

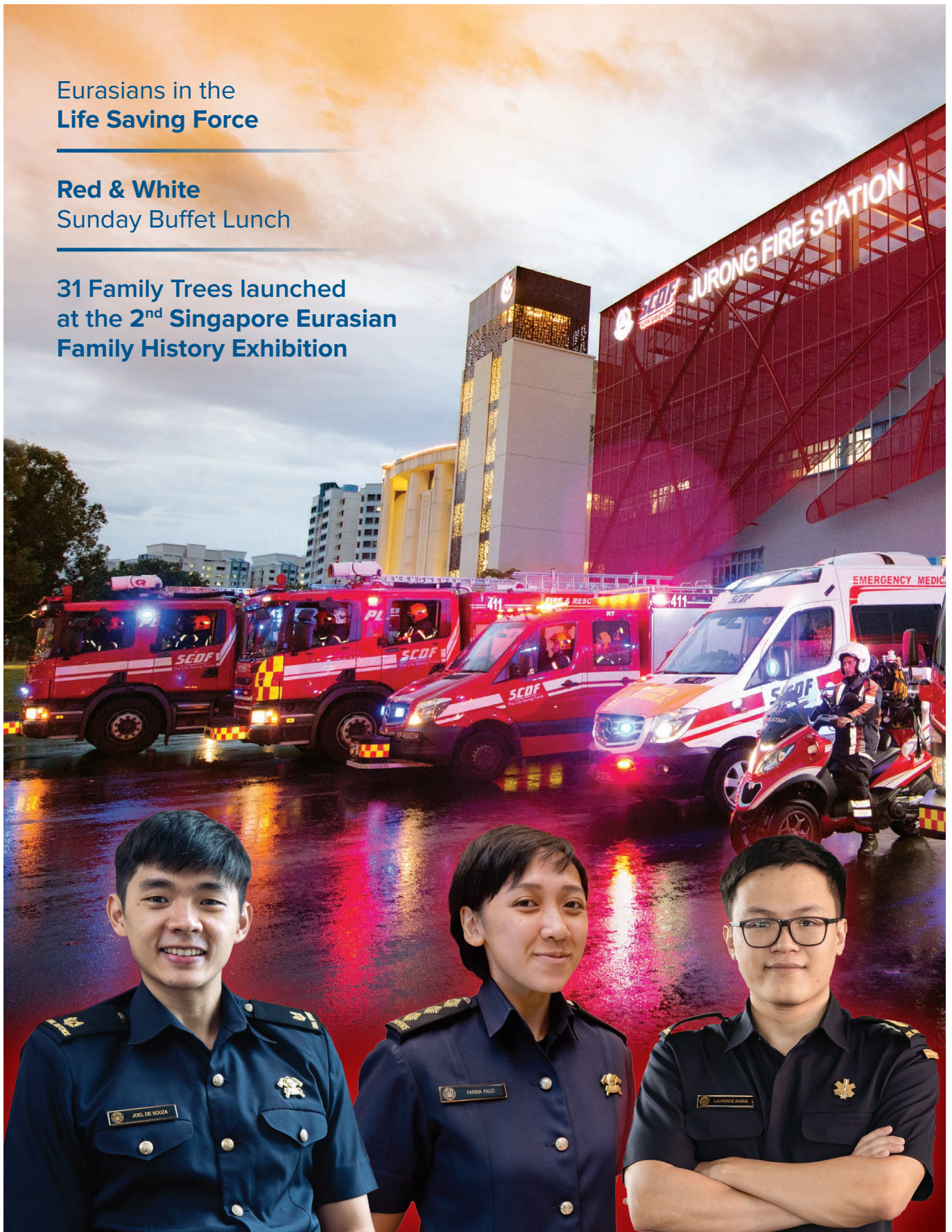
THE NEW EURASIAN

Oct – Dec 2022 | eurasians.sg

Eurasians in the
Life Saving Force

Red & White
Sunday Buffet Lunch

31 Family Trees launched
at the 2nd Singapore Eurasian
Family History Exhibition



Photos: SCDF

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Oct – Dec 2022 | eurasians.sg

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The New Eurasian

Magazine of the Eurasian Association, Singapore

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

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In Touch



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Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year in advance to all EA members, and may you have a wonderful 2023!

Dear EA members

This year, we celebrated Singapore's 57th birthday with a big bash, and it was special to everyone in Singapore in more ways than one. The EA's Red and White Sunday buffet lunch to celebrate National Day also returned to the Eurasian Community House after two years, with more than 100 attendees. The emotion of everyone was palpable, after we had weathered two challenging years together, and we have many things to be thankful for as we emerge stronger and more united as one people.

We recognised Eurasian students who performed well at their examinations, at the Self-Help Groups' 19th Joint Tuition Awards ceremony on 20 August, as well as the 26th Eurasian Community Fund Education Awards ceremony on 10 September, where more than 260 students received merit, bursary and other awards. At the Project Ray of Hope Ceremony on 12 November, 65 students received vouchers to help them purchase school books and materials for their next academic year, and 10 needy students received the Coral de Cruz Memorial Fund award to support them in their studies. We thank MCCY; and donors Ambassador Simon de Cruz and EA Trustee Justice Judith Prakash; for their generous support of these two awards respectively. Congratulations to all our students who have overcome various challenges to excel in their studies.

Many views and ideas were shared over several dialogue sessions,

including the Singapore families plan engagement session held in partnership with the Ministry of Social and Family Development, and the Racial Harmony dialogue with Senior Parliamentary Secretary at the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Law, Mdm Rahayu Mahzam.

The Eurasian Community House was also lively over the past few months, as we welcomed many people for the Rock and Roll Night concert with the EA studio band, and held the second edition of the Singapore Eurasian Family History Exhibition with more than 30 Eurasian families featured. We also had lunch visits from special guests including DPM Lawrence Wong, Minister Iswaran, Minister Edwin Tong, and MP Joan Pereira.

We are gearing up for more exciting and meaningful events at year end, such as the multi-racial children's Christmas celebrations with children from all four races coming together at the EA to have fun. I also hope to see many of you at the upcoming Christmas party and New Year's Eve bash. Do purchase your tickets early.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year in advance to all EA members, and may you have a wonderful 2023!

Sandra Theseira
President

Share Your Stories With Us!

If you have an interesting story to share with the wider Eurasian community, let us know! Email Lester Low at lester@eurasians.org

You can read The New Eurasian magazine online at eurasians.sg/neweurasian-magazine



19th Joint Tuition Awards Ceremony



Eurasian JTA award recipients with Guest-of-Honour Dr Maliki Osman (centre) and EA Management Committee (MC) members. From left: Lester Low (EA General Manager), Edmund Rodrigues (EA MC member) Keagan D'Angelo Lazaroo-Felix, Eshton Isaiah Teo, Vincent Schoon (EA 1st Vice-President), Dr Maliki Osman, Sandra Theseira (EA President), Cubinar Martin Latino Joshua, Nur Natasha Fatheha Sahrudin, Marsh Aden Raphael, Humphrey de Conceicao. Awardees not in photo: Julena Millicent Natalie D'Sylva, Nathiya Nicole Ann Naomi d/o Sukumaran, Ira Umairah binte Irwan Rino.



The four SHG leaders with GOH Dr Maliki Osman at the JTA ceremony.

Eight Eurasian students were among the 768 students from all four races receiving awards for their improved academic performance at the 19th Joint Tuition Awards (JTA) ceremony on 20 August at the Nanyang Polytechnic Auditorium. Minister in the Prime Minister's Office, and Second Minister for Education, and Foreign Affairs Dr Mohamad Maliki Osman graced the event.

