



The Canossians' Connection

This is the official newsletter of the Canossian Alumni Association



Canossian Alumni

JANUARY 2015

ISSUE #01

CONNECTING, from my heart to yours...

President's Message

The theme of the 120th Anniversary celebration last year highlights a vision for Canossians and is succinctly defined in the following phrases.

One Love

"Make Jesus known and loved" through our unconditional and universal language of love. Reaching out regardless of color or creed.

One Mission

Strive to make a difference by touching and inspiring lives through our hearts and hands.

One Canossian

Every Canossian – Sisters, Students, Teachers and Lay ministry worker, has a responsibility to align our values and a role to carry the torch of our Foundress to continue the works that St Magdalene has envisioned more than a century ago.

As I make my first address as President of the CAA, I'm humbled that along with my team, I have been given a role of service – to unite and connect all Canossians – former students, teachers, sisters in the common endeavor of reaching out in love and service.

And our first "service" is a revised newsletter as you see now. In this communication, we will strive to get you in touch with the many people who have passed through the gates of CCPS, SACPS and SACSS - students and staff.

Schooled in your Spirit Canossa

There is much pride as we rejoice at our rich history and the glory of what we have achieved, through the works of our Canossian Sisters over the past 12 decades. I'm sure our most gratifying gift was having a Canossian Education.

In People & Faces, we catch up with Sr Calista, Principal at SACSS in the 70s and 80s. Find out how her life has panned out to lead her into the hinterlands doing Mission work in Africa.

Our education enlightens the mind and widens heart and fits us with the lenses

to look for, and into the needs of others. In that light, we are proud to meet Lily Goh, winner of the Woman's Award 2014, whose opportunity to attend the Canossian School moulded her to begin a social enterprise as an outreach to society locally and abroad.

If cheerfulness is personified, then it's the endearing Aunty Yanti, whom many students from SACSS Bedok will fondly remember plodding around maintaining the school facilities.

Lastly, we will give you a brief rundown of what may be happening this year so that you can get connected with your fellow Canossians through our events.

If you're not already on our Facebook page, join us at Canossians United (in Common Endeavour). It's an exclusive page, and we shall be admitting new members from Feb 1st to 10th in conjunction with Canossian Saint's Day, but ONLY if we see a badge on your profile picture & 8 mutual friends from SAC.

Via Veritas Vita

Cheers, Veronica

People and Faces

This is a segment where we will showcase familiar faces of those whom we've come to know and love in our younger years within the compounds of our school. Former teachers, staff, students and our ever loving Sisters. Write to us and let us know who you're thinking about and we shall try to see if we can snoop them out. And if any of you know the whereabouts of some of these people, do let us know so that we can share with the rest of the girls. Contributions are always welcome!

The Exco - 2014/16

United in Common Endeavour to Serve and Connect!



The AGM held on the 11th October, 2014, saw new leaders voted into the Exco for the new 2 year term which will end in 2016. Here are some voices from the new members on their wishes for the coming term.

"To go beyond the Alumni networking and provide a platform with meaningful reach out programmes, exemplifying the Canossian Virtues and share successful journeys of our Canossian Students."

*Martha Fernandez, Committee Member
Grad 1972*

The Canossian Alumni Mission

The objectives of the Canossian Alumni Association:

1. To strengthen the network of former students of the Canossian Schools and to develop a true spirit of loyalty and love for the Alma Mater.
2. To be a channel of collaboration between the former students, the Canossian Schools and the society at large.

L-R Standing

Jeraldine Lee Mei Yee (CM), Ong Hui Hong (Asst Treasurer), Rebecca Chin (Secretary), Sr Theresa Seow (Spiritual Director), Martina Wong (CM), Shelley Raeburn (CM), Martha Fernandez (CM), Catherine Yong (Treasurer).

L-R Kneeling – Sharon Yu (Asst Secretary), Teo Li Sian (Vice President) & Veronica Tan (President)

"That the CAA stays REAL (Relevant, Engaging, Appealing and Lively) and for more ex-girls to come forward and contribute and participate actively."

