heritage Centre. We hope you will participate in the community engagement workshops to plan this as well as the call out for heritage content and artefacts (see back cover).

I'm also pleased to share with you the successful revamp of our Family Support Services (FSS) following the resignation of management committee member Francesca Eber earlier in the year. For more than a decade, she oversaw the EA's Family Support Services and I would like to thank her for her years of service as a volunteer and for actively looking out for members of the community who were in need. I am grateful to Edmund Rodrigues, one of our longest-standing and steadfast volunteers in the Eurasian community, for stepping in to take over as chair of the FSS committee. I am also pleased to welcome back Vincent Schoon, EA's former first vice president, to our management committee. Both will be working closely on the revamp of the FSS to meet the growing needs of the Eurasian community (page 13).

This year, we are organising more events for young Eurasians in areas such as motivational workshops, supplementary classes to ace examinations, career talks, mentorship to guide young people on their careers and, for the first time, we are also organising a workshop for parents to better understand how to manage their children's stress during exams.

In conclusion, we are grateful for the support and contributions from all our volunteers and donors that allow us to continue to meet the evolving needs of the Eurasian community and to build on our Eurasian identity. As we lead up to the EA's centenary in 2019, I hope more Eurasians will come forward to help us. It is only by rallying together as a community that we can continue to *Make our Mark* as Eurasians in Singapore.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'James Wong', written in a cursive style.

President Tony Tan Visits the EA



President Tony Tan
with the EA management

Photo courtesy of Ministry of Communications & Information

President Dr Tony Tan Keng Yam visited the Eurasian Community House on 7 July, where he met the EA Management Committee. He enjoyed Eurasian refreshments at Quentin's restaurant and was given a tour of the three galleries at the Eurasian Heritage Centre (EHC).

Dr Tan learned about the EA's various programmes to improve the lives of the Eurasian community and the plans

for the major revamp of the EHC that is being undertaken ahead of the EA's 100th anniversary in 2019.

The President wrote on his Facebook page: "As a small and unique community in the region, Eurasians have a rich history in Singapore. I am glad that the Eurasian Association has put in much effort to preserve and promote the culture and heritage of its community."

A Visit by the Portuguese Ambassador

The ambassador of Portugal, His Excellency Mr Luis Lervao, met the EA management on 27 June over an informal Eurasian meal at Quentin's restaurant followed by a tour of the Eurasian Heritage Centre. The ambassador was also presented with a copy of the book, *Singapore Eurasians: Memories, Hopes and Dreams*. Pictured with Mr Lervao (second right) are (from left) EA general manager Lester Low and Management Committee members Benett Theseira, Alexius Pereira and Yvonne Pereira.



Top Award for Eurasian Biography

The biography *E.W. Barker: The People's Minister*, commissioned by the Eurasian Association, won the Best Non-Fiction title at the Singapore Book Awards.

To celebrate the award, and to thank all those involved in its success, the EA held an appreciation dinner at Quentin's restaurant on 23 May.

The book award would not have been possible without the efforts of the EA Management Committee; the National Heritage Board's CEO, Rosa Daniel, who assisted with the funding; author Susan Sim; the steering committee comprising Gloria Barker, Carla Barker, Deborah Barker and Gerry de Silva; and Mr Herman Hochstadt, who wrote the foreword.

A few days later, in further recognition of the late pioneer politician, the National University of Singapore's Faculty of Law renamed its Centre for Law and Business The EW Barker Centre for Law and Business at the NUS Bukit Timah Campus on 29 May, where the guest of honour at the ceremony was Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong.

The book is published by SPH and is available at the EA and major bookstores, priced \$45.90.



Booked for dinner: the team celebrates a job well done

Raising a New Toast

The day's topic for discussion was 'retirement', but the newly installed EA toastmasters are far from giving up competing with each other in the battle of the spoken word

Toastmasters from the country's various clubs attended the installation ceremony at the Eurasian Community House on 1 July. The day began with a welcome address by EA Toastmasters Club President, Yvonne Pereira, who said: "Now, as we embark on a new journey with a new and younger leader, Michelle, I am sure that we will be able to reach for the stars! Michelle, may I wish you and your team every success."

Division E Director Yian Tay conducted the installation ceremony, announcing the executive committee for the term beginning July 2017, which comprises: president – Michelle Tessensohn; vice-president (Education) – Michael Rodrigues; vice-president (Membership) – Christian Eber; vice-president (Public Relations) – Charlene Lee; secretary – Arshad Vasanwala; treasurer – Peter Lee; sergeant-at-arms – Denise Pinto; and immediate past president – Yvonne Pereira.

The meeting continued with participants presenting their prepared speeches and the impromptu table topic was titled 'Retirement'. Both Penelope Ann Radcliffe from Marine Parade TMC and



Standing (from left): Denise Pinto, Christian Eber, Peter Lee, Arshad Vasanwala, Charlene Lee and Michael Rodrigues; seated (from left): Division E Director Yian Tay, Area E4 Director Felicia Ong, Michelle Tessensohn and Yvonne Pereira

David from Paya Lebar Link TMC shared their thoughts about retirement and why it was important to plan early. Their thought-provoking speeches resulted in a tie and both walked away winners.

Past Division E director Prem Methani presented special awards to the following EA TMC members for achieving the

accreditation during the previous term: Charlene Lee – Advanced Communicator, Bronze (ACB); Christian Eber, Competent Communicator (CC) and Competent Leader (CL); and Peter Lee – Advanced Leader Bronze title (ALB). Carolyn Street-Johns, who was not present, was awarded the Competent Communicator (in German).

Beginner's Luck

New inter-club recruit Hyacinth D'Silva had an evening to remember when she joined the EA's team for the second round of the 33rd Inter-Club Balut competition – her high score of 161 points in a single game earned her one of the top prizes.

The competition was hosted by the EA on 21 June at the Singapore Recreation Club and the 72 participants represented members of the SRC, Singapore Cricket Club, Tanglin Club, Indian Association and National University Society of Singapore.