The JTA was held by the four Self-Help Groups comprising the Chinese Development Assistance Council (CDAC), the Eurasian Association (EA), the Singapore Indian Development Association (SINDA) and Yayasan MENDAKI, for students who attended the Collaborative Tuition Programme (CTP) and showed academic improvement in their PSLE, GCE N-Level and O-Level examinations.

The best overall Eurasian O-Level recipient, 17-year-old Marsh Aden Raphael, shared, "I want to express my gratitude for considering me for the award. I have an ambitious goal, which is why I worked so hard for my O-Levels to get to where I am now. I am quite grateful that my hard work and effort has paid off." Aden is currently enrolled in Yishun Innova Junior College and looks forward to university and the opportunity to share his knowledge with the next generation.

13-year-old Eshton Isaiah Teo, who was the best overall Eurasian PSLE recipient, said, "Even with the ongoing pandemic last year, I am thankful for the zoom sessions that CTP organised. With this award, I am honoured and will be motivated to give my best in the years to come!"



26th Eurasian Community Fund Education Awards Ceremony

More than 260 Eurasian students received merit, excellence and distinction awards for outstanding academic performance, as well as bursaries and scholarships to help cover school expenses, at the 26th Eurasian Community Fund (ECF) Education Awards ceremony on 10 September at the School of the Arts Concert Hall. Minister in the Prime Minister’s Office and Second Minister for Education, and Foreign Affairs Dr Mohamad Maliki Osman graced the event.

In the spirit of paying-it-forward, the EA also encourages award recipients to return and give back to the community. The inaugural Numeracy Pilot Enrichment Programme held in May this year was one such initiative, where EA University Scholarship recipients returned to the EA to coach young students in Mathematics through fun games.

In her opening address, EA President Sandra Theseira spoke about award recipient 17-year-old Nicole Ann – whose mother and brother have been EA volunteers for five years – who also has plans to help mentor younger students through enrichment programmes in the near future. Nicole received the 2022 Edward D’Silva award after performing well in her O-Levels in 2021, and is now studying nursing at Ngee Ann Polytechnic.

19-year-old Norris Rebekah Anne received the most awards this year after doing well in her studies in Pathlight School, with bursary, merit, SR Nathan Upliftment Fund and the Mads A. Lange & Pansy Theseira-Lange Education Bursary awards. She is now studying at the Institute of Technical Education.

Well done to all ECF award winners!



Scan the QR code to find out more about the ECF awards and view more photos.



Dr Maliki Osman with Samantha Santa Maria, EA Heritage committee member, Eurasian Heritage Gallery docent and 2022 recipient of the Merit Award (Tertiary) and the Henry David Hochstadt Award for the Outstanding Eurasian University Student 2021.



Recipients of the Edward D’Silva Scholarship, for students pursuing studies at the Institute of Technical Education or Polytechnic. From left: Nicole Ann Ong, Charmaine Odezza Lauchengco, Dr Maliki Osman, Edry Hafiz bin Aidil, Kyle Valentino Perez, Ethan Alexander Tan Toh Luck, Edward D’Silva.



Dr Maliki Osman with EA and Self-Help Group representatives. From left: Edward D’Silva (EA Trustee), Sabrena Abdullah (Assistant Director, MENDAKI), Dr Maliki Osman, Anbarasu Rajendran (SINDA CEO), Sandra Theseira (EA President), Yvonne Pereira (EA 2nd Vice-President), Tan Yap Kin (CDAC Executive Director).



Recipients of the S.R. Nathan Education Upliftment Fund. From left: Chloe Renee Roberts, Jasmine Leandra Oliveiro, Norris Rebekah Anne, Dr Maliki Osman, Sandra Theseira, Fabian Ignatius Teo, Matthew Gordon Kryst.



Harmony Dialogue at Dunman High

Dunman High School Junior College II students learnt about the rich and diverse aspects of Eurasian history and culture such as religious practices and celebrations, from EA 1st Vice-President and Education Chairperson Vincent Schoon, during a Harmony Dialogue session on 3 August. Vincent also fielded questions from students about Eurasians during the Question-and-Answer segment.



EA 1st Vice-President and Education Chairperson Vincent Schoon sharing details on Eurasian culture with Dunman High School students.



Vincent Schoon (second from right) with a Singapore Kindness Movement representative and Dunman High JC2 students during the Q&A segment.



Dunman High School Principal Chan Ying Yin presenting a token of appreciation to Vincent Schoon.



Buddhist Lodge Tea Session

Three primary school student recipients of the Singapore Buddhist Lodge Education Foundation (SBLEF) bursary awards were hosted by EA to a tea session on 2 July at the Eurasian Community House. The SBLEF has been distributing bursaries since 1979, to help financially disadvantaged students of different races and religions complete their education.

“Thank you EA & Singapore Buddhist Lodge for this wonderful opportunity. We are humbled by this.”

– Ms Florabelle Beins, Rio’s mother

Recipients of the SBLEF Bursary awards, with EA President Sandra Theseira (second from right), EA 1st Vice-President Vincent Schoon (second from left), and EA General Manager Lester Low (left).



15-year-old awardee Rheanna Kayla Ravichandran Beins (centre) and her mother Sandra Beins (right).



12-year-old awardee Rio Ignazio Beins-Au (centre) and his father Allan Pedro Au (right).



9-year-old awardee Trisha Elliyana binte Muhamad Hafizuddin Au (centre) and her mother Brenda Santa Maria (right).

EMBRACING THE CHALLENGES WITHIN

Eurasian Community Fund Merit award recipient Elizabeth Paulyn Gostelow is only 19-years-old, but one can tell that this young lady, who just started her studies at the National University of Singapore this year, is a born fighter. She was diagnosed with scoliosis – a condition where the spine curves sideways – at the tender age of 11.

“It was a journey where I discovered a lot about my own body; while some of the emotional changes weren’t the easiest to deal with, I managed to reconcile the struggles within myself and move forward with pride,” said the youngest of three siblings.

Before being diagnosed, she experienced occasional body aches which she thought was normal and part of growing up. This changed after she started learning how to ride a bicycle.

“I didn’t really complain much about body aches to my parents. However, my parents later noticed my curved posture when they were teaching me to ride a bicycle,” she shared, before adding how she later became more aware of her posture through photos.

This led to seeking medical treatment for her back, which included scoliosis surgery in 2017 and while Elizabeth acknowledges the trials and tribulations, she feels that embracing the challenges within has made her a stronger person.

She told the NewEurasian, “My greatest achievement is learning to ask others for help and being more open about sharing about my scoliosis.”

“This was especially in relation to back bracing treatment, where I felt very awkward and afraid to tell people about my back brace. After a while, I came to terms with the fact that I just over thought a lot of the negative reactions expected from family and friends and it made me a lot more comfortable in my own skin,” she added.

This was also a turning point for Elizabeth, who felt inspired to write a book on her journey.

“Another impetus was when my junior college counsellor Ms Woo shared my senior’s (Huang Huanyuan) book - Brave Girl Not Eating with Me - which was about her anorexia. I liked how the book included tips for caregivers and people with anorexia and thought I could do something similar on my scoliosis journey,” she said.

For someone who enjoys drawing and digital rendering which she picked up before and after her spinal fusion surgery, Elizabeth is optimistic about the future and supporting others who are on a similar scoliosis journey.

She hopes her book Embrace [second edition] can be a platform to support others in the community, with a strong message that they are never alone.