*Martina Wong, Committee Member
Grad 1979*

"My wish is to be able to reach out to more ex-students to reconnect them back to the CAA through current members, social media and come back for events."

*Teo Li Sian, Vice President
Grad 1994*

Sr Calista Ponnu Durai

Out of Africa

Sister Calista comes back to Singapore for a home visit every 3 years from Africa, where her Mission work takes her to the impoverished areas of Tanzania, Malawi and Kenya. She spent the last 25 years there.

She was a guest at the Mass celebrated at SACSS for the opening of the school year and we caught up with her. Her first remarks were "It was a really a moving and touching moment for me this morning coming back to my Alma Mater. Talking about blessings in life, that was another that was added on..." She left Singapore in 1983 for a 4 year stint in Rome after her 12 year career in education here as a teacher for 5 years, and subsequently a principal, for 7 years at SACSS in Middle Road. Many students would recall her firm but soft-spoken nature.

Having come from a staunch Catholic home, where she also has a brother who became a priest, Sr Calista had the full support of her family to get into the religious life. Her inspiration to become a nun came from Mother Adriana Reatto and Mother Joy Shelley who guided her through discerning her journey. Over and above that, she was touched by the acts of compassion and charity as a student in SAC, which attracted her to the vocation as a Canossian Sister. Her choice led her to make her Final Vow in 1970 in Milan, Italy.

I slowly began to have a desire to move to poor countries to help with people who were really more needy.

When asked how she got herself to the hottest continent on the planet, she said that after she read the revised rules of the Canossian Congregation which stated that local sisters may opt to become missionaries where people are of dire need, she wrote to the Mother General to become a missionary to work among the poor.

From 1988, after landing in Kenya, her first stop, she assisted in pastoral and social work empowering village women and sometimes in schools, and has, since the past 6 years done formation work in a Novitiate. Her current work is in the outskirts of Nairobi – Mukuru slum. The environment there is a world of contrast to the luxuries of developed countries. While there are natural beauty spots, fauna and flora; the stark poverty of the people is evident in many form - attire, homes, street-children, beggars, etc.

A typical day in Africa for her begins as early as 4am in the morning. "One works harder in a mission country for many reasons. Limited personnel in the Ministry, distance to cover – especially if you have to go to public schools which are far off," she shares.

So how does she live up to the challenges there and did she ever feel alone? "No - The Canossian community is biggest support in every way – Fraternal life, community prayer, mutual service in the Convent and the ministry. Community is indispensable for Missionary service."

Sr Calista is currently staying in the Canossian Formation House at Lorong Low Koon, and has a few travels planned in the region. She leaves on 28th February for Rome for a 'temporary service' after which may follow a continued missionary service in Myanmar.

One for the Canossian Family album.



L-R : Sr Cecily Pavri, Mrs Agnes Lim, Sr Calista Ponnu Durai, Mrs Susan Lopez, Ms Veronica Tan, Ms Sheila Sim, Mrs Catherine Yong (looking on is Sr Margaret Goh).

Email Interview with

Lily Goh

Singapore Woman Award Winner 2014



We are proud to feature our former student Lily Goh, 34 - the winner of this year's Singapore Woman Award. Organised by MediaCorp, this award recognises women who overcame challenges to accomplish extraordinary and beneficial achievements in society.

Lily is the founder of ExtraOrdinary Horizons, a social enterprise that promotes arts, culture, heritage and language among the deaf. She was also instrumental starting up a project to empower the deaf in Cambodia.

CAA : Tell us a little about yourself.

LG : I am bilaterally deaf (preferably not to be called Hearing Impaired). I am a social entrepreneur, running Extra Ordinary Horizons (www.eohorizons.com) and am a part-time UNISIM student. I graduated from SACSS in 1997.

CAA : Did you have any memorable moments in SACSS?

