

The New Eurasian

JAN – MAR 2021

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The New Eurasian

Magazine of the Eurasian Association, Singapore

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Dear fellow members of the EA,

I hope all of you are keeping safe and healthy during this period. 2020 was difficult for everyone.

Covid-19 and the circuit breaker have caused the EA's Eurasian Community Fund 2020 ceremony to be cancelled for safety reasons. However, the EA still managed to celebrate the achievements of all the students and their parents, as we turned to social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram to present their stories, as well as other print media options such as this issue of The New Eurasian. Please take a look to see how well our students have done (page 10).

The past quarter of the year also saw Singapore doing very well in dealing with Covid-19. Thanks to the government's circuit breaker measures and the cooperation of Singaporeans, we have seen local transmissions fall to near zero. Although the long-awaited Phase 3 of the country's re-opening finally began on December 28 last year, we must not let our guard down for the safety and well-being of all.

The EA commenced the first of many digital workshops on October 23 to help the community navigate the Zoom platform. I encourage more members to join these complimentary sessions to learn more about the constantly advancing technology which we are dependent on during these times.

I encourage more members to participate in our future complimentary events and dialogues to engage with other members in the community.

As a self-help group, the EA will continue to work with the government to assist Eurasians affected by the pandemic (see story on page 9). If you know of anyone who needs assistance, please let us know and we will try our best to help. You can contact our general manager, **Mr Lester Low** at lester@eurasians.org or **6447-1578 (ext 201)**.

I wish all members a happy 2021 and thank you for your continued support of the EA.

Dr Alexius Pereira

President





Enhance Your Digital Skills

The Eurasian Association (EA) conducted two digital workshops on October 23 and November 21 last year to help individuals make use of advanced technology to adapt to the new norm better during the current pandemic.

The workshops took place at the EA's multi-purpose hall with a total of 32 participants.

The speaker at the event was Mr Gerard Goh from the EA's secretariat. Highlights of the session included learning the use of Zoom functions to better understand what the cloud-based video communications app can offer, and picking up the basics on attending online sessions such as how to join, schedule and start virtual meetings.

Seating arrangements were made according to proper safe distancing measures and bento boxes were provided during tea break to minimise interaction among the participants.





Seize The Day

Mr Dale Aroozoo shares how he followed his dreams and turns opportunities into success.

Mr Dale Aroozoo, a senior business advisor and innovation and productivity specialist at SME Centre@Singapore Malay Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SMCCI), is a believer in taking the road less travelled. Not only is the 55-year-old Eurasian proud of his diverse family history with Kristang, Welsh, Ceylonese and French roots, he also takes pride in the choices he has made in his life to take charge of his future.

Here, he shares about moving out of his comfort zone to pursue new careers, striking it out on his own overseas and finding purpose in his work.

Making a career switch

After seven years as an aircraft technician with the Republic of Singapore Air Force, Mr Aroozoo took a leap of faith to venture into the world of advertising. Although it was very different from what he was used to, he could see a future for himself in this field in the long run.

He took a full year to create his portfolio at an advertising agency before moving on to become a staff

writer for two years in a publishing company. Later, he took on a senior account executive role which he held for nine years.

Venturing overseas

In early 2005, Mr Aroozoo, then 39 years old, saw a documentary on Channel News Asia about how Vietnam was going to be the IT country to watch in the next five years. Inspired, he dreamt about being his own boss and wanted to build a brand.

That same year, he left Singapore to start a food and beverage (F&B) business in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.



He chose to enter the F&B industry because he thought his previous short stints (before serving national service) at Burger King and Famous Amos would be useful. Those experiences proved to be helpful and his business did well for seven years before increasing and overwhelming competition led to him to downsize and sell it.

Finding his forte

Mr Aroozoo returned to Singapore in 2015 and he joined SME Centre@SMCCI as a business advisor the next year. SME Centres are set up by Enterprise Singapore and trade associations to help small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) remain competitive, transform and grow.

His work involves looking into the improvements of specific businesses, analysing their challenges, recommending support schemes and charting their growth.

“The best part of my job is having clients approach me for advice on solving their problems, regardless of how big or small they are,” he says. “And if I can move them ahead by an inch, I know I have added value.”

He also facilitates workshops such as content marketing, a key area which he feels many SMEs need to focus on as it is one of the main drivers to convert lead generation to sales.

Q&A with Mr Aroozoo on starting a business

How should an individual get started on a business idea?

Always have a business plan first. You need to think about your vision for the business, followed by its mission and marketing statements. SMEs tend to be very ‘operational’. They see a gap and just jump in. Do not overlook branding and human resources. Speak to people in your industry to be more well-informed, instead of depending on just hearsay or information from the Internet.

“ The best part of my job is having clients approach me for advice on solving their problems, regardless of how big or small they are. And if I can move them ahead by an inch, I know I have added value. ”

If I’ve already started a business, what can I do to grow it further?

