

## Almaty Toastmasters Spotlight Series: Greg Heaver

**Almaty Toastmasters Club - Member Spotlight Series** will be featuring all the current members of the Club. Stay tuned to learn more about our fellow Toastmasters, why joined the Club, what they like about it and what is their life like outside of the Club activities!

Today's "spotlight" features Greg Heaver, the founding member, Treasurer and recently appointed Vice President of Education of Toastmasters Club in Almaty, Kazakhstan, which was established in December 2013. We are delighted to present this interview.



Greg is an avid follower of Australian Football. This photo was taken at the Kangaroo Bar in Almaty in 2014 on the day of the Grand Final. His team Hawthorn won, of course!

1. What is your happiest childhood memory?

Each summer when we would spend a few weeks down at a caravan park on the beach together with our cousins and their families, just running around barefoot through the sandhills, eating icecreams, and swimming in the ocean.

2. When did you join Toastmasters? What made you join?

I think it was in 2011.

Even though I already had some unsuccessful stints at public speaking clubs in Australia on my resume, I thought I would give it another shot, simply because I knew that I needed to change.

3. Life outside Toastmasters or what do you do for a living?

I work for a mining company.

4. How do you use communication skills in your daily life?

Well, communications is required at some level to just survive in this world. And the better you can do it, the better your life, and the lives of those people around you, will be. So I try and use my skills to create better relationships, and better experiences.

- What do you like best about our Club?

The comradeship, the energy, and the passion of our members. It is infectious.

- What have you learnt since you joined? Do you feel that you had grown as a communicator or a leader since you joined Toastmasters?

I can say without doubt that I have become a better speaker. I know that simply from watching some of the early speeches that were recorded.

But despite saying this, when I watch some of the other incredible Toastmasters in our Club, I realise that I still have a lot to learn in this art.

What I have also learnt is that public speaking is like any skill. No matter how much you progress, if you don't continue practising on a regular basis, then you quickly unlearn things and find yourself going backwards, which is not fun.

- What are your personal hobbies and interests?

I love riding my bike, and I love playing poker.

When I was younger I had serious aspirations in the former. Now that I am a little older, I have serious aspirations in the latter.

- Can you share random or surprising facts from your biography?

One of my first jobs was as a 'checkout chick' (in case that is Australian terminology, then 'Person who scans the grocery items and works the cash register in a supermarket'), three times a week after school.

- If you could have a lunch with anyone, who would that person be and why?

No-one in particular comes to mind.

- What is the most important thing you would tell your friends and family about Toastmasters?

That it is never too late to face your fears in life. And if those fears are speaking in public then Toastmasters provides a friendly, encouraging, non-judgemental forum which will be able to help you succeed - providing of course that you have the courage to try.

Greg is the current Vice President of Education at Almaty Toastmasters Club. Previously, he held the role of a Treasurer since the Club's establishment in December 2013. He remains the key member of our Leadership team and recently established a Mentorship Program within the Education Committee that he chairs. Members, guests, fellow Leadership teammates and the founding members and officers of Almaty Toastmasters Club all treasure Greg's excellent organizational skills, positive energy and enthusiasm for the Club!

Thank you for this interview, Greg! We all appreciate your leadership and commitment to Almaty Toastmasters Club and your previous role as a Treasurer (which expanded to interim roles of Secretary and Sergeant of Arms a number of times) as well as mentor to so many members of the Club - was both inspiring and encouraging! We wish you all the best with your tour as a VP of Education starting in July 2016, where all your amazing efforts so far - already gather high praise from all members and guests of the Club.