



ROTARY:
MAKING A
DIFFERENCE

Rotary crossroads

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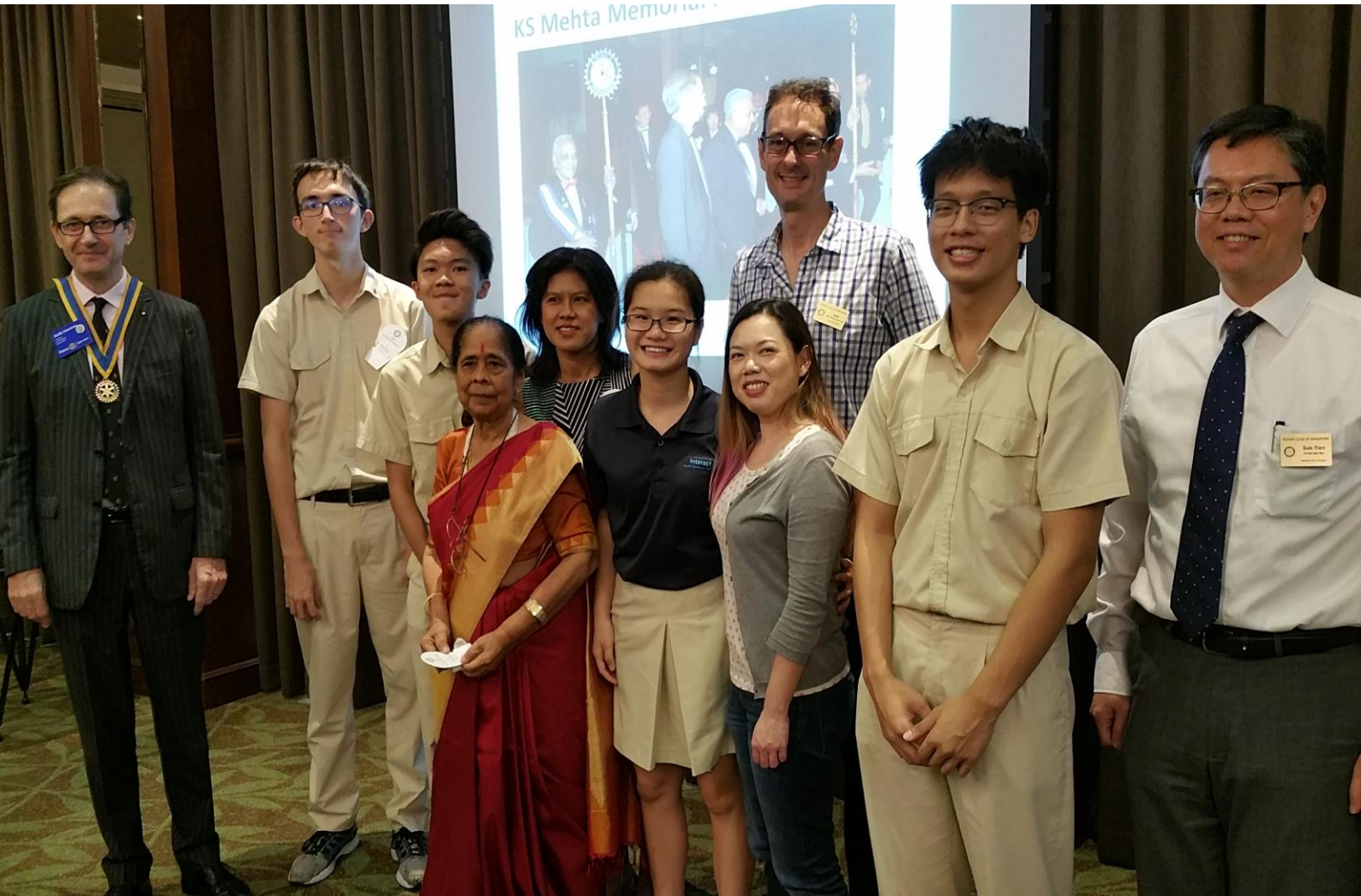
Proud of our Heritage, Committed to our Future

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K S Mehta Memorial Award Presentation

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How my Interact journey made a difference

By: Interactor Ryan Christopher Guai



Interactor Ryan Christopher Guai

Following is the winning essay written by Interactor Ryan Christopher Guai from Hwa Chong Institution Interact Club, which was read at the weekly meeting held on 23 May 2018...