For a start, you can do a SWOT analysis — an internal assessment that identifies the company’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. I would also recommend reviewing the company’s business objectives to understand what tools are required to achieve these objectives. There are support schemes available to help you upskill your current capabilities once you’ve identified these tools. This is where a business advisor can lend guidance.



One of the common challenges faced by SMEs is the lack of manpower. Therefore, SMEs need to examine digital tools to automate and reduce manpower. Doing so keeps the company agile. SMEs can tap on the productivity grant (eg. 80 per cent subsidy for an accounting software) to start making some progress. Hire consultants and take a loan, if needed.

It also depends on how you want to grow your business in terms of manpower and capabilities (eg. upscaling). Workforce Singapore has programmes to cover certain percentage of the salary for new hires.

What are the dos and don'ts of starting a home business that focuses on food?

Many micro businesses don't understand that it is important to know how much they are spending on raw materials. Keep the costs low — below 25 per cent. You can reassess the ingredients you need and tweak the menu to make it worth your costs.

Set prices that you feel are fair to your business. For example, home-based businesses tend to take their pricing cue from their competitors and larger SME brands in the market. Instead, they should understand their Cost of Goods Sold and formulate their pricing from there.

Aim to market your business beyond your community. A great way to increase your business is via Facebook and other relevant websites.

“ I would recommend adopting the “5W 1H” approach, a method of asking questions (who, what, where, when, why and how) about a process or a problem, and utilise infographics to show your workflow. ”

In your experience of reviewing business applications and proposals, what are some gaps that new business owners usually miss, and should really take note of?

Details are important. Investors need detailed figures, so you have to show them your marketing strategy and explain how your business is going to work.

In their proposals to secure a grant, I notice that many companies don't know how to elaborate how their projects lead to productivity improvements. Indicate the savings you're going to make with your business. Also, the impact analysis — before or after. I would recommend adopting the “5W 1H” approach, a method of asking questions (who, what, where, when, why and how) about a process or a problem, and utilise infographics to show your workflow.

Home- Based	<p>What can I do to make sure my business stand out? Highlight your business on Instagram and Facebook, come out with strategies and promos, take pictures. Nothing sells better than a testimonial. Be creative, break out of the same mould.</p>
Freelance	<p>How else can I spread awareness of my services besides via social media and websites? Referrals, retainment fees, knocking on doors and reaching out to trade associations.</p>
Corporate	<p>How can I ensure efficiency while my staff are working from home? Make use of remote working tools under the Productivity Solutions Grant and team web meetings to ensure everyone can get in touch. Have weekly reports of what's done to keep track of progress.</p>

If you would like to be connected with **SME Centre @SMCCI** for enquiries on setting up a business, visit www.smecentre-smcci.sg

Rockstars in Education

Teachers are the bedrock of every society in more ways than one. In this issue, we shine the spotlight on three teachers in the Eurasian community on their passion for the profession.

Inspiring a Love for Music

After almost 10 years in the teaching profession, **Ms Erica Stella Pereira** still finds her job challenging and fulfilling. The music teacher at CHIJ Our Lady of Good Counsel enjoys bringing music into her students' lives and igniting their love for learning.

Q: How are you coping with the 'new normal' of teaching?

When students could finally return to school during Phase 2 of Singapore's reopening, it was initially challenging with the introduction of additional routines and precautionary measures to deter the spread of the virus.

As teachers, we encourage students to adapt to changes, and we have to walk the talk and be adaptable ourselves. With blended learning in place, my colleagues and I have been working closely to develop and improve our lesson plans.

Q: How have you gone the extra mile for your students?

Any passionate teacher will have gone above and beyond their duties in their course of work. This year, I have created my own videos to guide my students to learn to play the ukulele with me. Thinking out of the box has helped me to engage them to learn beyond the formal curriculum.

One of the interesting topics I have created is Eurasian Music, as part of the ethnic music of local culture. I hope students will enjoy learning the folk song Jinkli Nona, the movements involved and its origin.

I also designed flipped classroom lessons to encourage independent learning. With the advancement of technology, education has moved away from "frontal teaching" to become more interactive, shifting the dynamics from being teacher-directed to student-centric.



Q: Why did you pursue a teaching career?

I was inspired by my late uncle, Leslie Pereira. He was a dedicated primary school teacher who spent his life teaching and nurturing students. He used to tell stories and play with me and his other nephews and nieces when we were home, and take us out during the holidays. Firm yet loving in his approach, he was loved by his students even till the day he passed on.

As a child, his dedication to his work and his selfless passion to want the best for his students and family inspired me the most. As I grew up, I wanted to follow his footsteps to bring the joy of learning to students.

Q: What's the best part of your job?

It is the journey with my students as they grow and learn. For instance, teaching a child who has never played a musical instrument in her life, and then finally seeing her perform music pieces with confidence brings me contentment and makes my effort worthwhile.

Q: What would you say to those who aspire to be teachers?

I would tell them that teaching is a vocation that demands a lot of time and effort. It can also be seen as a thankless job with working hours that do not correspond to the pay. However, when you finally see the faces of students gleaming with joy, or when you realise they finally understand what they are learning, the sense of fulfilment is beyond anything that money can buy.

