

Ying Wa at the Crossroads

Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

For over a century, No.76, Robinson Road has been 'home' to Ying Wa Girls' School. The noble motto of 'to serve and not to be served (非以役人·

乃役於人)' has been a constant reflection and reminder of the Ying Wa spirit and identity. While she proudly boasts her past vision in education and vows to remain true to the fine traditions set by her founder and the succession of dedicated principals and teachers, Ying Wa is also set on a future course that aims to meet the challenges of educating the



young for the 21st century. 'A transition from the traditional to the modern' is how Mrs Ruth Lee, the current Principal, describes the new mission. "Standing on the foundation made firm by more than a hundred years of history, hard work and goodwill, Ying Wa is poised to embrace new challenges for yet another hundred years."

Where 'Hearts and Minds' Meet

So, what has enabled all these changes? Without exaggeration, the changes owe much to the acumen and quiet generosity of our alumnae. Two renovation projects stand out as fine examples of the close link between the School and our alumnae.

In 2001, new staffroom and staff common room were completed to provide the 60-odd staff with much

improved facilities. However, the money from the government covered only the cost of the new rooms. There were no funds left for the long, dark corridor wedged between the staffroom and the retaining wall next to Robinson Road. So, it was left bare and unlit.

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Help was, fortunately, at hand. Without too much prompting, three groups of alumnae from the classes of '71, '76 and '83 respectively rallied together and started fund-raising. Other alumnae also chipped in. In no time, \$300,000 was collected. But the school purse was still a long way off the target of \$800,000 needed. With a stroke of luck, Leong Pui Yee, who attended Ying Wa in the 1930s, heard of the shortfall and single-handedly made up the balance. The long corridor is now transformed, with furniture, plants and soft lighting, into an inviting place where teachers and students can meet outside the restrictive confines of the classroom or staffroom. 'A meeting place for hearts and minds,' enthused the generous donors who were instrumental in bringing about the project.

Another shining example of generosity among our alumnae is the mural project, code-named 'The Sky (一片天)', which was part of a programme to promote visual arts and to have the artworks on display in public areas. Alumnae from the

class of 68 donated \$50,000 from their Miss Pilkington Memorial Fund to subsidize this project. In addition, the artistic concept and design, created - pro bono- by a past student and artist, Man Fung Yi, and her artist husband, Mok Yat Sun, also gave life to this project. A giant modernistic, metallic mural now graces the retaining wall opposite the gymnasium in the Low Block north wall.



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We Care and We Share

High profile fund-raising activities are not Ying Wa's style as Ying Wa girls are generally known for their sincerity, steadfastness and quiet dignity. In the more sophisticated world of the 21st century, perhaps a slightly bolder approach to fund-raising needs to be considered.



Why give to your mother school - whether it be in the form of time, effort or money? This is indeed a good question when we are bombarded by appeals for numerous charities. All these appeals drain our

pockets and tug at our conscience. Giving to the mother school is somehow different. It is not exactly about charity or social conscience. It's more about connecting. It's about connecting the present to the past. It's about remembering one's roots, minds enlightened, knowledge gained, and friends made. It's also about gratitude. For those who are far away, we can still be staying close to Ying Wa (身遠心莫離).

Or simply, we share because we care.

Dream Choices and Donor's Choices



Ying Wa walks on a tightrope when she comes to realizing her mission goals. Sustaining the academic, religious and moral fibre of the quality education she has traditionally offered needs funds. Providing a diversity of education opportunities for students with differing abilities needs

funds. Creating space and facilities for a more sophisticated, technology-and-knowledge-based learning environment needs funds. Smaller classes and better student-teacher ratio needs funds...The list is endless.

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Educational zeal and vision alone will not achieve any one of the above goals, not to say all. Depending only on government subsidy makes it a difficult balancing act to maintain the present momentum of change. Occasional project-based donations from alumnae certainly help. But strong, sustained funding with a long view has gradually become a necessity.

In recent years, an increasing number of schools with a long tradition have opted into the Direct Subsidy Scheme ("DSS"). With the autonomy to charge fees and the likely support of powerful past students' and parents' associations, many of these schools will be able to offer students a more stimulating learning environment and curriculum. Their offering of scholarships also helps ensure admission of bright students. Ying Wa has opted not to join the DSS. She will continue to serve in the public sector. Without the assurance of solid financial backing to upgrade continually and to pursue higher and broader goals, Ying Wa is unlikely to maintain her competitive edge amidst the well-

established schools in Hong Kong.

The need for a large infusion of funds in the near future is, therefore, crucial. Otherwise, Ying Wa's dreams to offer the best possible education will remain only dreams.



The Trust Fund

On 1 March 2006, our alumnae association was formally incorporated as a limited company under the Companies Ordinance and the liabilities of our members are therefore limited. A Trust Fund was set up on the same day under the management of the following trustworthy Trustees (with the assistance of Ms Yau Shue Ying, Josephine 游樹英 as honorary auditor) to reassure all donors that each and every dollar is spent for the good of the school:

Dr. Huen Kwai Fun 禰桂芳
(President of the Council of YWGSAA Ltd. (by post))

Ms. Lai Yuk Fai 黎育輝
(Vice-President of the Council of YWGSAA Ltd. (by post))

Ms. Chow Siu Fung 周小鳳
(Hon. Treasurer of the Council of YWGSAA Ltd. (by post))

Ms. Lam Lai Bing, Alison 林麗冰
(Representative from the School Council)

Rev. Lee Ching Chee 李清詞

Ms. Lee Man Shiu, Margaret 李聞韶

The advantage of setting up a Trust Fund is that funds called for and collected need not be tied to one single project. This will lend flexibility to long-term planning and development. And Ying Wa can have her 'dream choices'.

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The First Donor

In March 2005, Rev. C.C. Lee - past student, teacher, vice-principal, school chaplain, school council member and school supervisor donated 1,000 copies of her book (我憶故我在) to Ying Wa. The sale

proceeds went directly to the Trust Fund. Since the 2005 Founder's Day dinner, we have received more than \$900,000 contribution to the Trust Fund.

Any More Brave Souls to Follow Suit?



Remember: while you contribute to the Trust Fund, and whether or not you have indicated your choice of how the contribution is to be spent, you are in fact giving Ying Wa a choice - a choice on how to make the right move in the right direction.

parents are expected to follow the track and contribute annually. Upon the successful nurture of donation culture, fund-raising activities will become a natural part of Ying Wa life. Our Trust Fund will also become sustainable.

Ying Wa is indeed at the crossroads. But for those of us who have passed through her doors, it is both a privilege and a duty that we share in the process of change and to ensure that our Alma Mater is able to make a smooth and successful transition from the past to the future and from the traditional to the modern.

With the alumnae laying a solid foundation and setting the momentum, stakeholders especially

