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Changkat Primary celebrates its 50th anniversary



Changkat Primary School celebrated its 50th anniversary on Friday morning, with activities ranging from creating a time capsule to the launch of a heritage app. -- PHOTO: ST FILE

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SINGAPORE - Changkat Primary School celebrated its 50th anniversary on Friday morning, with activities ranging from creating a time capsule to the launch of a heritage app.

The school is one of a few primary schools to have been founded in the same year that Singapore gained independence. It is the inspiration behind their theme - Singapore is 50 and so are we! Changkat is 50 and fabulous.

For many of the former staff, the momentous occasion was a source of much joy and pride.

One of the pioneer teachers, Ms Kamariah Gani, recalled how the school used to draw students from areas like Tampines and Changi back in the sixties. Some students even walked as long as 30 minutes in order to attend the school at its previous location at Changi Road.

The celebration was especially poignant for her, given that she had taught at Changi for 30 years since 1970.

"When I received the invitation, I knew I had to go," said Ms Kamariah. "I don't think the school has held a bigger celebration than this."

Former principal Foong Bee Cheng was "very proud" to celebrate the school's anniversary together with Singapore.

"It's a great feeling knowing that we've come this far," said Ms Foong, who was Changkat Primary's principal from 1993 to 1998.

All students were involved in the celebration, with handcrafted paperwork going into the time capsule. Together, they voted for the top 50 items they would like to see in the capsule, such as the school's PE attire.

Retired principals and former teachers were also honoured as pioneers whose efforts saw the school grow and flourish.

The school, which used to be known as Changkat Changi Primary, had a staff strength of 41 and student enrolment of 900 back in 1965, but today has nearly twice the staff.

Reflecting on the school's journey, principal May Tang noted that it was an immense privilege to be able to celebrate Changkat's golden jubilee with the nation.

"We are honoured to be able to share a history of 50 remarkable years with Singapore," she said.

"It is not an everyday opportunity that you get to be a part of history. I'm very proud and happy, and couldn't ask for anything better."

Guest of honour Justin Pierre, Cluster Superintendent of E4 schools, echoed the sentiment.

"It is a proud distinction for Changkat Primary," he said.

"Few schools can boast such a long history."

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