LG : In 1995, I remember the moment when I performed the solo song "Happy Mallets" with the Concert Band at Singapore Conference Hall. That was my first time. Yeah, my first achievement! That started to develop my passion in music.

CAA : As the founder of Extra Ordinary Horizons, what is your vision for your social enterprise?

LG : We have set the vision for Extra Ordinary Horizons to create an inclusive society where the disadvantaged attain confidence in their own abilities.

CAA : The Canossian sisters and teachers are so proud of you. What would you like to say to them?

LG : I do remember a few like Sister Anne Tan, Sister Maria Riva. Without the Canossian School for the Hearing Impaired, I won't be the person to win the Singapore Woman Award. This school taught me good moral values. Also, I learnt to be more hardworking, self-initiated and independent. I merely do [the things I do] by following my heart.

Coffee Chat with

Noryanti Binte Ibrahim

Little Miss Sunshine

You will see her bright and early every day, and she doesn't finish work till most of the stairways are locked and rubbish cleared. She is often seen plodding around the school grounds in her petite frame, donned in a colourful tudung (Muslim headscarf) and always smiling – keys in her hands, and nowadays, a walkie-talkie. Those who graduated from SACSS over the past 2 decades will certainly remember this smiley character at school.

Aunty Yanti, as she's affectionately known, has been in the school for as long as SACSS has been at Bedok Ave 4. This year marks her 19th year here as the faithful caretaker of the premises – assisting to prepare event set ups and arrange exam areas, gardening and some general cleaning and basic estate maintenance. Most girls would remember her watering the plants or locking up the auditorium, and pulling down the shutters at the staircases. Her cheerfulness endears her to them.

Yanti appreciatively recalls her earlier years when she was hired by Sr Cecily in 1996. She has worked with 4 Principals over the course of her 19 years here, and remembers fondly the kindness of many teachers too, including the late Mr Quah and several others who have since left or retired.

When asked about what makes her stay in this job for such a long time, she admits that she's very happy here.

"This is like my home, I love everybody and everybody is very nice. It's like family. The girls are very helpful. Some of them even come back and visit me after they graduate. And the teachers & (Canossian) Sisters are all my good friends! They care for me and I enjoy my time here."

Looks like there's going to be another Canossian icon in the making, following the footsteps of Aunty Minnie!



Happenings

The Canossian Alumni Association has been actively organizing events to keep everyone connected to the Canossian roots. Some of these activities are staples in the CAA Calendar, and here's a schedule of what's happening in the course of this year.

MONTH	EVENT
April (tentatively 3 rd week 2015)	Canossians Connect Annual Dinner 2015
May (Confirmed 1 st May)	Visit to St Joseph's Home
August (Tentatively 3 rd week)	CAA Annual General Meeting

Get more information on [Canossians United \(in Common Endeavour\) Facebook page](#).



Request to join the Facebook page if you're an ex-student. As it is an exclusive group, we would be stringent in our admission, so it makes sense to have your badge either on your cover or a statement on your profile page which says you studied at SACSS. Otherwise be prepared to answer 5 questions for verification.

Members' Discount

We are glad to inform you that the following retailers will be extending a special offer to Alumni Members who present their membership cards :

Crossings Café 55 Waterloo Street Cana Centre	15% off ala carte orders
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In the Next Issue...

What is our Provincial Leader, Sr Theresa Seow pushing? A door? If doors could speak, what do you think they'd be saying?



We also catch up with a few teachers who have considered Sallim Road their home ground for decades. Find out who we will be speaking to in Coffee Chat.

This is the 15th year of St Bakhita's canonization as a Saint. What would she be like in today's day and age? Let's look at the girls who take after her in this modern times.

And look out for the theme for the Canossians Connect 2015 – it's gonna be HOT, WILD and HEART POUNDING (so that's hint enough!)

Do your part to contribute : The Canossian Alumni Association supports various causes such as scholarships, mission and has needs for operating costs such as communications. If you wish to contribute a donation, please send your Cheques to 1600 Bedok North Ave 4, S(469700) payable to "Canossian Alumni Association.