

# Financial help for Inobong students

**Leonard Alaza**

PENAMPANG: MyKasih Foundation co-founder Tan Sri Ngau Boon Keat appreciates the importance caring for one's neighbour, having personally experienced long periods of hunger as a youngster during the communist insurgency.

During that tough period when food was hard to come by, Ngau and his family were kept alive by the kindness and generosity of strangers who shared whatever they had.

After the country's political situation improved and people's lives returned to normal, he was determined to climb out of hardship and poverty – through education.

Excellent academic performance soon proved to be his key that opened many windows of opportunities and over the years he attained success after another in both his life and professional career.

Today, the 68-year-old former oil and gas company engineer is an active philanthropist whose contributions are aimed at building a society that cares for neighbours and values education.

It was for this reason that Ngau's foundation facilitated a generous sponsorship from ConocoPhillips Malaysia to 220 underprivileged primary school students under its "Love My School" student bursary programme.

ConocoPhillips Malaysia, who has been supporting the programme for four consecutive years, presented its annual contribution of RM160,000 in a ceremony held at SK St Theresa Inobong, Saturday.

SK St Theresa Inobong is one of four primary schools which have been adopted by

the company since 2013 under My Kasih's "Love My School" programme. The others are SK St Paul Kolopis and SK Combined and SK Sungai Apong, both in Sarawak.

"Through the bursary programme, students from economically-challenged backgrounds receive much needed financial support for daily meals and learning necessities, which, in turn, will give them a better chance at completing their education and building a better life for their families," said Ngau.

Ngau said he initiated the programme because he knows what it feels like to experience poverty and hunger. He also knows what it feels like to be helped by Good Samaritans.

"ConocoPhillips demonstrates their caring values as a responsible corporate citizen. We hope other companies will be inspired to come forward to collaborate with MyKasih Foundation as we continue to help more families and students here and in the region," he added.

Students from low-income households who are adopted under the programme are rendered financial support in the form of bursaries via a contactless MyKasih smart card.

Upon registration, an account will be opened against a student's Mykad in the MyKasih system into which a spending allowance of RM30 to RM40 will be deposited twice a month. Students will draw on the allowance by using their MyKasih student smart card to pay for purchases of school books and stationery from the school bookstore and food from the school canteen.

The bursary scheme is subject to annual review where students' academic performance is assessed.

Sixty-one SK St Theresa Inobong students and 70 from SK St Paul Kolopis are beneficiaries of the programme. Ten students from each school who excelled in their studies were presented with a bicycle during the ceremony as an incentive for them to do even better in education.

Playing its role at a good neighbour, ConocoPhillips expressed delight in continuing its collaboration with MyKasih Foundation.

"As a major global energy company, ConocoPhillips is fuelling the world's growth. We aim to do it in a responsible and sustainable manner, working closely to build strong relationships with all of our stakeholders, including the communities," company president in Malaysia David Hendicott said.

Since its inception in 2009, MyKasih Foundation has reached out to more than 230,000 low-income households in over 400 locations nationwide, out of which 11,000 are primary and secondary school students from 200 schools.

To date, more than RM180 million worth of aid has been channelled to targeted beneficiaries using the MyKasih cashless payment system.

Also present during the ceremony were MyKasih Foundation Trustee Datuk Yaacob Amin, the foundation's Managing Director Jeffrey Perera, ConocoPhillips Malaysia General Manager of Assets and Commercial Richard Thomas, headmasters of SK St Theresa and SK St Paul Martin Sibit and Edwin Gustin respectively.

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**Ngau with the students and Hencicott and others during the cheque presentation ceremony.**