If you have the calling to be an educator to inspire the curious minds of children, go forth and follow your passion.

A Positive Influence on Every Special Learner

For Ms Genevieve Klassen, working as a tutor and being on various internships since 2014 have led her to explore various teaching paths. Two years ago, she took up a full-time role as an educator at Pathlight School.

Q: How are you coping with the 'new normal' of teaching?

School life is pretty much back to normal with face-to-face teaching. Looking back on the circuit breaker period, I had to force myself to fiddle with the technology involved in e-learning. Besides that, numerous changes came along with tight deadlines. I pulled through that difficult period by focusing on teaching, so I could ensure my students were engaged and able to understand what was taught. Now, I'm prepared for sudden changes that may come along again.

Q: How have you gone the extra mile for your students?

Being in the special education sector, it is common for a class of six students to have vast differences in their learning abilities and styles.

My belief is that there is no child that can't learn but there are methods that don't work. Hence, the onus is on me to find the perfect method. I would create various materials and worksheets for students, according to their learning styles and abilities.

Q: Why did you pursue a teaching career?

I have always been interested in helping others learn. I started peer tutoring at 11 years old and went on to give tuition when I turned 15.

As I have never been tutored, I had to figure things out on my own. So my learning experience enabled me to understand the struggles of my students and devise a method which works for them. Witnessing their growing confidence after mastering a concept motivates me to be an educator.

Q: What's the best part of your job?

Nothing beats the joy of watching my students make improvements in the academic and non-academic aspects of their lives. As they have special needs, each step they take towards leading independent lives brings a smile to my face.

Q: There's more to teaching than what most people realise. What do you wish they know?

I wish that people realise the impact that teachers can have on their students. As students spend a large portion of their time in school, teachers have the privilege and numerous opportunities to influence them positively in their learning journey or even in building respectful relationships.

Q: What would you say to those who aspire to be teachers?

If you have the love for people and passion to bring out the best in others, then go for it — you won't regret it!

The endless marking of papers and the occasional mischievous kid in class will never beat the satisfaction you'll get from seeing the progress of those you nurture.



A Passion to Nurture and Support

An inspiration to teach, nurtured by caring teachers in his youth, had steered **Mr Don Magness** on a teaching career for 51 years in Singapore and Perth, Australia before his retirement in 1999.

Looking back, he recalls how a few teachers had gone out of their way to help him when he was still a student. One of them is his art teacher in secondary school who recognised his talent to draw and design art pieces. This teacher coached him personally after school hours and made him realise his own creative talent. Since then, he grew to appreciate and understand the impact of a teacher's supportive and caring actions.

When he became a representative of his secondary school in soccer tournaments and had the opportunity to train others, he felt he could impart his knowledge and skills to others and help them excel. That was when he realised that teaching is not just a profession, but more like a vocation.

In later years, he became a trainee teacher at St Stephen's School (SSS), while attending the then Teacher's Training College (TTC). He soon realised he had the knack for engaging students, whether it was in the classroom or out on the soccer pitch. And ever since he graduated from TTC, he has never looked back on striving to do his best as a teacher.

Q: There's more to teaching than what most people realise. What do you wish they know?

More people should realise that teachers are nation builders. Our future generations are in their hands.

I was heartened when I came to know that a former student of mine, Joseph Peterson also became a teacher. He moved on to become the vice-principal of St Patrick's School for several years. Upon my retirement, he welcomed me to teach in the school as a flexi adjunct teacher.

There are many former students like him who are making an impact in people's lives and contributing to society in different ways. In fact, I've come across several of them who are now virtuous men of integrity and compassion, prepared to serve the community locally and abroad.



When I was still teaching, I had adhered to, and imparted, all the Christian Brother's Values to my former students. I still hold St Stephen's School's motto in high regard — "Credere et Servire" which means "to believe and to serve". And I feel the same for St Patrick's School's motto, "Potest Qui Vult" which means "He Who Wills, Can".

Q: What's your advice to those who aspire to be teachers?

Teaching is a vocation. Teachers have to go that extra mile for their students. The rewards will come many years later when the students recognise you with respect.

Whether it is in Singapore or Perth, many of my "rascals" (and I say that with affection) often treat me to lunch and still call me "Sir" with respect. This is the privileged "reward" for a teacher.

Q: Could you share some differences between the teaching systems in Singapore and Australia?

I have served in Whitfords Catholic School, Padbury Catholic School and St Marks Anglican School in Perth, as a qualified Teacher Aid with a Certificate 111 in Teacher Assistant.

In these schools, there are around 20 students in each class, unlike in Singapore where each class can comprise up to over 40 students. Most extra-curricular activities in Australia are held within school hours between 9am to 3.45pm, except for certain disciplines like learning certain musical instruments, formal singing, drama, swimming and surfing. But in Singapore, non-academic activities are done after school hours.

