



(Left) CBN is one of Malaysia's oldest schools still standing on its original site. The fundraiser aims to repair old structures as well as restore features such as tiles, doors and floorboards (above). — Courtesy photos

By JADE CHAN
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THE alumnae of SMK Convent Bukit Nanas, better known as Convent Bukit Nanas or CBN, is organising a gala dinner to mark the school's 125th anniversary and to honour its history, achievements and legacy.

The milestone celebration will also serve as fundraiser for the maintenance, restoration and modernisation of the all-girls school located in Bukit Nanas, Kuala Lumpur.

The dinner is scheduled for Nov 2 at Malaysia International Trade and Exhibition Centre, Kuala Lumpur.

"We estimate that we need about RM2mil for the school," said CBN Alumni Association president Marina Yong, 61.

She said the money would be used to repair the building's old structures, some of which had been infested with termites, as well as restore features such as tiles, doors and floorboards.

"There is also a need for plumbing and roofing works as well as a complete redesign of the electrical system as supply keeps tripping.

"The building wasn't built to accommodate today's modern needs such as computer labs and LED screens.

"So, much maintenance and modernisation efforts are needed."

She added that the school's band was in need of a permanent space to practise as sessions were being carried out under a covered canopy.

"If there are sufficient funds, we would also like to establish a heritage centre to document and display CBN's history."

The fundraising is necessary as the mission school gets limited funding from the government, Yong added.

"As the school sits on a hill slope, there is urgent need for soil stabilisation works on the side facing Jalan Ampang.

"This is a problem that we have already highlighted to Kuala Lumpur City Hall.

"There was a previous incident when a brick wall collapsed due to a landslide bordering the Bukit Nanas Forest Reserve.

"This was repaired with funds raised by CBN's board of governors and alumnae association."

CBN Alumni Association treas-

Alumnae raising funds for 125-year-old KL convent

Gala dinner sets RM2mil target to modernise, repair buildings



Aerial view of the secondary school and two primary schools under the Convent Bukit Nanas wing.

urer Karen Wong, 60, said funds raised from the gala dinner would benefit the secondary school and two of its primary schools.

The convent was established in 1899 by Sisters of the Holy Infant Jesus – an institute dedicated to the education and betterment of underprivileged children.

It is currently operated by its owners under the school board Lady Superior of the Society of Saint Maur.

CBN was in the spotlight several years ago when the school board took legal action challenging the government's decision not to extend its land lease that was slated to expire in September 2021.

The Prime Minister's Office later announced that the government would grant a 60-year extension on the land lease for education purposes only.

Some of CBN's prominent alumnae include former minister Tan Sri Rafidah Aziz, women's rights activist Ivy Josiah, lawyer Ambiga Sreenevasan, the

late singer-comedienne Adibah Noor, former Bank Negara governor Tan Sri Nor Shamsiah Mohd Yunus, former national gymnast and plastic surgeon Dr Farrah-Hani Inran, PLUS Malaysia Bhd managing director Datuk Nik Airina Nik Jaffar and former Universiti Malaya associate vice-chancellor Prof Dr Shaliza Ibrahim.

Wong said aside from being one of the oldest schools in Malaysia to remain standing and in its original site, CNB was unique because it had a chapel that was still used for Sunday service.

She added that the school campus included an on-site welfare home for elderly women with disabilities, called Asrama Cahaya Rumah Wanita Cacat Infant Jesus Convent.

"Back in the day, students from the primary and secondary schools could also buy uniforms sewn by women of this home.

"These clothing items, including pinafore, shirt and bloomers, were very comfortable and



Yong (right) and Wong discussing the school's 125th anniversary gala dinner scheduled for Nov 2 in Kuala Lumpur.

durable," she recalled.

Wong, from the Class of 1981, used to live in Kampung Baru and walked to school daily.

Four women in her family went to CBN.

"I was very active in sports and used to play volleyball, table tennis, softball and badminton with a group of friends.

"It was thanks to this team spirit that we still keep in touch after all these years," Wong said.

Yong, part of the Class of 1980, also reminisced about her convent days.

She was part of a pioneer batch whose lessons were switched from English to Bahasa Malaysia.

She recalled a Maths teacher named Mrs Moey who was so committed to teaching in the national language that she persevered despite having to teach in a language that was unfamiliar to her at the time.

"We are appealing to CBN's alumni-at-large to give back to the school and society, and be part of nation-building in a tan-

gible way," she said.

Performers at the 125th anniversary dinner will include CBN's band, singer Mazlina Manan and singer-songwriter Timur Flores.

"We will sponsor tables for former teachers, headmistresses and CBN nuns," said Yong.

"There will be auctions of paintings, some done by alumna Christianne Goonting, as well as booths selling organic produce, clothes, handicrafts and CBN merchandise.

"Proceeds from the auction and booth sales will go towards the fundraiser."

The dinner is priced at RM270 per seat and RM2,500 per table of 10 guests for members registered with the CBN Alumni Association.

For non-registered alumnae, the dinner is priced at RM300 per person and RM3,000 for a table of 10.

For more details, visit <https://www.cbnumni.org/>, <https://bit.ly/cbn125th> or WhatsApp 017-646 5982 (Shareena).