**Where all Seniors can go to Learn, be Active and have FUN**

Dear Members

The u3a is not designed for a specific demographic and is replete with its own special challenges one of which is to enhance inclusivity and celebrate diversity implicit in its Constitution.

Fortunately, I was asked by our chairperson to put together some tangible examples of how we are trying to cover this issue. Day to day activities in our Interest Groups over the past few years has revealed that we are managing to find opportunities for our members to enrich their cultural and inclusive learning experience. Is this surprising?

Here are some examples of how some of the Interest Groups have responded. Please let me know if you have any suggestions as to how your Interest Group is actively engaging.

* **Historic Visits** included a visit to the British museum to take in a special exhibition on the influence of Islamic culture on design and Western Art
* **Poetry for Pleasure** researches modern day poets from diverse backgrounds
* **Writing for Pleasure** includes listening to each other, respecting and collaborating on personal cultural experiences
* **Language groups** stretch individual experiences of the language studied by introduction of the country’s lifestyle and cultural nuances.
* **Blues and Jazz Appreciation** signposts members to listening on line and attending specific events as a group to enhance their cultural musicality, appreciation and pleasure.
* **Chair Yoga** explains the origins of postures and uses their Sanskrit/ Hindi names. Music from different cultural genres is sometimes played to accompany the asanas.
* **Taste of World Cuisines and International Dining**, visiting different restaurants; takes members to diverse places and they experience different cultures through the food, music and social activities.
* **At the December General Meeting,** 12 members contributed, including talks given by BAME members on Christmas in Japan and Guyana. A traditional Guyanese Christmas cake was shared with attendees.
* **MOTO** (Members on their Own) held a Chinese New Year Lunch 2020 which included a Chinese buffet and a Chinese guest to tell everyone about the festival. A Japanese member spoke about the delights of the Spring Festival.

There’s no use sitting away in a corner and ignoring the public outcry which we have seen over the past six months across the world. We in Croydon have a wealth of experience and knowledge to share from our various life experiences and must find ways purposely to work together to engage diverse audiences. As a result of this we can begin confidently to have conversations around issues of disability, race, gender, class, educational background and homosexuality without fear of offending members or not using the correct vocabulary.

Our next generation of members needs to grow and I think that this is the way ahead. Attracting a diverse and inclusive retired population to the U3A should be regarded as a growth area and a positive part of our recruitment plan. This can only be a bonus for us all.

Jacqueline Harriott (Committee Member for Inclusion & New Members, Group Leader