The Pursuit of Happiness

The pursuit of happiness is a concept enshrined in several national constitutions. However, although this is recognised as a right, the path to the attainment of happiness differs from individual to individual.

Most ordinary people see life as a set of different stages. We grow up in the care of parents who love and nurture us. We go on to attend schools where we often establish life-long friendships, earn our academic and professional qualifications, get a well-paying job, meet a life partner, have children and live happily ever after.

But what if the fundamentals are different? Is happiness then an attainable goal?

Falling Through The Cracks

Consider this story of Jo Jo, who was raised by his grandparents. He only got to meet his parents for the first time when he was five years old, after they were released from incarceration.

Their reunion was a difficult and fractious one. The necessary readjustments were learnt the brutal and painful way, with verbal and physical abuse dished out in grand style to loved ones in the same household. That, was the order of the day. Long-term relief only came when the police arrived in force late one evening and took his parents away amid loud protestations, for another term of incarceration.

However, that did not mean things started to look up for Jo Jo. He soon realised that friends who used to play soccer with him in his neighbourhood had deserted him. When he asked his closest friend in the group why he was avoiding him, the reply hurt him deeply. Apparently, his friend's mother had witnessed a police raid on his house and promptly instructed him to never play with Jo Jo again.

The poor boy accepted his fate meekly, but he was frustrated and angry about the unfairness and prejudice.

"Why me? What have I done which is so wrong? Why must my friends be kept away from me? Why can't I have even one friend?" he bemoaned.

And just when he felt that he could move on with his life despite the absence of empathy and humanity from these friends, things took a turn for the worse. His friends in school began to stay away from him because someone had spilled the beans and his most private



secrets had been laid bare. The school environment turned toxic for him quickly.

Jo Jo yearned for a sense of belonging, and for love and friendship. But there was nothing he could do to help himself. Since then, he kept to himself and was not motivated in his studies. In fact, he has little hope of passing any of his subjects to complete his secondary education.

Deep in his heart, he still wants to pursue happiness, but the options are very much limited for him and the chances of success appear dismal.

Reach Out And Help

Jo Jo is a fictitious name, but the character and the circumstances surrounding him are a reality. Currently, there are many children in the same boat, yearning for intervention and assistance. And they are on our list of clients supported by the Family Support Services.

Do we reach out to these children with a deep sense of compassion and humanity because we believe "I am my brother's keeper!" or do we quietly turn away and mumble "The problem is too far gone, and there is nothing I can do which will change matters for the better."

The happiness of these children very much depends on you.

If you have a particular teaching skill and you wish to volunteer your services, or if you would like to donate generously towards the upliftment of children like Jo Jo, kindly contact **Ram** at ram@eurasians.org from Family Support Services.

Edmund Rodrigues

Chairperson

Family Support Services



Take Charge And Press On

Caitlin Celestine Fernandez, valedictorian for the Eurasian Association's annual Eurasian Community Fund Education Awards 2020, shares how she focuses on self-care and community work to move forward in life.

Have you always been academically inclined?

No, I struggled with my studies during my primary school and lower secondary years. I had very little motivation and encouragement to study because of my unstable financial situation, personal psychological challenges, and difficulty in maintaining healthy relationships.

What did you do to overcome your challenges?

Unfortunately, counselling and mental health support from my family and teachers were unavailable when I needed them. The turning point came when circumstances in my environment improved. The best thing I did to help myself was accepting encouragement from others and developing healthier bonds.

I became motivated in Secondary 2 when my History teacher told me that I had the potential to excel in the subject. She was the only teacher who believed in me. I dedicated more time to studying History, and gradually paid more attention to other subjects. I also

kept to my study timetable and made friends whom I could study with. My efforts were rewarded, and my grades improved within a year and a half. I even aced my 'O' levels.

At times when I am feeling stressed, I focus on practising self-care and seeking affordable mental health services. I've developed more coping mechanisms such as taking breaks, speaking with my partner and close friends about my struggles, and gratitude journaling.

Who is your role model?

My father is my biggest source of motivation and he is an excellent role model to me. I've seen him overcome many financial hardships and make a career switch from business to education.

Although we had a tumultuous relationship during my childhood and early teen years, he has become my biggest supporter. I still go to him for advice and deeply appreciate his candour in my life.

Where do you see yourself in five years?

My partner is a German citizen and HIV activist. As Singapore places restrictions on foreign nationals living with HIV, I intend to move overseas for a while. In five years, I see myself completing my master's degree and starting a job in Germany. I am passionate about social equality and would love to work in an organisation that tackles these issues.

I'm still exploring and discovering my strengths. My plan is to complete a traineeship in a research institute soon to assess if a career in research is what I would like to pursue in future.

Much of your time is focused on your studies and hobbies. How do you maintain a balance between them?

I've learnt through trial and error that I need a timetable to organise my time for study and play. Otherwise, I tend to overwork myself and my mental health deteriorates.

During my most hectic periods, I try to set aside about two to three hours a day for my hobbies like reading and hiking. It could be just reading a chapter or taking a stroll in the park to clear my mind.