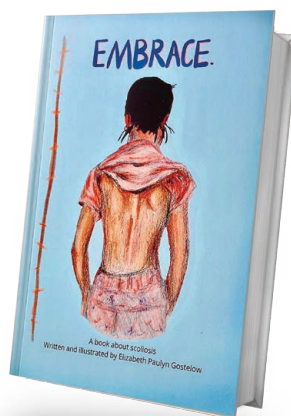
“Co-founder and President of Scoliosis Support Singapore (SSS) Jasmine Liew invited me to the Facebook support group and some others have contacted me via Instagram to share their experiences. I must say the community is very friendly and welcoming and I’m glad that there are avenues of support to make the scoliosis journey less daunting or lonesome.”

Elizabeth Paulyn Gostelow is a 2022 Eurasian Community Fund (ECF) Merit Award recipient and she was also given the honour to represent all recipients as the ‘Voice of Thanks’ at the ECF Education Awards ceremony held on 10 September.

Her book Embrace [second edition] is currently available at various public libraries.



Elizabeth’s spine X-ray.



A peek at the cover of Embrace [second edition].



Elizabeth with the first edition of Embrace.

A night of **Rock and Roll** revelry

What's a concert without live music and dancing? At the second Performing Arts Chapter (PAC) concert of the year on 17 September, more than 100 people filled the Eurasian Community House's multi-purpose hall for the Rock and Roll night with the EA Studio Band.

It was a night of fun and fellowship, with attendees enjoying the EA studio band's renditions of favourite dance classics.

The EA Studio Band comprises five Singaporean composers, recording artistes and live performers, formed by lead guitarist, EA music instructor and studio operator Joe J. Ferdinands (Gypsy, Mel & Joe, Fynderz Keeperz, Suicide Solution, Paul Di'Anno of Iron Maiden). It includes bassist and EA Studios recording engineer Bernard De Cotta (De Cotta Brothers, Leonard & The Country Riders), lead guitarist Bryan Jacob (Psycho, Paul Di'Anno of Iron Maiden), drummer Hilman Hidayat (Fynderz Keeperz, Abiator), and lead singer Denise Watt (Coup De Grace).

It provides professional audio recording services and guitar, bass and drum lessons at the EA's recording studio and music school on Level 4 of the Eurasian Community House.



Scan the QR code to visit their website and find out more.



Attendees enjoying live music by the EA Studio Band.



The EA Studio Band had people grooving to the music.

Celebrating **SG Families Plan** engagement session

EA President Sandra Theseira and Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) Director Liu Yue Xiang hosted 50 participants at a dialogue session on 26 July at the Eurasian Community House.

The session, in support of the year of Celebrating SG families (YCF) declared by MSF for 2022, saw participants share their aspirations, feedback and ideas on ways the government, community and society could better support and strengthen our families, to create a *Singapore Made for Families*.



Participants shared various views and feedback throughout the session.



Consolidation of ideas in the breakout groups.

RED & WHITE Sunday Buffet Lunch

✓ **Good company**

✓ **Music**

✓ **Sumptuous Eurasian Buffet**

That was how more than 100 people spent their Sunday to celebrate Singapore's 57th birthday at the Eurasian Community House on 14 August, at the Red & White Sunday Buffet lunch. The sold-out event, which made a return after a two-year hiatus, had everyone on their feet throughout the afternoon as 'The Rangers' filled the multi-purpose hall with evergreen hits. Barbara Angela Peters, who was there to join in the celebration, said, "I enjoyed the food and the band performance so much."



The Red & White Sunday Buffet lunch makes a return to the Eurasian Community House.



Party-goers commemorating the event with a group photo.

IMPOSSIBLE IS NOTHING

The late EA President Bryan Davenport who served from 2000-2005 was instrumental in initiating the Family Support Services (FSS) during his term with an important objective – to serve the community and the underprivileged group, especially the elderly, families at risk and those experiencing financial difficulties. Today, the FSS has various initiatives to serve the Eurasian community. The NewEurasian casts the spotlight on the Silent Minority Compassionate Bursary (SMCB), funded by the Silent Foundation to provide financial assistance to school-going children from the Eurasian community. The SMCB ensures they can continue their education despite the loss of financial income from the family’s breadwinner due to unforeseen circumstances. Three SMCB recipients share how ‘impossible is nothing’ from their journey.

BE ACCOUNTABLE TO YOURSELF

As a secondary school student, experiencing anxiety attacks was the norm for **Augusta Lea Loi**, 21, who often ended her days with breakdowns. Fast forward to today, the Singapore Institute of Technology student will tell you how to make it right – believe in yourself.

“When I was in secondary school, my mental health and self-esteem were deeply affected by society’s pressure to always excel academically. I was afraid to face another day of disappointment and I felt no one could understand what I was feeling even after speaking to my friends or even counsellors,” she said, before adding how that led her to isolate herself from others, and over time, built an internal rage towards those around her.

To distract herself from stress, she decided to fulfil her dream of becoming a YouTuber before entering polytechnic, and it was something she was determined to achieve. “It involved a lot of research around video editing software. As things started to take shape, my family and friends became my supporters and would share constructive feedback,” she said.

“Common feedback I received was to be more natural in front of the camera because they knew I was not being myself. This comment made me reflect a lot because I actually hated myself for who I was and I was constantly wanting to be anyone but me,” she added.

The moment of change came when her family advised her to ‘be herself’, and to not be afraid to show her personality and flaws. “It is always up to you when you want to begin this journey of growth and no one should take charge of it except you,” she said.

From then on, things started to go according to plan when she started polytechnic, until the Covid-19 pandemic not only crushed her dreams of interning at Disney World Orlando, but also cast doubts on her future. “Being a Tourism and Resort Management student and seeing how the tourism and hospitality industry were hit by the pandemic, it was a decision I had to make – to stay or explore other career options.”

She went on to share how the pandemic took a toll on her family’s income, and questioned whether she should pursue her university degree. “I didn’t want to see my parents struggle to support my university degree but they continued to reassure me that they would do everything to ensure I received a good education.”

This led her to take ownership of her future, and she went on to work with her school’s Education Careers Guidance counsellor to map out various areas and options to focus on in her pursuit for a university degree.

Today, the Digital Communications and Integrated Media undergraduate is optimistic about the future. “With the help of the Eurasian Association’s University Scholarship, I was able to start this new chapter of my life with pure excitement and relief that I would not be a financial burden to my parents and I could fully focus on my studies.”



Augusta performing with her dance club D'Streak Flo, at their first dance production at her university.



Augusta at the Singapore Botanic Gardens, soon after her graduation from Singapore Polytechnic with a Diploma in Tourism and Resort Management.

Making time to destress and relax is part of Augusta’s daily routine.

“What is motivating me to constantly give 100% is the thought of having the power to determine the trajectory of my future. Manifesting for a positive mindset and a fulfilling life is only effective if you truly believe in it and you have to put in your fair share of effort, not only into your work but yourself, because at the end of the day, you are investing in yourself, not your parents, not your teachers.”

NEVER GIVE UP ON YOUR DREAMS

Aloysius Tristan Ko Albuquerque, 21, is making sure nothing stands in his way to achieve his dream of becoming a Criminal Profiler. The National University of Singapore freshman acknowledged that while one will always face challenges, it is a matter of how motivated you are to push on to achieve success.

“My situation has played a big factor in motivating me to perform in school. Being from an underprivileged family, I was eager to prove that I could also perform to and beyond the standard of my peers,” said the youth with Portuguese heritage, who also added how things were never smooth sailing.

“One of the challenges I faced when attending school was the pace at which lessons flowed. At the tertiary level, information is passed from the teacher in a very fast and independent way but I am grateful to have friends as well as professors who are engaging and helpful with the small details that I may have missed out on during lectures.”