The EA's team 1 comprised Dorothy Tessensohn, Pat Leung, The Ban Khi (Yang) and Sandra Ross while its team 2 players were Louisiana Thomas, Therese Thompson, SK John and Hyacinth.

Out of 18 teams, EA's team 1 emerged in fourth position while team 2 came in 13th place.



EA players Sandra Ross and The Ban Khi (second and third from left respectively) together with Cynthia Robless (left) and Roopa J Mane

The SCC team 1 won with 2,445 points, while its teams 4 and 1 came in a close second and third respectively.

Balut convenor Yvonne Pereira says: "I would like to thank Caroline de Guzman, SRC's director of Public Relations, and her team, Syqin and Eunice, for assisting the EA with programming. I am also



Yvonne Pereira with prizewinner Hyacinth D'Silva

grateful to the SRC for its premises, and its F&B department for the sumptuous food and excellent service. It was also heartening to receive many compliments about our organisational skills in running the competition!"

The next Inter-Club balut competition will be hosted by the NUSS on 12 July.

Recording Our Stories Before It Is Too Late



National Library Board CEO Elaine Ng (centre) with (from left): OHC assistant director Jesley Chua; NAS deputy director Veronica Boudville; Eurasian COHC members Cedric Pereira, Valerie Scully, Gerry de Silva (chair), James Boss, Timothy de Souza (adviser) and Julia D'Silva; NLB deputy CEO Tay Ai Cheng, NAS director Eric Chin and OHC oral history specialist Mark Wong

Can you help us record the oral histories of our community?

The Eurasian Association is partnering the Oral History Centre (OHC) of the National Archives of Singapore (NAS) to form a Eurasian Community Oral History Committee (COHC). This initiative will help build up the national oral history collection and ensure that it is representative of Singapore's society.

The committee seeks to capture interesting and informative personal experiences of Eurasians. These accounts provide a record of Singapore's past through the memories of those who lived through it, and help to document the uniqueness of our community, history, traditions and culture. The OHC will be helping to train volunteer interviewers and preserve the recordings for posterity. While 139 Eurasians have

been interviewed, prominent Eurasians such as Dr Benjamin Sheares, John Le Cain and KM Byrne were missed. You can help the centre to improve the Eurasian oral history collection by identifying those with stories to tell and volunteering as an interviewer.

For more information or to sign up, contact Jacqueline at jacqueline@eurasians.org or call 64471578 (ext 202).

FAST FACTS

- Singapore's Oral History Centre (OHC) was established in 1979
- It has collected 4,500 interviews (23,000 recorded hours) to date
- The OHC's community oral history initiative was officially launched on 15 June by Minister for Communications and Information, Dr Yaacob Ibrahim, and will see the setup of four committees representing the Chinese, Malay, Indian and Eurasian communities
- Explore the existing oral history collection at <http://www.nas.gov.sg/archivesonline/>
- See further stories from the project on: <http://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/ramping-up-efforts-to-capture-rich-oral-history>

A New Book for Myrna



Myrna Blake as an academic and author in the 1990s

Dr Myrna Braga-Blake, an EA stalwart, had a pleasant surprise after returning home from a recent spell in hospital. Myrna, who headed the association's Family Support Services many years ago, was visited on 3 June by EA representatives who brought with them a special present: a copy of *Singapore Eurasians: Memories, Hopes and Dreams*.

This book was an update and re-issue of *Singapore Eurasians: Memories and Hopes*, a book about the Eurasian community, published in 1992, that Myrna edited with assistance from Ann Ebert-Oehlers.

Myrna was a senior lecturer at the Department of Social Work & Psychology at the National University

of Singapore for many years before her retirement. In 2000, she was awarded Singapore's Public Service Star by then President SR Nathan. In the same year, she received the Outstanding Social Worker of the year award from her colleagues for her 40-year career battling social injustice.

Among the visitors were EA's First Vice President Dr Alexius Pereira, Ann Ebert-Oehlers, Louise Clarke, Christine Moss and Myrna's daughter, Dr Ann Blake.

The EA wishes Myrna a speedy recovery.

Code to Success

Technology is the key to our future – so it helps to learn young

When father of two Giri Sirini chanced upon the Code in the Community programme through the Eurasian Association, he decided that it would be a great learning opportunity for his 12-year-old daughter Anesha and

was very nervous before the first class but managed to make new friends quickly. "My teacher Mr Wong was very kind and it was exciting to learn how to create games where I can control the movement of race cars on a track." He giggles and



DN Prasad chats to siblings Anesh and Anesha

10-year-old son, Anesh. He says: "I did not have this opportunity when I was younger and wanted my children to benefit from learning how to code and program."

Code in the Community is an initiative sponsored by technology giant Google and run by 21C Girls and Saturday Kids to help diverse young Singaporeans, especially those from less well-to-do backgrounds, to develop computational skills and inspire them to pursue a career in technology. The first cohort celebrated the completion of term one on 20 May at Google's office in Singapore. More than 500 students and parents attended the 'graduation ceremony'.

Anesh and Anesha, whose mother is Eurasian, admit they were clueless about coding before they started the programme, but the siblings have now formed a genuine interest in the subject and look forward to lessons every Saturday morning. Anesh says that he

"It is heartening to have one of the leading technology companies providing a helping hand to our children to help them secure better job prospects"



Anesh and Anesha flash a not-so-secret code: we're having fun!

continues: "I also created a 'crossy road game' where mice needed to cross the roads before the cats ate them up!"

Anesha joined the classes merely to support her brother, who is enthusiastic about computers and technology. To her surprise, she found herself liking the classes and enjoyed programming the micro-bit. She says: "I was hooked on using the micro-bit and programmed it



Anesha and Anesh Giri with Benett Theseira (left) and DN Prasad, Google's director of people services for Asia-Pacific

to make different sounds and games." During the graduation ceremony, the family were able to take a tour of Google's office, which Anesha found surprisingly agreeable. "I liked its openness; it's not a typical office and people can walk around freely," she says.

Both children are looking forward to term two, when they will be learning other data structures and adding their own flavour to their existing projects.