Could you offer some advice for Eurasian youths?

I'd encourage Eurasian youths to practise self-care and develop resilience to face challenges in a competitive academic environment like Singapore. It's perfectly fine to pursue non-traditional career paths. But more importantly, explore your interests, strengths and weaknesses, especially when you encounter failures. If you have the time and mental resources, participate in community work and try to help build a more equal society.

I've also often felt a loss of identity in Singapore as a Eurasian. To those who feel the same, I encourage you to speak with your family members, read extensively on cultural topics, and visit galleries to discover your heritage. Each Eurasian has a unique family history, and it can be uplifting to discover and share it.

Valedictorian's Message

I am honoured to be named as the valedictorian for the Eurasian Community Fund (ECF) Education Awards 2020 by the Eurasian Association (EA). This comes as a complete surprise and I am grateful to the people who have helped me come this far in my journey.

I appreciate my friend, Joanna, for her kind thoughts and for informing me about the EA's Empathy Package. I am especially thankful to Mr Ramakrishnan and Ms Vinitha for their prompt responses to my e-mails and assistance in processing my family's application for it.

Also, I would like to express my gratitude to the EA for the lifeline it has given us, when my mother lost her job and my father suffered a loss of income. We are deeply touched by the EA's demonstration of solidarity and empathy during that difficult period of our lives.

As I have been granted the privilege of penning my thoughts here, I would like to share an initiative that I started on Instagram (@uequalsu_sg) to encourage more empathy for marginalised communities.

Today, I would like to share the slogan "Undetectable = Untransmittable", or U=U. It means that People Living with HIV (PLHIV) who are on effective HIV medication daily can have an undetectable viral load, thus they can have fulfilling relationships and bear biological children with no risk of HIV transmission.

Over the past year, I have worked with members of the PLHIV community to spread awareness about U=U and reduce the HIV stigma in Singapore. I plan to continue representing my community to advocate this, and hope that you will be interested to learn more and share this knowledge.

Caitlin Celestine Fernandez
Valedictorian

Memorable Events In 2020

Here's a flashback to some of the exciting happenings at the Eurasian Association last year.

WWII Tours

The Eurasian Heritage Gallery (EHG) conducted five special themed tours, "In Remembrance — Eurasian Heroes of WWII" to remember the fallen every Saturday in November last year. They were conducted by EHG docents Sharon Miller, Long Chin Peng, Alison Dragon, Ramesh Shahdadhuri, Melanie Rodrigues Smith and Tay Siew Khim. It kicked off by offering a red poppy as a souvenir to each participant of every tour.

Insightful real-life accounts of Halford Boudewyn and Cleaver Eber were shared by the docents and a reading of the poem "Lest We Forget" by Edmund Arozoo was done at the end of each tour. Poem cards were also given to participants to remember the Eurasians who suffered during WWII.



EHG docent Ramesh Shahdadhuri sharing about the food eaten during the war at the cuisine section in Gallery Three.

Origin Journeys Eurasian Heritage Tour

The Eurasian Heritage Gallery specially curated the "Origin Journeys Eurasian Heritage Tour", in collaboration with Origin Journeys by local tour operator, The Traveller, last October.

The four-hour programme started with an hour-long bus tour, during which guests learnt the history of St Patrick's School, Parkway East Hospital (which used to be the former Paglar clinic), Church of the Holy

Family and Kampong Serani as they passed these iconic locations in Katong. Next, they visited the Eurasian Heritage Gallery to learn about the history of the Eurasian community, before being treated to a taste of Eurasian cuisine with a bento set meal at Quentin's Eurasian Restaurant.

The immersive experiential tour was part of a staycation bundle deal by Origin Journeys, which could be purchased with SingapoRediscover Vouchers. The tours were conducted by EHG docents Sharon Miller, Long Chin Peng, Tan Hui Kheng, Melanie Rodrigues Smith, Trevor Nerva, Geraldine Gomes and Ramesh Shahdadhuri.

"The tour was very informative. There were so many interesting stories about Eurasian families in Katong that I never knew. The food was great too," said one of the participants.



EHG docent Tan Hui Kheng (far left) shared how St Patrick's School was used by the Japanese during WWII.



Learn Eurasian folk dance from dance trainers Valerie Scully and Marian Lazaroo.

EA Dance Troupe Recruitment

The EA has been on a mission to recruit dancers since late last year. An informal gathering on November 20 successfully drew 11 people to sign up. The search is still on for male and female dancers aged between 10 and 50 years. Eurasians and non-Eurasians are welcome and no dance experience is required.

So if you have a keen interest to keep the Eurasian culture and dance alive, and are willing to commit to fortnightly evening practices (7pm to 9pm), from January 29, 2021, contact Ms **Jacqueline Peeris** at jacqueline@eurasians.org for enquires.