Despite being in his first-year at university, Aloysius is already thinking a few steps ahead to chart his future,

which focuses on family and the community. “I hope to be able to build a secure future for myself so that I can provide for my younger brother as he starts his school journey. Apart from that, I would also want to have the means to give back monetarily and through volunteering to support the Eurasian community.”



In his free time, Aloysius enjoys catching up with his friends over a game of football.

Turning his attention to the EA, Aloysius acknowledged the strong support from FSS as one of the pillars for his achievements. “EA has helped me in many ways throughout the years, with bursaries and most recently with the university education bursary/scholarship. All these have gone a long way to ensure that my school fees are covered for, as well as any school related items that I require.”

DON'T FEAR FAILURE

While most face ups and downs during their student life, it was quite a big challenge for **Gail De Cruz, 21**. Said the Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS) first year student, “I had faced many hurdles that made me question if I was good enough to enter university or if I was on the right path.”

“Throughout polytechnic, I constantly found myself struggling with tests and exams, where I felt that I had been trying my best but my results were showing otherwise. I often felt disappointed for not meeting the expectations of others and most importantly my own. I was also struggling to balance my time between school and my other commitments, such as my co-curricular activity,” added Gail, who is pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Marketing with a minor.

After graduating from polytechnic, Gail held further doubts as she prepared to take the next step in her education journey – applying for university with her underwhelming grade-point average (GPA). The odds were not in

her favour as her university applications were rejected, and she hit a dead end with her appeals to the schools. But it was a turning point for Gail as with encouragement and support from family and friends, she decided to move forward.

“I started to look for alternative options to get into university and came across the SATs, a standardised test that could be used for admission into a local university,” she shared, before adding how she was initially hesitant to take a gap year in order to take the test.

“I knew it was just what I needed to be a step closer to my goal so I spent months studying for the test and managed to achieve a good test score which met the university admission requirements and earned a place in the course of my choice.”

While speaking of her achievement, she also credited the support of the EA who has been with her throughout her journey, which allowed her to focus



Mission accomplished for Gail following her graduation from Ngee Ann polytechnic, and on to continuing her education journey in university.

on her studies without worrying about school fees and finances.

She has this advice for students in the Eurasian community who can relate to her struggles. “Do not fear failure. For it is through failure that we are able to learn and become better versions of ourselves. It is perfectly fine to feel disappointed when we fail, but what matters the most is what we choose to do after,” before quoting Robert F. Kennedy, “For ‘only those who dare to fail greatly can ever achieve greatly.’”

31 Family Trees launched at the 2nd Singapore Eurasian Family History Exhibition

The Singapore Eurasian Family History Exhibition (SEFHE) returned for the second edition, with Guest-of-Honour, Member-of-Parliament for Holland-Bukit Timah GRC and Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of Singapore Christopher de Souza launching it on 24 September.

This year's exhibition, which featured 31 family trees, an increase from last year's 28, was held for a month at the Eurasian Community House. Following the event, all family trees will be incorporated into a permanent exhibit at the Eurasian Heritage Gallery in an A3 flip book, with a virtual tour on the EA website.

In his address to guests, Mr de Souza spoke about the EA's relevance to the Eurasian community.

"Not only do we [the EA] serve Eurasians as we know them to be, traditionally, going through the lines generation to generation, but new Eurasians. There is an increased number of inter-racial marriages in Singapore, and the offspring are Eurasian, in all senses of the word. I would enjoin the Eurasian Association, to reach out... Your relevance is continued, is necessary, and is significant," he said.

He also invited new Eurasians to join the EA as part of the wider community. "Join it. Embrace it. Be part of it. Add to it. Add your own ingredient."



Welcoming GOH MP Christopher de Souza to the Eurasian Community House for the SEFHE launch. From left: Lester Low (EA General Manager), Vincent Schoon (EA 1st Vice-President), Percival Shepherdson (EA Management Committee member and Heritage Chairperson), Christopher de Souza, Yvonne Pereira (EA 2nd Vice-President), Christopher Gordon (EA Management Committee member and Youth Chairperson).

Representatives from the 31 Eurasian families featured at the 2022 SEFHE.



Humphrey de Conceicao and Andre D’Rozario also shared their own experiences and stories of doing up their family trees at the 2022 launch. Lorenzo Overee, who contributed his family tree for the 2021 exhibition, summed up his experience via a written letter:

“A family tree isn’t a dull reminder of the distant past, but rather, it is a living testament of a legacy that began with a seed that was sown generations ago. We’re all fortunate in belonging to a lasting lineage that withstood the test of time. Now, it has fallen upon our shoulders to serve as the custodians of the legacy and preservers of those roots.”

He was happy to be able to create a lasting knowledge legacy for his young daughters, through the stories discovered about his own family.

“Being Eurasian, we come from diverse origins that bring a panoply of cultures and traditions to our narratives. As they say, diversity is the spice of life. I believe our community’s stories are arguably some of the most flavourful (and dramatic) ones ever told.

Let’s keep them alive, and tell them we shall!”

These are the 31 Eurasian family trees featured in the 2022 SEFHE: Bodestyne, Byrne, Cashin, Cordeiro, Danker, De Conceicao, De Cotta, De Roza, De Silva, De Souza, Dragon, D’Rozario, Edema, Fernandez, Fobrogo, Francisco, Jalleh, Jansen, Martens, McCully, Monteiro, Morier, Oliveira, Pereira, Rabot, Sequeira, Snodgrass, Sta Maria, Stewart, Velge, Woodford.



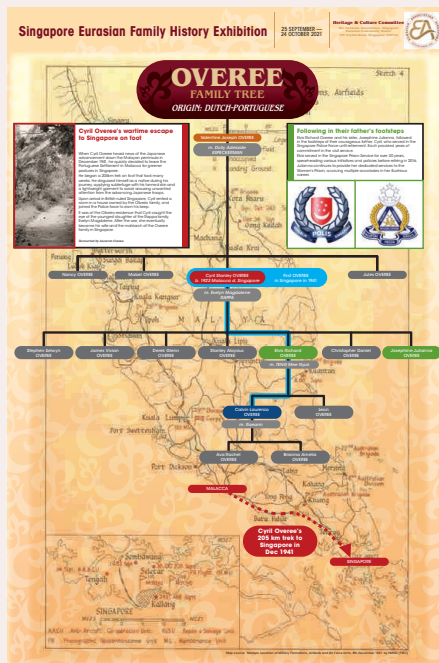
Event guests touring the Eurasian family trees on display.



GOH MP Christopher de Souza with members from the Heritage Committee and Family History Committee. From left: Christian Eber, Gerardine Donough-Tan, Michele Minjoot, Percival Shepherdson, Christopher de Souza, Jacqueline Peeris, Misha Monteiro, Geoffrey Morris.



Humphrey de Conceicao, who contributed the de Conceicao and Stuart family trees, sharing humorous anecdotes about his childhood.



The Overee family tree, featured at the 2021 exhibition.



Lorenzo Overee and Raeann with their children, Brianna and Ava.

HERITAGE EVENTS 2022

TOURS

12, 14, 19, 26 and 28 July



Over 400 students from the Tao Nan School primary 3 cohort visited the Eurasian Heritage Gallery (EHG) over five sessions as part of their racial harmony month programmes.



Docents Long Chin Peng, Valerie Scully, Geraldine Gomes, Nancy Fobrogo, Gerardine Donough-Tan, Melanie Rodrigues Smith, Hafiz Rashid and Sharon Miller shared stories on Eurasian history and culture with the students.