EA President Benett Theseira says: "It is heartening to have one of the leading technology companies providing a helping hand to our children to help them secure better job prospects and a brighter future for themselves and their families."

Enrolment for next year will begin in November 2017.

To find out more or to sign up for the classes, please contact Keith Kuah at keith@eurasians.org or call 6447 1578 (ext 205).

Where Cool Stuff Rules After School

The Big Heart Student Care centres run by the self-help groups are now offering youngsters even more after-school activities to enjoy

Primary school students can now take part in after-school drama and art classes provided by the EA, thanks to an expanded curriculum in the student care centres. The EA will also be rolling out a Communication Skills programme organised by one of the association's Toastmasters, which will focus on public speaking. The students will be taught how to craft speeches and build their character through communication.

The school-based Big Heart Student Care centres run by Self Help Groups Student Care Limited began in 2016 and now

operate in more than 15 schools throughout the country. The centres aim to help schools support the all-round development of students, including those from underprivileged backgrounds. Many pupils do not have proper care after school and the centres provide a welcoming environment where they can play and study after school hours.

If you are keen to find out more about the Big Heart Student Care centres, please contact Keith Kuah at keith@eurasians.org or call 6447 1578 (ext 205).

Getting the Numbers Right

The EA's Maths Intensive Programme is a speedy revision programme that helps students ace their exams

The Mathematics Intensive Programme for students taking both the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) and 'O' levels was held at the Eurasian Community House from 5 to 16 June. The two-week course covers revision of all the exams' maths concepts and formulas.

Ryan Michael Chua Jun Jie, a pupil at St Gabriel's Secondary School, is keen to get an A1 during his 'O'-level examinations at the end of the year, but admits to a bit of a wobble in his studies. "I used to get As or Bs last year for maths, but this year I am disappointed that I've dropped to a D7. I was unable to complete my paper on time and left many questions unanswered," he admits.



Back row, from left: PSLE tutor Christopher Rozario, PSLE student Fabian Ignatius Teo, 'O'-level student Ryan Michael Chua Jun Jie and 'O'-level tutor Gerald Lee Zhaohong
Front row, from left: PSLE students Troy Lee M S De Silva and Kazu Kai Wright with 'O'-level student Claudia Jane Van Huizen

"I like the environment. It was unlike other programmes with classroom settings"

When asked what inspired him to join the programme, he answers sheepishly, "It was free!" but adds that, more importantly, the programme has provided him with the much-needed guidance that

he required. In particular, he now has a better understanding of the concepts behind coordinated geometry, a branch of maths that he used to struggle with.

Ryan, whose mother is Eurasian and father Chinese, says his tutor was kind and that the small class size enabled him to get personalised attention. Ryan says: "I was able to clear all my doubts and am now confident of at least reaching a B3.

If I manage my time effectively, I might even be able to get an A1."

Following his success, Ryan now encourages more students to sign up for the programme and concludes: "I also liked the environment. It was unlike other programmes with classroom settings. The room was very cosy!" He hopes to ace the examinations and qualify for a science stream in a Junior College.

Buddhist Lodge Awards for Eurasian Students

The Singapore Buddhist Lodge awarded bursaries to three secondary-level Eurasian students – Chiara-Ann Yuan-Qi Spruyt, Charmaine Odezza Lauchengco and Elmes Darwisy Cook – at its 39th bursary presentation ceremony on 22 April. The charity works closely with the EA to help finance students from underprivileged families with their school fees, books and transportation.

Receiving the bursary award for the first time, 16-year-old Chiara said: "I feel extremely blessed to receive this award. It spurs me to work even harder after seeing how my efforts can be recognised."



Front from left: Chiara-Ann Yuan-Qi Spruyt, Charmaine Odezza Lauchengco and Elmes Darwisy Cook with their awards

Celebrating the Eurasian Spirit

With the Nation

In 2019, the Eurasian Association celebrates its centenary. In the run-up to the big event, it is staging various festivals to demonstrate that despite the community's small size, it has had – and continues to have – a significant beneficial impact on the nation's history



A Portuguese-style Eurasian folk dance



Cute handmade crafts from the Craft@EA team

"The Eurasian Festival at Our Tampines Hub was a spectacular celebration of our culture, food and dance. I received calls from my friends who remarked how our community was honoured by PM Lee. The photo which appeared of Mrs Stewart hugging PM Lee was such a touching gesture of the relationship and great appreciation our PM has for his people"

- Timothy de Souza, EA trustee



Cheyenne D'Silva (left) and Samantha Santa Maria explain Eurasian cuisine to visitors



Volunteers with their certificates at the Festival Appreciation Dinner



EURASIAN FESTIVAL 2017

MAKING OUR MARK

PM Lee addresses the festivalgoers



PM Lee and Benett Theseira applaud a festival performance

As part of the current drive to raise the profile of the Eurasian community in Singapore, the EA held a celebration of all things Eurasian at a special event on 9 April at Our Tampines Hub. The Eurasian Festival was as diverse as the community and lively as its people, showcasing aspects of the community's life from its history, language and Christian religion to its pastimes, dances and, of course, food. It was celebrated throughout the day with dance performances and activities at cultural booths. Organised in partnership with the People's Association and staffed purely by volunteers, it was a major event in the social calendar that merited the attendance of Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong as guest of honour.

Visitors began streaming in from 10am and redeemed a goodie bag comprising delicacies such as sugee cake, a hot cross bun, chocolate Easter egg with an Easter card and the booklet, *Eurasians In A Nutshell*. Shortly before the arrival of PM Lee, other VIPs, including Minister for Trade and Industry (Industry), Mr S Iswaran, Eurasian Members of Parliament Christopher de Souza and Joan Pereira and People's Association's chief executive director Desmond Tan turned up for the event.

EA President Benett Theseira gave a brief explanation of the history of the Eurasian people and how their forefathers had first come to Southeast Asia and settled more than half a millennium ago. He added:

Fun Ways to Learn the Eurasian Story

In addition to providing a fun day out, the festival was designed to expand the public's knowledge about who the Singaporean Eurasians are. More than 100 volunteers took part in staging the festival, including a number who staffed the various booths that showcased diverse Eurasian cultural elements.