Christmas Tours

Six special Christmas tours were organised at the Eurasian Heritage Gallery in December last year. After learning about the Christmas traditions of individual personalities like Ms Mary Klass and famous families such as the Schooling and Sheares families that were featured in the gallery, participants adjourned to the EA Platinum Lounge for a festive treat. It was a four-course Christmas meal which included Mulligatawny soup, Curry Debal, Shepherd's Pie and Sugee Cake. The four-hour programme was conducted by EHG docents Alison Dragon, Valerie Scully, Cecilia Martin, Richard Ong, Tay Siew Khim and Ramesh Shahdarpuri.

While enjoying the sumptuous dishes, everyone took part in fun activities such as playing Secret Santa and pulling Christmas crackers to reveal topics hidden within to talk about. Every tour ended with a gift exchange that emphasised the significance of giving and receiving during Christmas.

"The stories told by the animated docents were riveting and the one-hour tour was too short! We stayed on after the sumptuous meal to view the many interesting stories in the gallery," said one participant, who is a non-Eurasian, but enjoyed learning about Eurasian heritage at the tour.



EHG docent Cecilia Martin shared about the traditions of Eurasians with a festive face mask made by Sunset Breeze, in support of local Eurasian businesses on Dec 5.



Participants enjoyed a four-course Christmas meal individually plated and served, while joining in the Secret Santa activity, pulling the Christmas cracker and reflecting on popular Christmas dishes and pastimes.



Virtual Gallery

The Eurasian Heritage Gallery has gone virtual. Visit www.eurasians.sg to view its exhibits and artefacts from the comfort of your home or anywhere in the world. If you would like to check them out in greater detail, you are welcome to visit the gallery in person.

The opening hours are from 10am to 5pm, Tuesday to Friday, including public holidays. It is closed on Monday. To sign up for a guided tour (and tour packages which include sampling of Eurasian cuisine), book your tickets via Peatix.com



View exhibits and artefacts at the Eurasian Heritage Gallery from the comfort of your home.

WHAT'S COMING UP

Battle For Singapore Tours

Commemorate the fall of Singapore to the Japanese with a visit to the Eurasian Heritage Gallery in February. Get to learn about Mamoru Shinozaki, the chief welfare officer in Singapore during WWII, often called the Schindler of Singapore, and Dr Charles Paglar, a misunderstood Eurasian leader who tried his best to help his community during the war, and other interesting stories of Singapore during WWII.

Participants will get to make their very own poppy and meet a Eurasian war survivor who will share gripping tales of the war. Refreshments will be provided. Look out for more information on Peatix.com

Eurasian Cultural Kit

As part of our school outreach programme, the Eurasian Heritage Gallery (EHG) has developed a Eurasian Cultural Kit for students to engage in four hands-on activities to discover Eurasian history and culture in a fun way.

The kit contains two videos: one offers a peek into the various aspects of the Eurasian community such as enclaves, careers, cuisine and lifestyle; the other is a Jinkli Nona instructional dance workshop.

Students can engage in the remaining activities on culinary etiquette, play a Eurasian snap card game, tackle Jenga blocks with a spice spinner, and try out a specially curated board game "Land Ahoy" conceptualised by EHG docent Sharon Miller. With the support of the National Heritage Board, EHG will be giving away the kits to about 300,000 primary and secondary students in Singapore.



Webinar On World Mental Health Day 2020

The virtual event focused on raising the level of understanding of mental health and sharing ways to manage anxiety issues.

A World Mental Health Day webinar was organised by the Eurasian Association Youth team in partnership with Youth Corps Singapore (YCS) on October 10 last year.

It was organised at The Red Box and streamed live to participants via Zoom to ensure that safe management measures were met.

Ms Joan Pereira, Eurasian Member of Parliament for Tanjong Pagar GRC, was the Guest of Honour. She shared a touching personal experience about her daughter’s loss of a schoolmate to suicide a few years ago. During that period, Ms Joan supported her daughter by listening and talking to her about it. Together, they made an effort to deal with the situation.

After this personal sharing, the webinar continued with breakout sessions covering various mental health topics led by facilitators from various organisations. They were Ms Athel Hu from Mentidote, Mr Varian Monteiro from The Relational Counselling Studio (and an EA Youth committee member), Mr Muhamad Haikel from Psychosocial Support Community and Ms Nicolette Fernandez from Fleek Image.

Coping With Anxiety

The segment by Ms Hu, founding director from Mentidote, covered the main causes for anxiety:

Life stages and transitions

As each stage in life is similar to confronting a challenge, overcoming challenges will give one psychological strength and a better sense of self.

Meaning and purpose of existence

Existential issues can also create anxiety. Some examples are loneliness (by choice or enforced), responsibility and freedom for choices in life, death and dying, as well as the tendency to over think.

Negative thinking style

As our feelings and behaviour are tied to our thoughts and beliefs, we need to manage our system of believing and thinking in order to restructure our thoughts to find ways to cope with anxiety.

Interpersonal issues

Factors such as cognition (perception and thoughts),

emotions feelings (feelings of anxiety), and physiology (bodily responses like racing heart rate) can influence one's behavioural response to fight or take flight.