Making a difference. What is it? To create positive change in the world, some could venture; to have an impact, to leave behind something important, tangible or intangible.

I joined Interact club exactly one-and-a-half years ago, slightly apprehensive, and unsure of what the future would hold. I had always enjoyed community service, but there was always a nagging feeling in the back of my mind that I was doing something wrong. It was only upon further introspection that I could pinpoint the error in my ways -- I was going through the motions; I was doing it because I had accepted that I had a certain responsibility to do my part for the community, but had never fully questioned and ruminated over the true impact I was having.

Today marks the final day of my Interact journey. As I sit down and reflect upon my experience, I am glad that I no longer have to say the same.

Over the past year and a half, I have had many incredible opportunities to learn, and to serve in a wide range of capacities. This is in no small part down to the initiatives of my club's Exco members, who have taken steps to tailor an Interact experience that is dynamic, varied and fun. In doing so, I have conversed and come to know people from all walks of life, ranging from the children from disadvantaged families that I tutored on a weekly basis, to the numerous elderly, disabled and even terminally ill whom I have had the chance to serve and get to know better over the course of my time in Interact.

The bulk of my time in Interact was spent at two activity centres catered to children living in the neighbourhood, namely, Beyond Social Services in Tiong Bahru and MCYC Community Services in Bukit Batok. Our role at the centre primarily involved providing the children with academic help – assisting them with homework, answering their queries and encouraging them at times where they were close to giving up.

The cynic in some of us may question if we were actually having any kind of substantial impact. Initially, I too, had such doubts. After all, there were times where the children refused to listen to us and instead of studying, ran off in the hope that we would chase after them. There were times where we made an insensitive remark, and were



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subsequently ignored by our tutee for the rest of the session. There were times when our tutees were listless and bored, unable to focus on anything we were saying.

It took time, but, as time passed, I slowly began to fathom how important these weekly sessions were to these kids, and how vital it was for us not to underestimate our role at the centres. For this realization, I credit three parties – one, the children, two, their parents, and three, the staff at the centres, whose words of encouragement and gratitude were what kept me going.

Our visits were important because it provided a safe space, a conducive environment to learn and play, which, for many of these children, was a rarity. Many of us take for granted the role of our parents in acting as mentor and a guiding figure for us to lean on throughout our childhood. However, these kids do not have such a fortunate upbringing. Many come from single-parent or impoverished families, and have parents who are (to no fault of their own) too preoccupied with work to play a more active role in their children's lives. Many hail from schools which do not belong to the elite tier of schools that many of us are used to, and as a result, find it difficult to concentrate in their school environment. For them, we volunteers represented role models, someone to look up to, a beacon of hope to show that they too could achieve something if they worked hard enough for their goals. Our study sessions represented a platform, where they could clarify their doubts without being judged, and receive that extra push that perhaps some of them needed to keep at it, particularly during the intensive exam periods. Our friendship gave them reassurance, that, every week without fail, they would have someone to share their struggles with and a comforting listening ear to fall back on.

Of course, all the above was merely from the children's perspective. For their parents, us Interactors, along with the other volunteers at the centre, represented people that they could entrust with their children's development, which allowed them to pursue their other endeavours, and perhaps made it easier to cope with the numerous things they had to juggle. For the centres, it was our volunteerism that made all of their activities possible, and allowed them to create the positive change in society that they were set up with the intention of creating.

While I have written at length about the impact my Interact journey has had on society, this process has had a similarly great impact on my own personal growth and development. I have grouped my learning points into three main areas – increased self-awareness, greater emotional intelligence and a renewed passion for community service and volunteerism.

Firstly, my Interact journey has made me more aware of my strengths and weaknesses, in particular, the latter. When I first became an Interact member, I had already had various experiences of community service from my secondary school days, where I had embarked on several Service Learning projects. However, being in Interact really pushed me to my limits as the complexity of issues I handled and number of difficulties I faced increased exponentially. It was only through such a process that I became more cognizant of a number of areas where I was sorely lacking in, which going forward, will serve as a springboard for me to continue to improve my service ability and work towards the goal of "Service before Self".