People's Association CED

Desmond Tan says: "The People's Association is happy to partner The Eurasian Association. Through the Eurasian Festival 2017, we will be better able to appreciate the delicacies, music, history and other aspects of the Eurasian community's rich heritage and share them with the larger community. In this way, we can promote greater cross-cultural understanding and strengthen community bonding."

"Over the last five decades, Singapore has developed as a successful multi-racial first world nation; these characteristics of religion, language and lifestyle are no longer unique to the Eurasian community.

The small size of our community and our openness to integrate has resulted in a high degree of inter-marriage with the

Malay, Chinese and Indian communities, which further dilutes the identity of the Eurasian community. While some Eurasians do lament this increasing loss of identity, on the flip side I would argue that Eurasians have just become more Singaporean and Singapore, has to some extent become more 'Eurasian'."

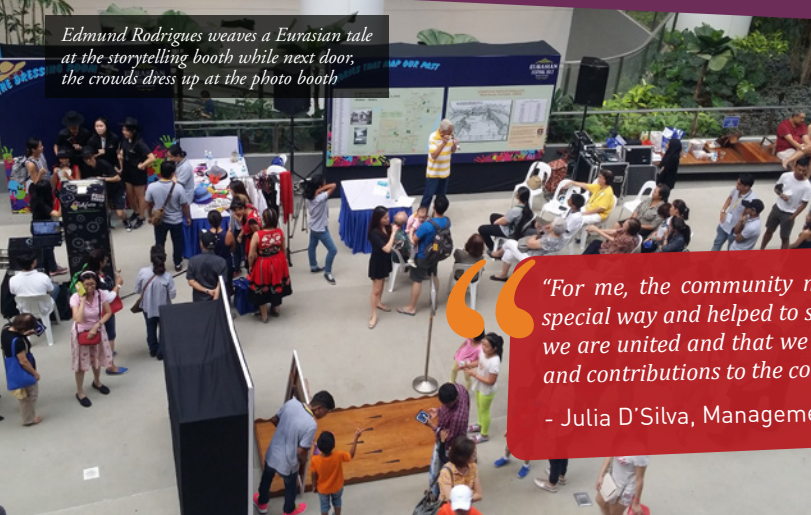
Benett then invited PM Lee, Minister Iswaran and MPs Christopher de Souza and Joan Pereira to join him on stage with a group of Eurasian children to assemble an Easter-egg puzzle together.

EA Management Committee member Julia D'Silva explains that during a visit to the EA by Christopher de Souza, Joan Pereira and a team from the People's Association, they discussed how they could raise the profile of the Eurasian community in Singapore, and decided: "What better way than to hold a series of festivals across the island in the next two years leading up to the EA's centennial celebrations in 2019?"

She adds that even though the Eurasian community is small and is often lost in the sea of new faces that immigration has brought in the last decade, the Eurasians have continued to march on and excel in their chosen careers.

The next Eurasian Festival will be held on 9 December at the Ulu Pandan Community Club.

Edmund Rodrigues weaves a Eurasian tale at the storytelling booth while next door, the crowds dress up at the photo booth



"For me, the community made their mark in their own special way and helped to shine our light. We showed that we are united and that we are very proud of our heritage and contributions to the country"

- Julia D'Silva, Management Committee member

Guests enjoying their day at the festival





Therese Stewart, aged 102, greets PM Lee, who she knew as a child, watched by daughter Olivia



Natascha Miller chats to PM Lee about the significance of Easter eggs

Aidan Woodford at the Storytelling Booth

Aidan helped run the storytelling booth, which comprised four speakers who shared different facets of Eurasian heritage, from the trials of World War II to the Eurasian enclaves. "The whole experience was invigorating," he says. One of the most common questions he was asked was: 'What is heritage?' "To me, it is how we as a community come together to celebrate the things that we share. We sieve through our individual histories and memories, find the common things and these things slowly build up as our heritage."

Loretta Santa Maria at the Craft Booth

Loretta began her volunteer work at the EA when she retired. She became a member of the Craft@EA team and has created many items for sale at the EA. The booth had a display of hand-made beanies, scarves and table runners. The most popular items were the smartphone pouches and EZ-link card lanyards. Loretta laughs and says: "I was surprised that they were mostly bought by youth as I didn't think they would be fond of knitted crafts! The crafts were really admired by many for the amount of work that went into making them."

The festival catered to every individual, from all walks of life. It was a comfortable space to engage in and with the Eurasian community. You could say that it was truly a Eurasian affair!
- Aidan Woodford, volunteer

Cheyenne D'Silva at the Cultural Booth

Cheyenne, 21, was one of the younger Eurasians at the cultural booth. She admits that she had never taken much notice of the 'Eurasian' classification on her ID card until her uncle traced their family tree recently. She felt that he learnt so many things about his lineage and culture that her own curiosity was piqued. "Volunteering at the Eurasian Festival was a small step to learn more about the history and culture of the Eurasian community, get in touch with my roots and also a great opportunity to meet fellow Eurasians," she says. The highlight of her day's volunteering was the opportunity to speak with PM Lee and tell him about the popular Eurasian dishes, devil's curry and beef meatballs. "I briefly mentioned the ingredients used, occasions that we eat them at and passed him the recipe cards," she says. "It was great to see how interested PM Lee was about the Eurasian culture and I am overjoyed that our race, despite being a minority, is not forgotten in Singapore."

Eurasian Festival Volunteers' Appreciation Dinner

A thank-you dinner was held on 3 June at the Eurasian Community House for the volunteers at the festival. The guests enjoyed a buffet spread by Quentin's Eurasian restaurant and musical entertainment by Trevor Nerva and David Ng.

The guests watched a video of the festival highlights and were then each presented with a certificate to recognise their contribution.