Try this breathing exercise to cope with anxiety

1. Close your eyes.
2. Inhale for 4 seconds.
3. Hold your breath for 4 seconds.
4. Exhale for 4 seconds.
5. Repeat steps 1 to 4 till you calm down.

Relational Communication

The segment by Mr Monteiro, a counselling consultant from The Relational Counselling Studio, covered the topic on understanding relational communication.

The term refers to any communication involved in a relational aspect. There are two main kinds: intrapersonal (communication you have with yourself), and interpersonal (communication with people around us, such as in a group within a work cohort or classroom and in a cultural context such as a community, neighbourhood or religious organisation).

Intrapersonal communication can be improved by:

- examining the evidence of a situation (making a list, looking at the facts, being objective),
- treating yourself as the friend you would give advice to,
- cultivating self-awareness (through meditation), and
- focusing on the present.



Improving relational communication is dependent on how you communicate. When you do so verbally, consider your choice of language and your tone.

If you communicate via writing, think about your choice of words and the delivery of your note (via text messaging, letter or e-mail). You can also consider your non-verbal communication skills through your body language, expressions and other peripheral behaviour.


Another point about relational communication is active listening. To enhance this aspect, consider asking open-ended questions, avoiding judgement, and listening to understand instead of doing so just to reply or give advice.

Most of the time, people don't really say what they feel or mean. They sweep it under the rug. This is why it is important to be congruent with what you really feel, and saying it in a way that the other person understands.

What you say and how you say it matters. Try these 3 tips:

1. Focus on the true message separate from emotional influence.
2. Ask to clarify.
3. Paraphrase to verify if the message was received correctly.

How to care for people you love with these 5 languages of love:

1. Physical touch: Show affection. 
2. Acts of service: Give assistance or do a favour.
3. Words of affirmation: Provide encouragement or compliments.
4. Receiving Gifts: Offer gestures of thoughtfulness.
5. Quality Time: Focus on giving attention.

Tip: Do not use the words "Always" or "Never". Try to remove these absolutes from your vocabulary.



Understanding yourself better to control your actions

Arousal + Interpretation = Emotion

“Arousal” can be an event or sensation (eg. the shock of someone stepping on your shoe), while “Interpretation” is your perspective of what happened (eg. something done on purpose). When both are combined, “Emotion” is the feeling that arises (eg. anger).

When you realise you are in an “angry mode”, try this SOBER practice. Ideally, it would work best when practised before you react in a negative way.

Stop whatever you are doing and disengage

Observe what is happening in your body and the sensations that have come up

Breathe slowly, deeply, and calmly using your belly

Expand your awareness to see the entire situation, similar to a third-person view in a video game

Respond Mindfully

One of the most powerful things you can ask a person (or yourself) is: **What do you need right now?**

Psychological First Aid

In this segment, Mr Haikel, founder and principal psychosocial support consultant from Psychosocial Support Community explained how Psychological First Aid (PFA) works as a humane, supportive and practical first response given to people in emotional distress during or immediately after a crisis.

It is a set of skills and knowledge that can help people in distress to become more calm and to be able to cope in a difficult situation. It can be provided until referral to professional mental health services is made,

PFA in a nutshell

Psychological = Emotions and feelings

First = First Response

Aid = Help and support

if required. Trained laypersons providing psychological first aid may be referred to as PFA Practitioners, PFA Providers or PFAider.

Commonly used phrases are not advisable when executing PFA:

“Don’t cry.”

This offers no validation to an anxious person’s feelings.

“I understand.”

A person with anxiety may find this helpful because you are expressing empathy. However, another person in the same situation may feel that you do not understand the situation.

“Get a hold of yourself.”

This may result in the anxious person to suppress his emotions.

PFA Action Principles: Look, Listen and Link

Do this three things when you meet a person suffering from anxiety:

Look

Check for emotional signs such as distress.

Listen

Understand and accept the needs and emotions of the affected person and stay close to him.

Link

Refer the person to professionals to seek help.



Tackling Body Image Issues

The segment by Ms Fernandez, Head Communications Coach from Fleek Image, focused on how one's perception of body image can affect confidence and potentially give rise to anxiety issues.

Media images often portray thin beauty ideals on women's and men's body image. In a case study, results showed that participants had a significantly more negative body image after viewing images of three thin models, compared to those who were exposed to average- or plus-sized models. This can lead to the question of authenticity in self.

Understanding one's authenticity depends on these four aspects, in relation to body image:

- The way you see yourself.
- The way you feel about the way you look.
- The thoughts and beliefs you feel about your body.
- The things you do in relation to the way you look.

It is important to bear in mind how you assess, and do, with your thoughts, behaviour and emotions. Below are three respective explanations for them:

- What we think affects how we feel and act.
- What we do affects how we think and feel.
- How we feel affects what we think and do.