29 July



35 Social Studies and Character and Citizenship Education (CCE) teachers from the West Coast cluster visited the EHG. Following a guided tour, Jacqueline Peeris and Melanie Rodrigues Smith facilitated a Eurasian Cultural Kit session with the teachers to equip them with knowledge on Eurasians, to share with their students.

16 August



20 K1 students from Learning Vision NUHS visited the EHG where they were given a guided tour in Mandarin, before they interviewed docents Richard Ong and Long Chin Peng. The visit was part of their learning journey reflection on understanding the different cultures in Singapore.

20 August



EA dancers Jasmine Oliveiro and Ignacio Estioco welcomed a group of visitors from the Gift of Joy Shelter to the EHG.

CULTURAL BOOTHS

23 July



Volunteers Rubina Aw and Tejas Hirah engaged participants at the EA cultural booth at Punggol CC by facilitating a memory game task using the Everything Eurasian Cards. Participants walked away with the Eurasian tile coaster as a souvenir.



Former EA education programme recipients, siblings Andreanna and Alecia Stewart together with their mother, Sally Yeong, hosted the EA cultural booth at Clementi. They were there to promote and raise awareness of the Eurasian community.

Keen to be an Oral History interviewer?

In 2017, the EA partnered the Oral History Centre (OHC) of the National Archives of Singapore (NAS) to form a Eurasian Community Oral History Committee (ECOHC). This initiative was to help build up the national oral history collection and to ensure its representation in Singapore's society. Over the years, the ECOHC has captured interesting memories of Eurasians from all walks of life and in various sectors of Singapore's community to document their experiences in Singapore's history. There are over 150 oral interviews of Eurasians in the national collection of 5,700 interviews since OHC's establishment in 1979.



From left: Julia Chee (Director, NAS), Jesley Chua (Assistant Director, OHC), with members of the ECOHC: Burton Westerhout, Humphrey De Conceicao, Prof James Boss, Christian Eber, Gerry de Silva, Julia D'Silva (chairperson), and Mark Wong, Senior Specialist (Oral History), Oral History Centre.

The EA is looking to identify more Eurasians with stories to share and to volunteer as interviewers. The OHC will train and guide volunteers in their work. If you are interested, contact Jacqueline at jacqueline@eurasians.org

DANCE PERFORMANCES

16 July



EA Dance Troupe members Tejas Hirah, Periyachi Roshini, Cynthia Yap, Ignacio Estioco, Veann Lincoln and Terry Ong joined the Marine Parade SMC IRCCs' Racial Harmony Day celebrations as they performed three songs, including the iconic Jinkli Nona.



The EA Dance Troupe were in action later that evening, as Veann Lincoln, Terry Ong, Janeiro Beins-Au, Florabelle Beins-Au, Laylabelle Beins-Au, Rio Beins-Au, Jaime Lee, Ignacio Estioco, Jasmine Oliveira and Cynthia Yap headed over to Wisma Geylang Serai to perform at the launch of the new wing called Anjung@WGS.

23 July



The EA Dance Troupe, with Ignacio Estioco, Jacqueline Peeris, Jaime Lee, Azalea Oliveira, Jasmine Oliveira and Terry Ong together with Chris Lesslar and family at the Pasir Ris-Punggol Inter-Racial and Religious Harmony Carnival.

30 July



From left, EA Heritage committee member and Eurasian Heritage Gallery docent Alyssa Minjoot filmed the performance by the EA Dance Troupe comprising Janeiro Beins-Au, Florabelle Beins-Au, Laylabelle Beins-Au, Rio Beins-Au, Jacqueline Peeris and Ignacio Estioco as they performed at Tanjong Rhu Pier with the amazing city skyline in the background.

HERITAGE SPOTLIGHT

29 June



EA Heritage chairperson Percival Shepherdson (right) and EA Heritage manager Jacqueline Peeris (centre), receiving a certificate of appreciation from National Heritage Board Chief Executive Chang Hwee Nee, for EA's participation in NHB's Singapore Heritage Festival in May 2022.

20 July



EHG Docent Sharon Miller conducted a Getting to know Eurasian Heritage session with St. Anthony's Primary School students. She was later joined by Tejas Hirah and Jacqueline Peeris who performed the Jinkli Nona dance.

15 September



Jacqueline Peeris (EA heritage manager) presented the Eurasian cultural kit to members of the UPLIFT (Uplifting Pupils in Life and Inspiring Families Taskforce) committee at MOE HQ, sharing ways for teachers to use this resource to teach students about Eurasian culture.

Produced by the EA and funded by the National Heritage Board, the kit aims to strengthen EA's outreach efforts and promote awareness about Eurasian heritage in Singapore. 300 kits were distributed to primary and secondary schools in August 2021, with distribution to 760 preschools and 40 international schools in November 2022.

Be a Eurasian Heritage Gallery docent

The EHG is looking for docents who are able to host weekday tours, and Mandarin-speaking docents. If you are keen to join us in our mission of preserving and sharing Eurasian history and culture, contact Jacqueline at jacqueline@eurasians.org


Exceptionally Eurasian Tour
 Saturday, 26 November 2022
 10am - 1pm
 Eurasian Community House
 139 Ceylon Road, Singapore 429744
 Tour Fee: \$10/Pax
Programme
 Includes a guided tour, dance workshop, cooking demonstration, bento lunch, and Kristang workshop, to delve into our Eurasian roots and celebrate our unique mix.
 All participants will receive Eurasian Heritage Gallery souvenirs.

 To register, contact Jacqueline at gallery@eurasians.org
 Organised by:  Supported by: 

Networking session with Eurasian youth

EA Education and Youth Committees co-organised an engagement session for Eurasian youth to visit the Eurasian Community House on 24 September, to find out more about the various EA education and youth programmes to support them.

The session at the EA Platinum Lounge was hosted by EA Trustee Edward D'Silva; with Eurasian Member-of-Parliament (MP) Christopher de Souza; and EA 1st Vice-President Vincent Schoon and EA Youth Chairman Christopher Gordon also in attendance. Youth shared what they were passionate about and reasons for choosing their course of study or profession, and had the opportunity to network and make new friends over Eurasian snacks and tea.

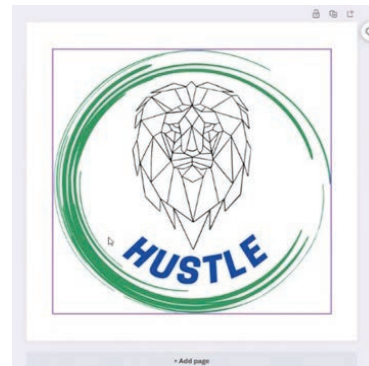


Youth at the chit-chat session with EA Trustee Edward D'Silva and special guest MP Christopher de Souza. From left: Ian Pereira, Kyle Valentino, Jonathan Hendriks, Vincent Schoon, Edward D'Silva, Christopher de Souza, Andre D'Rozario, Taye Alex Natthapong, Christopher Gordon, Jared Maurice Bateman.

Brand Building 101

Product owners today are spoilt for choice with various platforms to market their brand, and are more conscious to get their brand building fundamentals right.

That was the objective of participants at the EA Youth 'Brand Building' virtual Zoom workshop held on 13 August. The session was conducted by Jessie Chew, Creative Director of State Creative, and covered topics on 12 brand archetypes; including how to define the target audience and educating participants on the know-how to build a strong personal and professional brand by leveraging a brand visual board.



Sample work from participants at the workshop.

Racial Harmony Dialogue – Collective action towards stronger race relations

The EA Youth committee collaborated with OnePeople.SG to host a Racial Harmony dialogue session on 27 August, building on previous dialogue sessions in February and October 2021.