In thanking them, EA President, Benett Theseira said: "Many of you were working under warm and crowded conditions and I would like to share that the entire Eurasian community applauds your efforts. The good news is that this is the first time I am also seeing such a large number of youth volunteers. I am sure that you would have realised during the event that volunteering can be fun, is time well spent and is also a meaningful experience."



Peter Diaz waving the crowd



Peter Gordon with his son Wesley



Marlene Beatrice Mouret with Minister Iswaran



A group photo at Sky Terrace



The welcome party for PM Lee (from left): Desmond Tan (PA CED), Julia D'Silva (EA Heritage chairperson), Bennett Theseira (EA President), Patricia and Timothy de Souza (who is an EA trustee and PA board member), Minister Iswaran and MPs Christopher de Souza and Joan Pereira



A question of balance: Abigale Rodrigues encourages a tot during the egg and spoon race

Natasha Marie Miller-Leong at the Easter Egg Colouring Booth

Natasha learned about the Eurasian Festival from her mother, Sharon Miller, who volunteers as a tour guide at the Eurasian Heritage Centre. Knowing that many of the booths would be staffed by young Eurasians – and potential new friends – was an incentive to volunteer immediately. She was assigned to the Easter-egg colouring booth where, she says: "Parents were glad to leave their children with me as it gave them a chance to check out stations like the informative heritage booths." Natasha ensured that the kids didn't get too messy – which involved keeping the under-fives away from the glitter! – and says that it was an amazing opportunity to explain to the children that the Easter eggs represent 'new life' and that Easter day represents the resurrection of Jesus. She, too, was able to speak to PM Lee.

Abigale Rodrigues at the Kampong Games Station

Abigale worked at one of the most popular spots in the festival, where there were long queues throughout the day. She was responsible for the 'eggs station' where participants had to hold a fake egg on a spoon and complete a short course. She says: I work as a freelance outdoor trainer and it was good to use my prior experience to engage with the children and ensure that they had fun. I also liked the fact that the parents could support their child throughout the game." Other games at the booth included five stones, pick-up sticks, hopscotch and bowling.

"What I enjoyed most about the festival was working with the young children and meeting other Eurasian youth. There were children assisting me with my morning shift and I was impressed that they were very attentive when given instructions"

- Natasha Marie Miller-Leong, volunteer

Roll of Honour

In his address to the festival visitors, PM Lee highlighted a number of Eurasians who have risen to the top of Singapore society. He said: "Eurasians have distinguished themselves and made significant contributions to our society. To name a few: Professor Maurice Baker, who was among the first generation of diplomats; and Mr Bernard Baker, also an diplomat; Mr EW Barker, our first Law Minister, who drafted our Separation Agreement with Malaysia; Mr Stanley Stewart and Mr George Bogaars, both heads of the civil service – and I am so happy today to see Mrs Stewart, and her daughter Olivia here with us. Mrs Stewart is 102 years old and older than the Eurasian Association and still going strong! There was Benjamin Sheares, an eminent obstetrics and gynaecology surgeon, who was Singapore's second President; Ambassador Barry Desker, who was our ambassador to Indonesia and who built up our trade relations as CEO of the Trade Development Board; our first woman Supreme Court Justice, Judith Prakash; Jeremy Monteiro who's our King of Swing; and, of course Joseph Schooling! I am also very happy to see a new generation of Eurasians doing well in many professions, all over society, establishing and making a name for themselves and I have no doubt that Eurasians will make many contributions to Singapore in time to come."

"Everyone regardless of their race or religion came together and appreciated what being a Eurasian is all about"

- Loretta Santa Maria, volunteer

A Tribute to the Old and New

The new leading names in the EA's Family Support Services discuss how to build on predecessor Francesca Eber's near decade of work

Vincent Schoon, EA Management Committee member and Edmund Rodrigues, the new chair of the EA's Family Support Services (FSS) Subcommittee share their thoughts on the reboot of the FSS after the resignation of management committee member Francesca Eber. She had been involved in FSS for close to a decade and a number of volunteers have stepped in to continue providing the essential services.

Edmund joined the team following an invitation from Francesca, who introduced him to the plight of the poorer members of the Eurasian community. He describes Francesca as a close friend to all those who approached EA for assistance. "She always felt that there was a solution to the problems presented and worked tirelessly to find a happy solution. She will always be remembered for her genuine affection and will be badly missed," he says.

"We need the backing of older retirees and we also need the enthusiasm and energy of the young to help to motivate and inspire the younger generation from underprivileged backgrounds"

Vincent's involvement in the FSS began in 2003 when he volunteered to deliver rations. He hopes to get more befrienders on board and ideally hopes to achieve a ratio of one befriender to two households. He also aims to set up an emergency fund. "This fund was an excellent idea mooted by volunteer Renee Shepherdson. It will cater for genuine and dire requests from individuals at very short notice. We are

working on gathering donations from individuals and organisations to set this up," he says.

Both he and Edmund stress that the way to continue helping those in need is with generous support from the community. Vincent says that donations are critical and he is working on ensuring that donors are always aware on how their donations are being used. Edmund adds that the committee also needs diverse support from different groups. "We need the backing of older retirees and we also need the enthusiasm and energy of the young, especially the successful, to help to motivate and inspire the younger generation from underprivileged backgrounds who are often accustomed to low standards and failure."

If you are keen to volunteer or donate, contact Ram at ram@eurasians.org or call 6447 1578 (ext 210).

A Welcome for New FSS Befrienders

Members of the Family Support Services' team learned how their individual roles play into the larger scheme



FSS chairman Edmund Rodrigues discusses the department's future plans with the volunteers

A welcome lunch for more than 20 new volunteers was organised by the EA's Family Support Services on 6 May.

The lunch began with an opening address by EA President Benett Theseira, after which the volunteers were briefed by the recently appointed chair, Edmund Rodrigues, about the needs of underprivileged Eurasians. He called on

the volunteers to serve as 'Befrienders', who visit FSS beneficiaries on a regular basis as many are elderly, without an income and live alone. He also outlined future plans and programmes for the FSS and took questions and feedback from the guests.