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Secondly, I have become more sensitive to others' feelings, and mature in handling difficult situations. This has come through repeated interaction and conversation with different beneficiaries, which has improved my ability to read the emotions of others and respond in an appropriate and reasoned manner.

Thirdly, my Interact journey has only increased my passion of serving others. Going into Interact, I always had a slight fear that I would lose my interest in community service simply because of the saturation of volunteer opportunities. However, on the contrary, my Interact journey has exposed me to the magnitude of often hidden problems that continue to plague our society, and made me ever more determined to do my part for those around me.

In summary, my Interact journey has made an immeasurable difference to my own life, and the lives of countless others. I am hugely thankful for all the experiences I have been given, and hope to be able to use my newfound knowledge and skills constructively going forward.



Message from PP Manish Mehta to Members and Awardees of the K S Mehta Memorial Award 2018:

“Dear Rotarians Dr Ho Sek Tien, President Keith Harrison, Deblina Chatterjee and Esteemed Members and Guests of Rotary Club of Singapore:

Greetings from Ann Arbor, USA!

I regret that due to pressing work deadlines, I am unable to travel and join my mother Kanak Mehta at the KS Mehta Memorial Awards Program on May 23 in observance of Youth Service Month at the Rotary Club of Singapore's . My sister Mala was in Singapore from her home in Orlando, Florida for two weeks until May 17, but also could not extend her stay. Our dedicated helper Mrs Lily D'Mello has brought Mom to today's meeting.

Our family is deeply touched that the tradition your esteemed Leadership and Club members began in 2007-2008 has continued for 10 years, whereby the Youth Service Committee annually organizes an essay competition for selecting and awarding deserving Interact members of junior colleges in Singapore for whom Service Above Self, compassion and volunteerism matter...We thank you for honouring the memory of my late father Rotarian K S Mehta, who was an active member of various Rotary clubs since 1958 in India and E.Africa, and finally in Singapore from 1975-2006, until his sudden demise in September 2006 while helping organize the Club's Deepavali Party that year.



*PP Manish with his mother,
Mrs Kanak Mehta*



Message from PP Manish Mehta to Members and Awardees of the K S Mehta Memorial Award 2018... *cont'd*

Thank you for the sacrifice and forethought in using the proceeds of that cancelled Deepavali Party, and wisely co-investing with our family in nurturing Singaporean youth by instituting this beautiful youth Awards recognition program in honor of Dad's 13 years selfless service and volunteerism to Rotary. Rotarian KS Mehta was the Club's longest-serving Sergeant-At-Arms. Dad was a gifted insurance executive who took great pride in serving Rotary, sponsored many new members, always was impeccably dressed, exhibited the highest respect and fairness for all, and considered it an honor to apply his persuasive skills to sometimes "shake down" Club members for donations to your club's service projects - and he even had the knack for making you feel good about it!

Since his passing, your love for Mom and warmth for our family are much appreciated by us. In fact, these relationships have since spurred three new joint International service projects between Rotary Club of Singapore and my home club Ann Arbor North which is located outside Detroit, the Motor City of USA- two projects are in progress on rural sanitation in India and Nepal, led by Rotarians PP Tapan Rao, Rotn MM Patel, PP Dr Yap Lip Kee and PP Dr Shahul Hameed, and a new one is in the works on Telemedicine with Dr Rupesh Agrawal.

My mother Kanak is deeply honoured and touched to see you all from our Rotary family (including many dear Rotarians and staff from Dad's generation who visit and still keep in touch). She is excited and delighted to help in today's recognition of the promising young writers who submitted most impactful essays as judged by you. I am personally looking forward to reading some of the published essays exemplifying how Service Above Self has mattered to these wonderful youth role models of our society who are potential future Rotaractors and Rotarians. Our heartiest Congratulations to the winners!