The session saw 40 participants gather at the OnePeople.SG Hall of Trust, including members of the Eurasian community, OnePeople.SG and fellow Self-Help Groups (CDAC, MENDAKI and SINDA). Senior Parliamentary Secretary (Ministry of Health and Ministry of Law) and Management Committee Member (OnePeople.sg) Mdm Rahayu Mahzam joined the dialogue and engaged participants on topics related to racial harmony, including how individuals and organisations could play their part to create a stronger collective state of race relations in Singapore.



SPS Rahayu Mahzam shared her personal experience on racial harmony with attendees.



The Racial Harmony Dialogue brought members from the Self-Help Groups together to discuss ways to nurture deeper understanding between races.

Eurasians in the Life Saving Force

They are often known as the frontline unsung heroes, whose mission is to protect and save lives and property for a safe and secure Singapore. From paramedics to fire and rescue, they are equipped with life-saving skills to make a difference and save someone's life. The NewEurasian speaks to Eurasians in the Life Saving Force – Major Joel Michael De Souza, Captain Ros Farina Binte Mohd Fauzi Rodrigues and Sergeant Laurence Gabin Barns – who share details on their Eurasian heritage and their work with the Singapore Civil Defence Force (SCDF).

Major Joel Michael De Souza

A career that is meaningful and being able to do good. That was Joel Michael De Souza's calling when he decided to join the SCDF in 2015.

"This career has fulfilled that purpose for me, and has been an incredibly fruitful experience," said Joel, 34, who has Portuguese heritage.

In his current role as Assistant Director, Crisis Preparedness and seconded to the Ministry of Home Affairs Joint Ops Group, Joel works in the Crisis Preparedness (CPD) Directorate which supports the Whole-of-Government planning and response to crises in Singapore.

"During the Covid-19 pandemic, CPD directly supported the Homefront Crisis Executive Group and the Ministerial Task Force in coordinating the response to the Covid-19 outbreak. My role was to oversee Maritime Security related issues in Singapore," he said, before sharing an incident which continues to remind him why he joined the SCDF.

"Earlier in my career, I served as a Fire Rescue Officer at Central Fire Station. We responded to an incident where an elderly lady was trapped in her house which had caught fire."

"We managed to extinguish the fire, found her and carried her out to the ambulance. While situations like this rarely happen, being able to directly help someone, reminds me of why I joined the force in the first place," he added, before highlighting why the job requires a lot of commitment and passion.

"When it comes to dealing in crises preparedness, we must always be ready to respond when incidents happen. That can be challenging, especially if you have a newborn to look after," said Joel, who would have been a teacher if he didn't join the life-saving force.

When off-duty, Joel spends his time with his newborn, which shares some similarities with his job – being on-call 24/7.



"When it comes to dealing in crises preparedness, we must always be ready to respond when incidents happen. That can be challenging, especially if you have a newborn to look after."

Photos: SCDF





“I have assisted in several road traffic accidents when I was off-duty. Whether it was basic first aid or managing the incident, the victims were always relieved to receive some help and reassurance. This has helped me to appreciate the training I have received in my profession.”

Captain Ros Farina Binte Mohd Fauzi Rodrigues

Imagine being stuck about 20 metres off the ground waiting to be rescued. Many would have walked away from that experience with negative thoughts, but it was the opposite for Captain Ros Farina Binte Mohd Fauzi Rodrigues.

“I was fascinated and felt inspired watching how the rescuers carried out their duties,” said the 32-year-old, while describing her abseiling mishap in Vietnam, before adding how her father also influenced her to join the life-saving force.

“My father was a paramedic in the Singapore Armed Forces and I had always enjoyed stories of his training and overseas missions. When I saw him march as the Colours Regimental Sergeant Major during NDP, that was when I considered joining the uniformed services as my future career,” said Ros, whose father has Melaka-Portuguese heritage, while her mother is Javanese-Malay.

Ros served as a Rota Commander at Woodlands Fire Station from 2015 to 2016, before she was posted out to SCDF HQ to take on the role of Senior Officer (SO), Shelter Management.

“As a Rota Commander, I was responsible for about 30 personnel. We would be on 24-hour shift standby at the fire station, and would turn out for fire and rescue incidents upon activation,” she shared, before highlighting how each of her SCDF roles has a different purpose.

“Being at the frontline is not only exciting, but we also get to witness the direct impact and differences that we can make in saving lives and property.

My subsequent staff roles did not offer that kind of instant gratification, but I quickly realised how these roles give me the opportunity to work on more deep-seated issues and forward-looking projects that play a crucial role in supporting our organisation,” said Ros, who has been with the Logistics Department since 2020.

Her different roles have posed some challenges, but also helped in personal development to build relationships with her colleagues.

“I was a young Rota Commander with little operational experience when I was first posted to the fire station. It was one of the greater challenges for me as I had to command and lead a team of about thirty firefighters and rescuers, some of whom were more experienced.”

“In my current work as a staff officer, one of the key challenges would be to resolve issues and achieve consensus among stakeholders on a solution to be implemented. You need to be an active listener and find a common ground when working with colleagues and stakeholders,” she added, before sharing how her training is put into practice anytime of the day.

“I have assisted in several road traffic accidents when I was off-duty. Whether it was basic first aid or managing the incident, the victims were always relieved to receive some help and reassurance. This has helped me to appreciate the training I have received in my profession.”

Apart from work, Ros enjoys spending time with her family, and confesses to being a bouldering addict.



SCDF
The Life Saving Force

HEADQUARTERS



Photos: SCDF

Sergeant Laurence Gabin Barns

Since young, Sergeant Laurence Gabin Barns' ambition was to be in the medical field and when he was serving his National Service, it seems that the 'stars were aligned' for him to fulfil his wishes.

"I was a SAF combat medic during my NS and we often had joint training with SCDF paramedic trainees. That was where I learnt more and became passionate about the paramedic vocation," said the 24-year-old with Scottish and Filipino heritage.

He added that unfortunately, that period had also been a challenging time for his family after his father was subsequently retrenched when he was 62-years-old, and couldn't find re-employment.

"It was difficult for all of us as my mother had to work two jobs teaching kindergarten and abacus to support my sister and I, and I wanted to help support my family. So, I seized the opportunity to apply for the SCDF paramedic position towards the end of my NS."

Born in the Philippines, Laurence spent his growing up years living in the US before residing in Edinburgh, Scotland, and spent time with his grandmother there learning how to cook. "Following that, I moved to Singapore and have been staying here for 15 years. We changed countries due to my dad's nature of work, but after staying in Singapore for longer, my family took up Singapore citizenship back in 2011," he shared.

Concurrently pursuing a part-time Biomedical engineering degree with a minor in paramedicine at the Singapore University of Social Sciences and into his fifth year with the life-saving force, he acknowledges that each day is a tough juggling act of studies and work.

"I will arrive early for work so I can take over the shift from my colleagues. This includes my daily routine checks on the ambulance equipment, ensuring its operational readiness, and replenish its medical supplies to ensure that they are sufficient for the shift," shared Laurence, who is currently based at Kallang Fire Station.

"995 ambulance calls may vary from road traffic accidents, elderly falling at home, strokes and other medical conditions. Our ambulance would be dispatched from the fire station with myself as the paramedic, a firefighter who is medically trained as a driver and an NSF Emergency Medical Technician to support me as an assistant," he continued, before adding how a patient is assessed and provided prehospital treatment to stabilise the patient and convey them to the nearest hospital based on live traffic conditions, with their patient documentation carefully completed.