Carol Shepherdson, who has been volunteering her time for the FSS for

14 years, said: "I have been doing groundwork as a befriender to deliver rations to the beneficiaries. More than just delivering the rations, I found that the beneficiaries wanted someone to talk to and were happy whenever I visited them. The lunch was an eye-opener and I understood that my work is truly meaningful."

The revamped FSS committee comprises Vincent Schoon, from the management committee, FSS chairman, Edmund Rodrigues, vice-chairman Paul Rodrigues and the following members: Christine Pereira; Josephine Cordeiro; Renita Sophia Crasta; Mark De Souza; Martha Fernandez; Michael Gerard Lewis; Karen Marsh; Misha Monteiro-Benson; Quentin Pereira; Evelyn Rodrigues; Patricia Rodrigues; Robert Scully; Carol Shepherdson; Rene Shepherdson Jr; Lydia Tan.

If you would also like to be an EA FSS Befriender, please contact Ram at ram@eurasians.org or call 6447 1578 (ext 210).

Insuring a Healthier Old Age

A recent Tea With Neighbours session focussed on the government's health insurance scheme

Forty members of the Eurasian community came together to gain a better understanding of the Ministry of Health's EldersShield insurance scheme for those with severe disabilities, and to take part in a focus group discussion on how it could be improved.

The event, held on 9 July, was one of the Tea With Neighbours series and was staged thanks to the help of Koh Juay Meng, a member of the EldersShield review committee, which is seeking views throughout the republic.

"The session taught me what I was missing out on"

The event began with a welcome address by Edmund Rodrigues, after which guests watched a video on EldersShield and held group discussions.

The event revealed that many of those attending lacked knowledge about

ElderShield and its coverage, benefits, and pay out. After the session, guest Cedric Pereira, 69, said: "I was not quite sure if I was able to use the ElderShield scheme. The session not only taught me what I was missing out on but also helped me to better understand what things I can afford on the medical front."

Guests enjoyed refreshments and also received a goodie bag and NTUC vouchers from the MOH as thanks for their participation.



Above and below: Facilitators help the participants to think about their health insurance needs



Striding to Success in the New School Term

A workshop for students was held to challenge the way they think, help them to study better and achieve their goals

The EA Youth Sub-Committee kicked off its Mentorship Programme for Eurasian students on 1 July with a workshop to help them improve their exam and study skills.

The workshop was conducted by experienced coach Humphrey Conceicao, who used neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) techniques to help them to transform their behavioural and thought patterns, so that they could become more productive in their studies and achieve their goals.

One of the workshop elements was a Visual-Auditory-Kinesthetic (VAK) assessment, which revealed to the students which learning style was the most effective for them. Humphrey also taught them effective learning strategies to help them improve memory recall and enhance their creativity and problem-solving skills. They were also taught effective stress management techniques and how to connect to their passions and motivation in life.

Jared Bateman, 23, a Mechanical Engineering student at the National Technological University attended the workshop to open his mind to new ideas. He says: "The session has taught me how to be a more effective student

using the various study techniques that Mr Humphrey taught us."

Samantha Monis, 18, who is currently pursuing a NITEC in Digital Audio and Video Production, found the workshop extremely useful. "I have definitely learnt how to identify the different types of stresses and to manage and conquer them," she says.

Christopher Gordon, who chairs the EA's Youth Sub-Committee, encouraged young Eurasians to come on board the Mentorship Programme. He says "The comprehensive series of workshops under the programme will help our youth to discover their passion and gain clarity of their study and career goals. It will also provide them with the tools to maximise their potential and achieve their aspirations."

The NLP workshop is the first in a series of workshops under the EA Youth Sub-Committee's flagship Mentorship Programme. All workshops are complimentary for Eurasian students. To sign up for the Mentorship Programme or find out more, contact Revathhi at revathhi@eurasians.org or 6447 1578 (ext 207). Students who successfully complete the programme will be given a Certificate of Accomplishment.



*Thinking differently now:
Jared Bateman and Samantha Monis*



The students think it's been a great session

Accounting for Success

Danni Jay's plans for his new role at the EA add up to good news for aspiring young Eurasians

Last year, when Danni Jay Luke Danis, a management consultant and qualified accountant with one of the 'Big Four' accounting firms, was at a Singapore budget event he was approached by Christopher Gordon, who chairs the EA's Youth Sub-Committee. The two got talking, realised they had much in common – and, most importantly, both had a desire to help give their fellow young Eurasians their best shot at creating a positive impact in their lives.

So Danni, 28, didn't hesitate to take up Christopher's invitation to join the association's Youth wing: "It was a huge opportunity for me not just to help our youth, but also drive initiatives and action on ideas to actually contribute to the future of our youth," he says. He is



Danni receiving his CPA recognition award at the CPA Australia office in Singapore upon qualifying as a Certified Public Accountant

Asian and European heritage. He says: "My dad is Eurasian and Ceylonese and my mother is Javanese and I've always had the curiosity to dig deeper to who my forefathers were." He believes that

"The mentors will be their friend, brother or sister and even be someone they look up to as leaders in their respective professional field"

passionate not only about improving individual skill sets but also about bringing young Eurasians together and resurrecting dying traditions in the community, like folk dancing and the making of traditional pineapple tarts or even speaking a few words in Kristang.

Danni has been actively involved in community and grassroots work for the past few years working with the Cashew-Zone Grassroots community, but says his greater agenda has always been to focus on the needs of women, children and youth. Why specifically youth? His answer: "Youth and children; because they are our future. The youth of today are lucky to have grown up in the society and norms of the '80s, '90s and early 2000s. This combination of 20th and 21st century thinking – an understanding of a more conservative perspective combined with the fast-moving economy of today, globalisation and digital disruption will make them better leaders and better human beings in the world we live in."

His vision for the Eurasian youth community is firstly for them to know their roots rather than just consider themselves as someone with 'mixed'

youth should "go-figure" who they are, what their forefathers were like, where they came from, how Eurasians contributed to society, community and country and how they arrived at where they are today. His reason for this is so that youth form a personal identity and also have the ability to resurrect certain cultural traditions, thought processes and social customs that may have been lost through modernisation.