Finally, I know how much organizing and coordination goes on behind the scenes at the Club - the Mehta family is grateful to the enthusiastic members of RCS and the Youth Service Committee, especially Dr Ho Sek Tien, Deblina Chatterjee, PP Garry Taylor, President Keith Harrison, and to dedicated Club staff Bernie Ng and Ivy Yew. My sincere apologies if I have inadvertently missed anyone from this list of acknowledgements.

Thank you all for Making a Difference!"

Yours in Rotary Service,
Manish Mehta, Ph.D.
Chair of Project Dignity Committee &
Director of International Service at
Rotary Club of Ann Arbor North (D6380), USA
Tel: +1-734-604-7989, manimehta@gmail.com

View the 2016 Project Dignity video at
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kTMYuLjWmtk>



News of our Honorary Member (H M), Rtn Shoichi Ishizaki...

By: PP Peter Tan

HM Shoichi Ishizaki and spouse Kimie sends their greetings to Rotarian friends. They regret not being able to join us at our lunch gathering for Nonagenarians recently. Shirley Tan, spouse of PP Peter, who visited the couple and reported that she was happy to see Shoichi recovering well and hope and pray that before too long the couple may visit our lunch meeting to greet Rotarian friends in person.



HM Shoichi & Kimie Ishizaki



Last Week

Last Week – Report on the Wednesday Meeting – 23 May 2018

OPENING REMARKS

Acting Sergeant-at-Arms was Community Service Director, Rtn See Mee Lee called the meeting to order and invited President Keith to start the Meeting.

President Keith welcomed special guest, Mrs Kanak Mehta as well as the winners of the essay writing competition of the K S Mehta Memorial Award, Interactors Ryan Christopher Guai and Nicole Ng Ning Xuan from Hwa Chong Institution and Bukit Gombak EAGLES Interact Clubs respectively.



CSC Dir See Mee Lee

WELCOME

The welcome of guests and visiting Rotarians fell to Rtn Jeff Rajeck:

Guests:

Mrs Kanak Mehta

Ms Lily D'Mello

Interactors Nicole Ng & Serene (Bukit Gombak EAGLES)

Interactors Ryan Christopher Guai, Joel Tan, Lorcan Murphy (Hwa Chong Institution)

Mrs Sasha Guai

Mr Tyler Stringham

Dr Hitendra K Doshi

Visiting Rotarians:

PP Patrick Fortuit – Lille, France

PP Dr A K Chatterjee – Durgapur Central, India

Ashwarya Kasturia – Beijing, China

PN Corinna Chang – Suntec City



Rtn Jeff Rajeck

TOAST

President Keith called on Rtn Daniel Beyeler whom members have not seen for some time, and recently returned safely back in Singapore, to raise a toast to Rotary Club of Lille and Rotary International.

Toastmaster, Rtn Daniel invited visiting Rotarian PP Patrick Fortuit to say a few words about his club Lille, located in France. PP Patrick spoke of his club's water projects undertaken in Africa, in cooperation with various sister clubs in Europe.



From left: President Keith, PP Patrick & Rtn Daniel



EXCHANGE OF BANNERS



President Keith presents a club banner to PP Patrick (left) & visiting Rtn Ashwarya Kasturia (centre) from RC Beijing



President Keith exchanged banners with PP A K Chatterjee who is Rtn Deblina's father

JUNIOR ENGINEERS PROJECT

On behalf of the Vocational Service Committee, Rtn Bala Venkatesan called on members to support the Committee's Junior Engineers Project, details as follows:

Date: Monday, 28 May 2018

Time: 8.30am to 4.30pm

**Venue: Singapore Poly @ Makerspace Invention Showcase
500 Dover Road
Singapore 139651**

Members were encouraged to join in the event, even for a while, and perhaps stay for the prize presentation which will take place at 3.30pm.

For more details, please contact Organising Chair, Rtn Bala Venkatesan.



Rtn Bala Venkatesan



PE Mark presenting the School's gift to President Keith

GUIZHOU MINORITY VOCATIONAL SCHOOL VISIT

President Keith called on PE Mark Wang who briefly reported on the successfully completed visit to GuiZhou Minority Vocational School visit which took place from 18 to 22 May 2018.

PE Mark presented to President Keith a gift from the School, the elaborate artwork was created using silver and silk threads.

