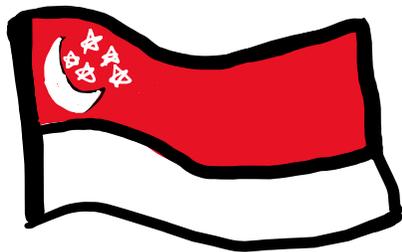


Racial Harmony in Singapore

By : Joia Kor

My fond memories of Racial Harmony Day in school are about the beautiful traditional costumes, food and games of the different ethnic groups. As I grow older, I gained a more in-depth understanding of why this day is important. Singapore is a multi-racial society made up of different ethnic groups, and to live together harmoniously, it is important to learn about and respect the different cultures and their customs.

I recalled an incident when I had my first cultural shock. I was having lunch at the coffee shop when I chanced upon a Malay family sitting at the nearby table. They were eating their rice with their bare hands. I could not help but stared hard in disbelief. My parents spotted it and quickly instructed me to stop staring as it was rude to do so. After I went home, they explained to me it was part of the Malay culture to eat with their hands. We need to respect their culture and be sensitive to it. I got to understand this more as I grow older. Just like the Chinese will hold a funeral at the void-deck. It is just part of the Chinese culture. We will always need to respect and be empathetic about others, no matter what their race is. This is a part of diversity which we need to embrace.



SG ♥ United

There is a reason why we celebrate the different New Year of each ethnic groups, there is a reason why we have little India, Chinatown and Malay village despite the scarce space Singapore has. Our government has always taken the effort to celebrate the important occasions of each race and religion, ensuring each place is beautifully decorated and decked out with beautiful streamers and lights during these celebrations.

We have to embrace the diversity we have in Singapore. It is the differences that make us unique and special. It is like a puzzle when pieced together, it forms a beautiful picture. Each of us is a unique piece. With mutual respect and trust, we come together united as one. Together, we embrace the road ahead as one Singapore. Different is beautiful.