At the EA, he has decided to start by planning small but impactful activities. He says: "We are working on various events such as the career dialogues, mentorship initiative and the Young Eurasian Career Network (YECN). In particular, he will be fronting a culinary workshop event later in the year where young Eurasians and their families can come together to learn how to cook Eurasian food."

The first phase of the initiative is a series of workshops for young Eurasians, which include maximising success using neuro-linguistics programming techniques and working on examinations using techniques to control their emotional and intellectual expressiveness. The workshops will be completed later this

year, and at the same time the youth will be paired with their mentors. Danni explains: "The mentors will be their friend, brother or sister and even be someone they look up to as leaders in their respective professional field. They will show them they don't have to think that just because they are not as fortunate as others, they'll be left behind – because they won't be."

Danni concludes that the Eurasian community will continue to expand as globalisation impacts communities further – however that does not mean that the awareness of who the Eurasians are will disappear. He laughs and says: "It would be pretty cool if every one of us knew our heritage and our story; it's an easy way to kick-start conversations and create an awareness of our Eurasian community. Haven't we all been asked: 'What's your race? Chindian, Malay, mixed?' Well, we're Eurasians!"

If you are keen to join the EA's Youth Sub-Committee, please contact Revathhi at revathhi@eurasians.org or 6447 1578 (ext 207).

What Does It Mean to Be Eurasian?



Being part of a cross-racial heritage gives me exposure to all sorts of cultures, languages, and even ways of living. This allows me to relate and resonate easily with people of other races – understanding things from their perspective, how they grew up, and their cultural norms and so on. Honestly, it's a 'good-thing' to be Eurasian and I'm proud to be one!

Teachers are Enthusiastic to Learn about the Eurasian Community

A group of teachers were on the receiving end of education when they visited the Eurasian Heritage Centre

More than 80 educators visited the Eurasian Heritage Centre in April to learn more about the community's history, culture and heritage. Tour guide Sharon Miller provided the visitors with insightful information about the Eurasian community in Singapore, which they, in turn, plan to use to create more meaningful lessons for their students.

The tour was part of the Racial Harmony Forum, which was set up this year to assist Ministry of Education educators to deepen their understanding of the country's various ethnic groups and how to maintain social cohesion in Singapore. The forum was held over four sessions in April and was spearheaded by the Character and Citizenship Education Branch of the MOE and OnePeople.sg

One of the visitors, Adrian Goh, a non-Eurasian, from the MOE Character and Citizenship Education branch, believes that the forum provides a platform for teachers and students to embrace diversity. He was interested to learn about the Eurasian traditions – one that particularly caught his imagination was



Sharon prepares the educators for their visit to the Eurasian Heritage Centre

the custom of a prospective bridegroom writing a letter to the bride's father's asking for her hand in marriage. He says: "I also liked how personal stories were weaved into the tour. For example, instead of sharing how the Portuguese

came to Singapore, the guide shared where her grandparents were from and their journey to Singapore. I think the use of such personal stories help participants feel more connected to the facts presented in the learning journeys."

Passengers Enjoy a Cultural Journey

The Eurasian Heritage Bus Tour took to the roads as part of a national festival

A bus taking visitors to four of the island's 'Eurasian' destinations had its second year of outings this year when it took part in HeritageFest 2017, a festival celebrating Singapore's cultural diversity.

The festival is supported by the National Heritage Board and passengers who signed up for the tour had their first stop at the Eurasian Heritage Centre at the Eurasian Community House, before moving on to St Joseph's Church for a glimpse of traditional Catholic Church architecture. The next stop was the former St Joseph's Institution (now Singapore Art Museum), the oldest Catholic boys' school in Singapore, which was built by the same French priest who built the Cathedral of the Good Shepherd, the

St Joseph's Institution, the oldest Catholic boy's school in Singapore, was built by the same French priest who built the Cathedral of the Good Shepherd

country's oldest Catholic church, which was the final stop of the tour.

At each stop, the 'tourists' were given an insight into the history and culture of the Eurasian community. The tours were carried out over three weekends from 29 April to 14 May.



Tour guide Christian Eber (second from left) with the group at Singapore Art Museum, the former St Joseph's Institution

Tempu Birah Kaza (It's Time to Come Home)

A group of enthusiasts are speaking up for Kristang, one of the heritage languages of the Eurasian community in Singapore and Malaysia

Throughout the world, once-thriving languages are disappearing as major languages take over and younger generations fail to learn the native tongue of their elders.

In Singapore, one such dying language is Kristang, the creole (hybrid) language created by the descendents of the Portuguese settlers and their Asian wives, which was once spoken widely among the Eurasian community on the island.

Today, enthusiasts for the language exist among younger generations, not least Eurasian linguistics graduate Kevin Martens Wong, who has recruited a team and pupils for Kristang classes and conceptualised the idea of a Kristang Language Festival, which was realised on 20 and 21 May.

The event to revive the language was organised by the Kodrah Kristang (Awaken, Kristang) team led by Kevin and comprised a range of programmes which showcased Kristang and Eurasian history, heritage and culture, as well as some of their efforts to bring the language to a new generation of Singaporeans. Kevin says: "The festival has been an entirely community-led effort from its very modest beginnings in October 2016, and I have been at many times humbled by the energy and enthusiasm our amazing team of volunteers have put into conceptualising, developing and preparing."

During the two-day fiesta, guests took part in a range of activities from a forum discussing 'How Eurasian is Kristang?' (on which Eurasian Association President Benett Theseira was a panellist) to workshops on Eurasian Dance for Beginners and a gala dinner at Hotel Fort Canning.

Sara Frederica Sta Maria is a teacher for underprivileged children in the Portuguese Settlement in Malacca, and also the co-author of *Beng Prende Portugues Malaká (Papiá Cristang)* - 'Come, Let's Learn Portugues Malaká', a Kristang tutorial book. Every Saturday since 2012, she has been teaching Kristang culture, traditions and the language to the settlement children. She participated in a panel discussion at the



The Kodrah Kristang team, with Kevin third from left

festival alongside Kevin on 'The Future of Kristang: Dreams and Awakenings'.