K S MEHTA MEMORIAL AWARD 2017-2018

Awardees are: 1st Prize: Interactor Ryan Christopher Guai
Hwa Chong Institution Interact Club
Runner-up: Interactor Nicole Ng Ning Xuan
Bukit Gombak EAGLES Interact Club



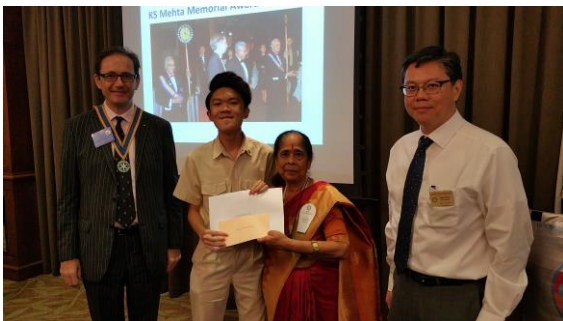
The late Rtn K S Mehta

President Keith introduced the K S Mehta Memorial Award and handed the Chair to Youth Service Director, Rtn Dr Hoh Sek Tien who advised that the Award was in memory of Rotarian K S Mehta – an exemplary member of the Club, who was the longest serving Sergeant-At-Arms.

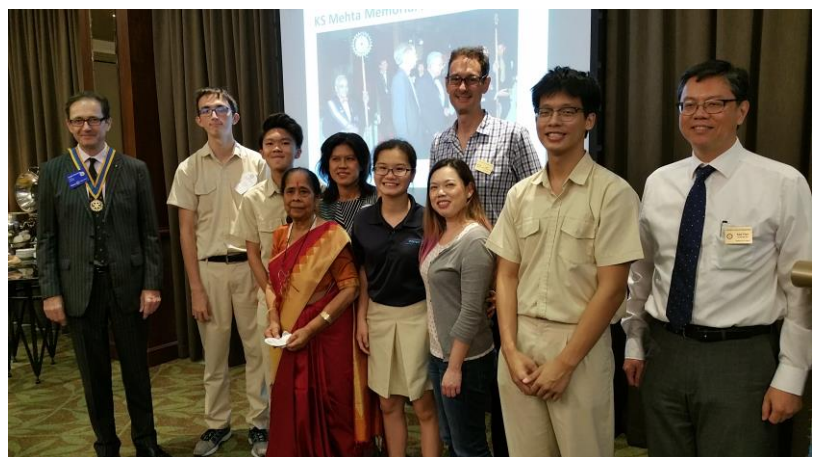
Rtn Sek Tien advised that the Award's essay writing competition was opened to all Interact Clubs and the topic chosen was *"How my Interact journey made a difference"*. He thanked the Judging Panel comprising of Rtns Jeff Rajeck, Ronald Wong and Dr Suresh Mahtani, as well as the Awards Chair, IPP Garry Taylor.

Rtn Sek Tien advised that PP Manish Mehta (R C Ann Arbor North), son of the late Rtn K S Mehta had written a message to members and the awardees, which is reproduced in this week's, bulletin (pages 3 & 4). He then invited Mrs Kanak Mehta to say a few words and to present the prizes to the Awardees Interactors Ryan Christopher Guai and Nicole Ng Ning Xuan who received \$1,000 and \$500 respectively for their Interact Club projects.

Next, Rtn Sek Tien called on Interactor Ryan, followed by Interactor Nicole to read their winning essays.



Mrs Kanak Mehta with President Keith & YSC Dir Rtn Sek Tien present the prizes to winners Interactors Ryan (above) and Nicole



From Left: President Keith, Interactors Lorcan, Ryan & his mother, Mrs Sasha Guai, Mrs Kanak Mehta (in front) Interactors Nicole, Serene, Rtn Jeff (behind), Interact President Joel & YSC Dir Sek Tien

Mark Your Diary

Birthday Celebrants

RC sends best wishes to Birthday celebrant this week:

Jasbir Koh

This Meeting

30 May 2018

Weekly Meeting is cancelled in lieu of the Final Club Assembly for RY 2017-2018 at 6.30pm:

**Gilmour Room
Singapore Cricket Club
Connaught Drive**

Next Meeting

6 June 2018

Reception Desk duty: Anant Jain, Deepu Joseph

Sunshine Box: Kimio Somemiya, Wilson Widjaja

Speaker: Mr Ajit Singh Gill, Olympian & Sportsman

Topic: To be advised

Anniversary Celebrants

RC sends best wishes to Wedding Anniversary celebrants this week:

Dr Hans & Patricia Schniewind
PP Peter & Shirley Tan
Edward & Deirdre Loy
Ronil & Reshma Sujan

Vocational Service Meeting

Vocational Service Committee Meeting will be held as follows:

Date: Thursday, 14 June

Time: 7.00pm

Venue: Singapore Cricket Club at Gilmour Room

Hosts: Rtn Anant Jain, PN/VSC Director Deepak Nagrani, Hon.Member PP Raymon Huang, IPP Garry Taylor, PP Dr Oliver Hennedige, PDG Dr Philbert Chin, Rtns Daniel Beyeler & Vikrant Kanyal

Coming Rotary Events

May

Youth Service Month

27-28 May – RC Osaka Semba's 30th anniversary celebrations

30 May – **Weekly meeting is cancelled in lieu of the Final Club Assembly for RY 2017-18**

June

Rotary Fellowship Month

24-27 June – R I Convention, Toronto, Canada

30 June – Sister Club Fellowship at Senior Police Officers' Mess

July

1 July – Installation Dinner at Pan Pacific Singapore

Community Service Meeting

Community Service Committee Meeting will be held as follows:

Date: Thursday, 7 June

Time: 7.00pm

Venue: Tamarind Hill, 30 Labrador Villa Road, S 119189

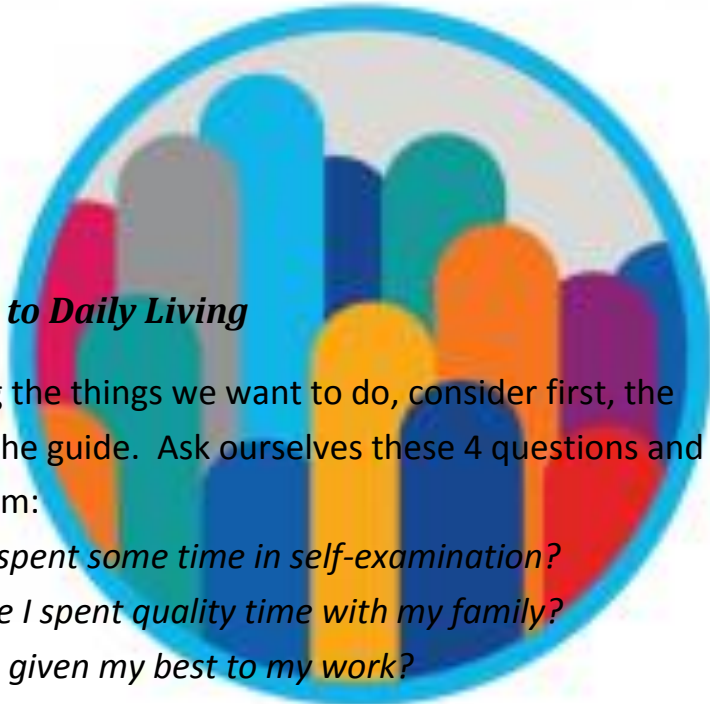
Hosts: Hon Member Mohan Vaswani & CSC Director See Mee Lee

**Wishing All Members
A Happy Holiday**



HAPPY VESAK DAY





The Guide to Daily Living

Before doing the things we want to do, consider first, the Precepts of the guide. Ask ourselves these 4 questions and act upon them:

First: *Have I spent some time in self-examination?*

Second: *Have I spent quality time with my family?*

Third: *Have I given my best to my work?*

Fourth: *Have I given some time to someone near and far?*

The Guide, in fact, encompasses the 4 parts of the Object of Rotary.

The Four-Way Test

Of the things we think, say or do:

- Is it the truth?
- Is it fair to all concerned?
- Will it build goodwill and better friendship?
- Will it be beneficial to all concerned?

**ROTARY:
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Vice President (Public Relations)	Andy Mankiewicz, OBE
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