Turning his attention to the challenges on the job, Laurence said that staying focused and applying skills from his training is important in handling the wide range of emergency cases.

"Situations are dynamic and every incident can present different challenges. For instance, we would have to occasionally attend to infants who are more vulnerable



"I was a SAF combat medic during my NS and we often had joint training with SCDF paramedic trainees. That was where I learnt more and became passionate about the paramedic vocation."

than adults and this can sometimes make the situation stressful. Concurrently, we would also have to deal with the parents' anxiety by constantly reassuring them that their children are in safe hands."

For those who are looking to be part of the life-saving force, Laurence cites the importance of teamwork and having a good working attitude. He added, "Always stay humble and continue to learn and develop yourself as there is always room to improve."

Photos: SCDF



TIRELESS EFFORTS TO NURTURE A CLEAN AND GREEN SINGAPORE

From a half-day litter picking event known as 'Operation WE Clean Up' at one location in 2014, to an annual, month-long, flagship initiative involving 450 organisations running more than 750 activities in 2019 in a full-fledged 'Keep Clean, Singapore!' campaign.

This was just one of the many initiatives that EA Trustee Edward D'Silva initiated during his time at the Public Hygiene Council (PHC) since 2013 and then PHC Chairman since 2015, driven by his strong conviction that everyone should take responsibility for the cleanliness of shared public spaces. The PHC is the driving force behind the 'Keep Singapore Clean' movement.

Edward championed many programmes to engage the public and improve Singapore's hygiene standards, one of which was CleanPods – a storage facility for anyone to borrow items such as metal tongs to pick litter. He was awarded the Distinguished EcoFriend Award by National Environment Agency at the 15th EcoFriend Awards Ceremony in October, the first time this award has been presented, to recognise especially significant contributions to Singapore's environment.

Edward feels strongly that the youth can help lead Singapore to become a truly first world society. He sums up, 'Singapore's hardware is first world, but its heart-ware is still not quite there yet.'



CleanPods can be found in many parks across the island. (Photo: Public Hygiene Council website)



Edward taking part in 'SG Clean Day', which he initiated to highlight the amount of litter accumulated on a day without cleaners, and to encourage people to take part in litter picking exercises, to gain a deeper appreciation of the work cleaners do.



Dr Amy Khor presenting Edward the Distinguished EcoFriend Award, for his dedicated commitment to Singapore's environment.

KEEPING ESSENTIALS WITHIN REACH

Support schemes to help all Singaporeans manage the cost of living

As prices rise worldwide, we can remain confident that there is immediate support to keep necessities affordable.

Longer-term schemes are also in place to ensure good jobs and wages for Singaporeans. Visit go.gov.sg/costofliving to find out more.

Support for living expenses

CDC Vouchers

Doubled GSTV - U-Save in FY2022

Top-up to Education Accounts

\$100 Household Utilities Credit

gov.sg

Scan to learn more

15 YEARS OF DEDICATED SERVICE AT THE EA

EA General Manager, Lester Low, received a Long Service Award from EA President Sandra Theseira on 30 September, for his 15 years of dedicated service to the EA.

Lester joined the EA in October 2007. He has worked with EA patrons; trustees; and past EA presidents during their terms; including Gerry de Silva (2006-2008), Edward D'Silva (2008-2010), William Jansen (2010-2012), Benett Theseira (2012-2018), and Alexius A. Pereira (2018-2022). He successfully supported many management committees over these terms, and led the EA secretariat team to carry out their work effectively.

The EA has been able to achieve much through his leadership over the years; to live out its mission of supporting the less fortunate through its key pillars of education and family support programmes, as well as through community development events to bring people together at the Eurasian Community House (ECH), also ensuring that all operational needs at the ECH have been met.

Lester also played an instrumental role in seeing the EA through its 90th anniversary celebrations back in 2009; and more recently, its centenary celebrations in 2019; administering the Empathy Package in 2020-2021 during the Covid pandemic; and spearheading many other events and initiatives over the years such as EA's education award ceremonies; heritage initiatives to preserve Eurasian history and culture; and more, with much hard work done behind the scenes. Lester has also been the key liaison in initiating and supporting collaborations with our fellow Self-Help Groups, to bring people from different races and communities together.

Former EA Trustee (2001-2021) and EA President (1991-1999) Timothy de Souza had these words to share:

“Mr Lester Low has been the Eurasian Association's General Manager for 15 of its 28 years as a Self-Help Group. This is a remarkable achievement of long and valuable service.



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1. General Manager Lester Low receiving his 15-year Long Service Award from EA President Sandra Theseira.
2. Lester receiving a rice donation from Lotus Light Charity Society in 2008, on behalf of EA's Family Support Services.
3. Lester (right) at dinner following a 2018 Crystal Cup football match between the Singapore Recreation Club and EA.
4. Lester (left) at an EA education ceremony in March 2014. In the photo with Lester (from left): Geoffrey da Silva (then EA Education Chairperson), Francesca Eber, event GOH Barry Desker (then EA trustee) and his wife Peggy Desker, Jacqueline Peeris, Benett Theseira (then EA president).

Lester's personal attributes of exceptional efficiency, integrity and his deep knowledge of the Eurasian community has made his service most valuable to the EA and has added to its stability and growth.

I congratulate Lester on his exceptional achievement and wish him more years in contribution to the association.”

Immediate former EA president Dr Alexius Pereira said, “It was a pleasure working with Lester during my two terms as President of the EA. His calm and easy-going demeanour allows him to run the Secretariat smoothly. I would like to thank Lester for his support of the Management Committee, and of the Eurasian community, over his many years of dedicated service to the EA.”

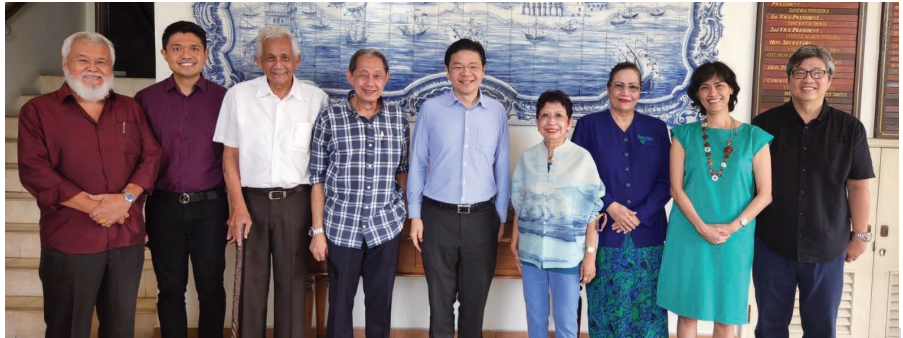
The EA thanks Lester for his invaluable contributions over his 15 years of service.

SPECIAL GUESTS at the Eurasian Community House

The Eurasian Community House (ECH) welcomed special guests from July to October, with lively and engaging discussions over lunch.

EA President Sandra Theseira and representatives from the EA Management Committee (MC) hosted DPM Lawrence Wong to lunch, at his first official visit to the ECH on 11 October. The MC members shared details on EA's key programmes with DPM Wong and discussed ways the EA could contribute to drive positive change in both its own community and on a national level, through its role as one of the four Self-Help Groups in Singapore.

In July and August, Minister for Transport, Minister-in-charge of Trade Relations and Minister Representing the Eurasians in Cabinet, S. Iswaran; Minister for Culture, Community and Youth and Second Minister for Law, Edwin Tong; and Member-of-Parliament Joan Pereira were also hosted to lunch by EA President Sandra and EA MC members. They discussed areas ranging from EA's planned initiatives, to future Self-Help Group collaborations and youth dialogue themes.



