

Church Mission School (CMS) Alumni Group

By S Meraj Nazar (1)

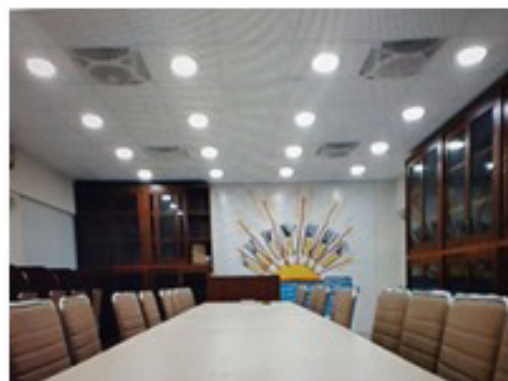


Church Mission School (CMS), established in 1846, is probably the oldest school in Karachi. The school has the honor of having Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the Founder of Pakistan, as one of its students in 1892.

Having spent most of the 1950's as a student at CMS, I have very fond memories. The school, run by the Christ Church, was considered one of the best schools in Karachi. Its students achieved some of the highest honors in the matriculation examinations, including three of the top positions in Karachi in 1960. The school excelled in sports, and produced many outstanding cricketers, like Intikhab Alam, Mushtaq Mohammad, Sadiq Mohammad, Javed Miandad, and Haroon Rashid, who became famous through their performances in world test cricket. The school also had a well-known Boy Scouts Group, which participated in National Scouting events as well as in world Jamborees in Iran and Greece.



Those were the heydays of the school. This started changing in 1971 when the school was nationalized, which it still is as of this writing. During its nationalization period, until 2010, the school saw deterioration in its standards. The three main historical blocks of the school were ruined due to lack of maintenance and neglect, and encroachments built on school premises. The good news is that this situation was brought to the attention of the senior government officials, who took strong corrective measures, as reported in the daily DAWN, February 20, 2010, "KARACHI: Restoration of Church Mission School Ordered." Besides restoring physical conditions of the school, a new management team, led by Principal Imtiaz Ali Bughio, went to work on improving the academic standards as well. School also got support from mentors like Mr. Shafiq-ur-Rehman Paracha, an ex-Commissioner of Karachi, who has been a great help in the restoration efforts.



The idea of establishing an alumni group came about in April 2016, during my visit to Karachi when I went to see the school with Dr. Altaf Hashmi, also a CMS alumnus, and now a surgeon and Professor at SIUT, Karachi. We were pleasantly surprised by the good work being done by the current school management, but we also recognized huge opportunities ahead to help the school restore the high standards it had in 1950's and 60's. We were part of that era and knew the potential for improvement to make the school one of the best in the city, and yet offer affordable education to all. Mr. Paracha suggested galvanizing an alumni group overseas, and providing ideas for improvement, encouragement, and moral support.



The Alumni Group was founded in California, USA, in summer of 2016, and has been gradually growing, enrolling members from around the globe as well as from Pakistan.

The Group has been working with the school management and alumni to identify projects for improvement.

Following projects have been identified:

- Renovation of School Library -- completed
- Multi-Media -- completed
- Library Books -- underway
- Training of key teaching staff – planned for 2018
- IT Lab/eLearning – under planning
- Endowment Fund – Future
- Extra-curricular Activities / Sports - Future
- Boy Scouts Troop - Future

The first project was renovation of the library. The project was launched this year, sponsored and funded by the alumni, and already executed. Special thanks are due to Mr. Iqbal Molvi, a CMS alumnus, and President, Schoellerman/PACE, Inc. dba Best Air Control, who led the project from California, and to Mr. Waseem Akhtar, also a CMS alumnus, who traveled from Los Angeles to Karachi to execute the project.

The second project, comprising of multi-media equipment, managed by Dr Altaf Hashmi, has also been completed, with his compliments.

The third project is of furnishing the Library Books, and expected to be completed over the next few months in 2018. A teacher-training program by private organizations is also being planned for 2018. Thanks to Mr. Abdul Qadir Molvi, a CMS Alumnus, and an associate professor at the Institute of Business Management, who is leading both these projects.

Students of 1950's and 60's are currently leading the alumni initiative, and there is a great need to bring younger alumni to the group for sustainability of this initiative. We are looking for ways to reach this broader group of alumni through the Pakistan media and the world social-media such as Facebook and WhatsApp, as well as through networking.

We also need to thank other supporters like Mr. Parwaiz Karamat, Mr. Fazlul Haq Syed, Mr. Qamar Saifuddin, Mr. Qutub Saifuddin, Mr. Azizur Rehman, Mr. Yousuf Nazar, Mr. Shakil Aslam, and Ms. Parveen Pasha.

Special thanks are adue to Mr. Intikhab Alam, one of our celebrated alumni, and a member of the Alumni Group, who made a special visit to the school to visit the CMS team and to see alumni activities.

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