She says: "My late father, Aloysius Santa Maria, was a native Kristang speaker and began work on the language in the late 1980s; he presented a Kristang dictionary at the Pen Writers conference in Brazil in 1997. A month before he passed on, he had prepared a syllabus for the Kristang festival and I decided to take his work to pass it on." She adds that her father would have been very proud of the efforts of the Kodrah Kristang team.

During the panel discussion, Sara admitted that there had been a decline in the language at the Portuguese settlement in the late 1990s, but revival efforts were made by Michael Singho, president of the Malacca Portuguese-Eurasian Association. She played her part by teaching Kristang and currently has close to 15 students (both children and adults) in her class. She has also started teaching classes at the Faculty of Languages and Linguistics, University of Malaya and told the panel audience that reviving a language is a collective effort in which everyone has to play their part.

She also teaches the Kristang culture and traditions to her students. "One of the traditions that I still hold dear is from weddings where a 'cronchi' resembling a crown is considered a symbol of chastity and is hung at the entrance of the bride's room. I am happy that it is still being practised today."

Sara adds that she was overwhelmed by her experience at the Kristang Language

Festival. "It was great to be given an opportunity to speak Kristang and to dance together with the 1511 O Maliao Maliao dance troupe!" She concludes, "Beng nos prende papiá Kristang! Beng nos papiá Kristang!" which translates to "Let's learn Kristang! Let's speak Kristang!"

Kristang in Singapore

In Singapore today, an estimated one hundred elderly people are believed to still speak Kristang natively. It is estimated that less than half of them can speak the language fluently. The language is a critically-endangered heritage language of the Portuguese-Eurasian community.



Photos: Marvin Tang

For more photos from the festival, visit https://www.facebook.com/pg/kodrahkristang/photos/?tab=album&album_id=294193617674700

Operating at Her Best

Melody Bellido rarely suffers from an unproductive day at work. When she returns home at the end of the day, she knows she has played a direct part in saving somebody's life

When, as a young child, Melody Bellido visited her two younger brothers in hospital when they fell ill with a respiratory disease, her attention was caught by the nurses' kind and reassuring demeanour. "They always seemed to know what to do and how to provide help and information when the patients and their family didn't understand what was going on," she says.

Later, at the age of 12, when she attended a career fair in school and learned more about what a nursing career entailed, it sparked a curiosity that led to her graduation from ITE in 2010 as an enrolled nurse.

Now 25, she works in the major operating theatre at Singapore General Hospital as a peri-operative staff nurse. A typical day for her starts at 8am when she prepares the necessary instrument sets

and medical equipment needed for the day. Once a patient arrives, she helps to ensure that all consents and proper documentation are in place before taking turns to scrub and circulate in the operating room.

An operating nurse also needs to have critical thinking as they act as the surgeon's extra pair of eyes and hands. "Sometimes we know what they require even before they ask for it. It takes time to develop such competency." She also emphasises the utmost importance of remaining calm and composed during emergencies.

Throughout her nursing career, Melody says that her most rewarding experiences are when she sees a patient from the OT walking healthily in the hospital



Melody reassuring a patient having surgery at SGH

compound or even outside hospital grounds. "Even though they don't know me, I know that I had a part to play in their recovery," she says. "It makes everything worthwhile."

A Special Kind of Love

Veteran volunteer Priscilla Theseira found herself competing with time to ensure contestants at a major recent sporting event were well fed throughout the duration



Priscilla, suitably attired at the Special Olympics

If anybody is proof that you get every bit as much out of volunteering as you put into it, it's Priscilla Theseira. Now 73, and a grandmother of four and godmother of 10, Priscilla has been volunteering in various ways for 36 years.

Her most recent task was at the 9th Special Olympics Singapore National Games 2017, held from 19 to 21 May for both local and regional athletes. As a former school principal at MINDS (Movement for the Intellectually Disabled of Singapore), she

knew that she had to lend a helping hand to a competition that held, at its core, people with special needs. And it involved that most precious of Singaporean obsessions – food!

"We had approximately 800 athletes and volunteers hosted in University Town (at the National University of Singapore) for three days. They moved to different venues in order to participate in the various sports and my role was to supply lunches to each location. It was close to 4,000 meals!" she says. She collated the meals that she had to deliver to each location to ensure that all the athletes, coaches and volunteers had enough nutritious food to get them through the games. She not only thoroughly enjoyed her stint but also encouraged family members and friends to join, including a number of youngsters.

Priscilla has been working with children with special needs for many years. Part of her work was to teach the students daily living and self-help skills such as washing dishes and buttoning a shirt and, as a pianist, she would also teach them through music and movement.

Her most satisfying moments, she says, are when some of her former students, who are now working, get in touch with her to show that they have received their payslips. "I feel really proud!", she says. "I hope that what I taught them during school has somewhat contributed to their success."



Be Part of Our *Eurasian Heritage!*

Please e-mail your responses –
with contributions big or small – to
Jacqueline at jacqueline@eurasians.org or
call 6447 1578 (ext 202)



The Eurasian Association is revamping the Eurasian Heritage Centre (EHC) and is looking for members of the Eurasian community to participate in this exciting project. We're appealing to you to share with us your personal stories, artefacts and memorabilia to help us improve the way we showcase our Eurasian story.

We look forward to learning your views on the following:

- What message about Eurasians do you want visitors to take away from the EHC?
- What stories do you want to include about the Eurasian Association?
- In addition to our current displays on the community's roots, history, culture and lifestyle, what other important topics should we cover? How can we build on these to include the various European heritages?
- Many Eurasians have contributed to the nation-building process. Who should be highlighted?
- What are your thoughts about the Eurasian community today? What is its role – and what will our challenges be in the future?



Your input is valuable as it will not only help us to create a Eurasian Heritage Centre that makes us proud, but it will also impact on all Singaporeans and allow them to remember that our minority community has played and will continue to play an important role in the development of Singapore.