Welcoming DPM Lawrence Wong to the ECH on 11 October. With DPM Wong (centre) are MP Joan Pereira (second from right), EA Management Committee members (from left): Percival Shepherdson, Christopher Gordon, Edmund Rodrigues, Vincent Schoon (EA 1st Vice-President), Sandra Theseira (EA President), Yvonne Pereira (EA 2nd Vice-President), Lester Low (EA General Manager).



After lunch discussions with DPM Lawrence Wong over Eurasian suggee cake. In the photo from left: Vincent Schoon (EA 1st Vice-President), Sandra Theseira (EA President), MP Joan Pereira, Edmund Rodrigues (EA MC member), Christopher Gordon (EA MC member), Yvonne Pereira (EA 2nd Vice-President), DPM Lawrence Wong, Percival Shepherdson (EA MC member), Lester Low (EA General Manager).



At the ECH on 30 August. Minister S. Iswaran (centre) with EA President Sandra Theseira (third from left), and (from left) Shareen Galistan (EA Secretariat), Vincent Schoon (EA 1st Vice-President), Edmund Rodrigues (EA Management Committee member), Christopher Gordon (EA Management Committee member), Lester Low (EA General Manager).



Minister Edwin Tong with EA President Sandra Theseira, during his visit to the ECH on 29 July.



Lunch at Quentin's with MP Joan Pereira on 14 July. From left: Lester Low (EA General Manager), Joan Pereira, Yvonne Pereira (EA 2nd Vice-President), Vincent Schoon (EA 1st Vice-President), Sandra Theseira (EA President) and Jason Dendroff (EA Asst Honorary Secretary).

EA Merdeka Squad lifts inaugural Friendship Challenge Trophy 2022

From afar, it would look like your typical weekend football match with two teams in their respective jerseys, a referee in the middle of the park officiating, with a few supporters off the pitch cheering the teams on.

But if you happened to be at the St. Patrick's Secondary School football field on Saturday evening, 24 September, and took a closer look, you would have noticed that members of the two competing teams were slightly older gentlemen.

Welcome to the inaugural Friendship Challenge Trophy, initiated by the EA Merdeka Squad – an extension of the Eurasian Association Football Club, with the St. Patrick's Class of 82 All Stars team. One criterion was agreed on by both teams – only those between the age of 50 to 65 were allowed to play.

Witnessed by a sell-out crowd comprising family members, partners and former classmates, the match kicked off after EA President Sandra Theseira handed the ball to the referee.

As both teams came prepared with a larger pool of players (20 in each team), the match duration was tweaked into three thirds of 30 minutes each, instead of the usual two halves of 45 minutes. This was to ensure that every player had some game time, and have fresh legs on the pitch throughout the game.

The match concluded with a 3-1 win for the EA Merdeka team, with goals from Chris De Silva, Sandy Webb and Colin Santa Maria, while St. Patrick's Class of 82 All Stars grabbed a consolation goal through Daniel Tan.

Said Edmund Rodrigues in his message to both teams before the prize presentation ceremony, "There were no losers in this match, and the true winners were the closer friendships and the galvanising of inter-racial relationships that such a match had helped to promote."

The Friendship Challenge Trophy will continue over a five-year period between the two teams.



EA President Sandra Theseira handing the ball to the referee to officially kick off the Friendship Challenge Trophy. With her are Yvonne Pereira (EA 2nd Vice-President) and Edmund Rodrigues (EA Management Committee member), and Penny Chin (second from left).

The EA would like to thank Bart Lim, CEO of Catholic Welfare Services, for donating the trophy and match ball; Penny Chin from My Physio Services, for sponsoring the EA Merdeka jerseys; and Clarence Ngui (from the SPS82 team) and Kenny Pereira (from the EA Merdeka team) for sponsoring the medals.



The EA Merdeka Squad lifting the Friendship Challenge Trophy.



The EA Merdeka Squad celebrating their first competitive trophy since the team was formed in August this year.



The two participating teams hope that the annual match will foster greater friendships.

ASK ME ANYTHING ABOUT NS with LTC Brian Thomas

In this issue, we invite LTC Brian Thomas, Commanding Officer at the Special Forces Leadership School, Singapore Armed Forces, to answer questions related to National Service (NS). If you are enlisting in NS soon and have questions, send them to beverly@eurasians.org.

He tells us more about himself:

I'm like anyone else on this planet. I love watching movies, reading, exercising, and technology. I'm not the most hardworking bloke and I do find myself procrastinating on tasks. I dropped out of Nanyang Polytechnic in my first year, bummed around for six months before enrolling into Singapore Polytechnic studying Mechanical Engineering. I am married and have two precious boys who drive me crazy but I still love them so much.

I signed-on with the Army in my second-year of Polytechnic, and enlisted in December 2001. Signing-on came naturally as I had no affection for Engineering and wanted to be part of something meaningful (to me). I was in pretty good shape then as I trained consistently and was in the school dragonboat team, so I could cope with the physical aspects of Basic Military Training (BMT) and subsequent military training. But it was not always like this. I was a hefty 93kg at Secondary 3 and could not run 200m without stopping (for real). I decided I had enough when my mother could not find clothes that fit, and my father had to tailor make clothes for me.

What ensued was six months of exercise and diet and my weight dropped to 65kg. I realised that the key to a healthy lifestyle was discipline and consistency. More importantly, I developed a love for exercising and have been at it ever since.

I'm enlisting soon and I am not sure how I should get myself physically and mentally ready for NS. Any advice?

Interestingly, the education system prepares you for the Army as early as primary school. Waking early, PE lessons, the presence of a "Discipline



Pasir Ris Camp - where I spend most of my time at work.

Master", studying and so on. Military life, besides the jungle environment and the topics that you study is not that big of a jump. In the Army, I have trained Officer Cadets, Commando Specialist Cadets and regulars. Here are my tips on preparing yourself for NS:

Physically fit

The BMT programme is designed to be progressive so that someone with little physical conditioning will eventually be able to complete the requirements by the end of BMT. However, if you are physically fit before BMT and do not have to struggle with physical training, you are less tired and your mind can focus on military training and on learning new things. In fact, the runs and obstacle courses can help you unwind. I would recommend getting used to a thrice-weekly running regime of up to 5km each time at 6min/km, with some calisthenics to develop your upper body strength. Go for hikes carrying packs up to 15kg to prepare yourself for the BMT route marches. Vary the volume, frequency, and intensity of your workouts as your enlistment date draws nearer.

Mental conditioning

The biggest struggle for me, besides being in a foreign environment devoid of creature comforts, was the mental strain of being active from 5am to 10pm almost daily. The control you have of choosing when to rest, study or play, is gone once you enlist. You will do physical training, then attend classes followed by hands-on military training daily. Your mind will be stressed and tired by lunch, and this reinforces the need for you to be physically fit so that your mind can cope



Taking a break from work in 2019 as I travelled to New Zealand.



Social Night of 117/19 Officer Cadet Course at The Chevrons where I was Wing Commander in the Officer Cadet School in 2019.

better. Another big struggle I observe is that the soldiers have issues not having their devices and access to social media. My advice would be to manage your expectations, and "square away" your personal life before you enlist. For example, if you are in a relationship where you must communicate very frequently, preparing your partner for the long silences in the day will be useful.

I always tell my soldiers that nothing lasts forever, every tough training, tough situation will come to an end. When things seem hopeless, look forward to the next meal. Contrary to what you think, it is important to talk to yourself (in your head not aloud) and reinforce these positive messages. Chance favours the prepared mind – Louis Pasteur.