A Note Of Appreciation

“Thank you to the steadfast YCS team that co-organised and assisted in organising this important event with us — Dawn, Aisha, Yiwen, Shu Min, Ariel, and Jeshi. Working with all of you was such a breeze and it is a delight to work with people who strongly back a shared cause.

Thank you to the team from the Eurasian Association — Christopher, Andrew, Shannon, Hazel and Natasha, for the consistent support in our endeavour to champion mental health. We are doing some good work here.

Mental health generally continues to be stigmatised and ostracised and seen as something to keep quiet about. But we are now seeing more acceptance and understanding in this field, with an increasing number of people being okay to talk openly about the struggles they, or their loved ones, face.

Let us keep marching forward. Together, we can make mental health a household topic that is not approached with fear and trepidation, but with comprehension and compassion.”

Mr Varian Monteiro

EA Youth Subcommittee Member

Marvellous Sugee Bakes

Try your hand at baking Eurasian sugree cookies with this recipe by **The Sweets Factory**.



Ingredients:

- 200g ghee
- 130g icing sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 200g all-purpose flour
- 175g semolina flour
- 1 ½ tsp baking soda
- ¼ tsp salt

Method:

1. In a mixing bowl on medium speed, cream ghee, icing sugar and vanilla extract till well combined.
2. In a medium bowl, sift all-purpose flour, semolina flour, baking soda and salt.
3. Set the mixing bowl on low speed and slowly add sifted ingredients into it till everything is well incorporated and dough is formed.
4. Let the dough rest for half an hour at room temperature.
5. Scoop half a tablespoonful of the dough to form a small bite-sized ball. Continue with the rest and place them an inch apart on a baking tray lined with parchment sheet.
6. Preheat oven to 180°C, pop the baking tray in and start baking for 10 to 12 minutes.
7. Let the cookies cool down fully before transferring them into an air-tight container.



Note: This recipe makes about 60 to 80 small cookies. They can be kept for three weeks or longer in the refrigerator. Best served with coffee or tea.

About The Sweets Factory

Calista and Candice Danker are sisters who used to bake little treats to cheer up their fellow university classmates who were stressed over their assignments and exams. The satisfaction from seeing the joy their baked goods had brought to their friends and the encouragement from numerous compliments inspired them to improve their baking skills and start a business. And so The Sweets Factory was founded in 2013 to serve anyone who enjoys the taste of happiness baked with love.

Check out **The Sweets Factory** on Facebook (@thesweetsfactorybythedankersisters) and Instagram (@thesweetsfactory_tsf) for more information.

FLASHBACK



The Conga line is a familiar sight on the dance floor.



Everyone got on their feet to count down to the new year.

Rolling Good Times

A look back at some of the glorious New Year's Eve parties by the EA over the years.

The annual New Year's Eve Dinner and Dance event has always been one of the main highlights at the Eurasian Association (EA), drawing more than 200 attendees every year. Its community development team has never failed to throw a smashing party with sumptuous food, musical performances, best-dressed contests, lucky draws and great music to keep everyone entertained.



Guests had fun posing and taking snapshots at the photo booth.



Performers in shimmery costumes ushered in the new year with much fanfare.



Lights in the ballroom were turned down and someone disguised as Father Time wandered about in the dark just before the countdown began.

FLASHBACK

“My husband and I have always enjoyed the annual New Year’s Eve Dinner and Dance as we get to catch up with relatives and old friends, and strike up new friendships too.

An evening of relishing a lavish spread, watching shows by performers and musicians, and then dancing late into the night as we welcome a blessed new year is something special that we look forward to every year. My best memory of the annual event is winning the first prize in a lucky draw in 2018.

I miss the meaningful event that only the EA can organise best.

– Ms Dolly Valberg



The New Year’s Eve Dinner & Dance committee members and the president of EA, Dr Alexius Pereira (far left) welcomed 2020 with a bang.



Never miss a group shot to keep great memories alive.

“Sponsoring New Year’s Eve dinner and dance events is meaningful to me because it is a blessing to have good friends, acquaintances and families gather and enjoy themselves. As a regular sponsor over the years, I miss the entertainment, the dancing, the food, and definitely the drinking, this year!”

– Mr Glenn de Souza

“I have been attending the New Year’s Eve Dinner and Dance organised by the EA since I was a young lass. I remember the event was a grand affair at the Victoria Memorial Hall during my dad’s time. The annual event has always been special for us. We get to dress up according to a theme, meet our usual ‘gang’ for our annual reunion, dance to music from a live band, and eat and drink to our heart’s content. The most memorable event I’ve attended was in 2019 because I won a prize for a trip to Ho Chi Minh.

I miss the way the EA rings in the New Year. Let’s hope the event will resume in 2021!”

– Ms Maria de Silva



The annual event is always a good occasion to catch up with family and friends.



You can always count on the fabulous ladies to dress up to the nines at the EA’s dinner and dance events.



There’s never a dull moment at a party with lots of good food and entertainment.



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SATURDAY, 20 FEBRUARY, 2 - 4PM

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Scan here to register



For enquiries, please contact: gallery@eurasians.org