TAN KARR WE

FORMER SJK(T) Ladang Midlands student Elangovan Muniandy, now 40, will forever be grateful to the teachers there that encouraged him to do well in his studies.

"The teachers really looked out for me and even called on me after I have left the primary school to see how I was doing. I went on to study computer science in Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM)," said Elangovan, who now works as an assistant accountant.

He felt compelled to give something back to the Tamil school and is now the treasurer of the SJK(T) Ladang Midlands Former Students' Association.

Vice-president A.N. Mathuvai, 63, recalled how he used to sit on the floor when he was studying there.

"The school has been around for more than 100 years and has gone through several structures. During my time, we didn’t even have desks and chairs. We would be studying on the cement floor and there were also a lot of problems like flooding," said the retiree, whose two children also attended the same school.

Elangovan, Mathuvai and the other former students in the association were among those present at the launch of the new school building which many of them have waited for.

"We have been asking for a proper school for the children for many years and it’s a proud moment for us to see it materialise," said Elangovan.

The school was built at a cost of RM3mil funded by the Selangor government and also boasts its own multi-purpose hall, named the Midlands Convention Centre.

The air-conditioned convention centre was built with funds raised by the school board led by chairman K. Uthayasoorian and would be managed by the school.

Selangor Mentri Besar Tan Sri Abdul Khalid Ibrahim, who officiated at the opening, commended the committee for its hard work in translating the people’s hope and dream into a reality.

"This is history in the making because this is the first Tamil school in the country to have its own hall," said Khalid.

Uthayasoorian said they have raised RM500,000 for the hall so far and they wanted to show people that it could be done.

"We came up with a deal with the contractor to pay for the hall in installments. We are in the process of raising the rest of the funds and with the support that we have been getting, we are confident," he said.

Among those present at the event were state executive councillor Dr Xavier Jayakumar and Shah Alam mayor Datuk Mohd Jaafar Mohd Alan.

During the event, Khalid also announced that the state have allocated RM5mil for women estate workers to start their own small businesses.

Xavier said there will be a committee set up to determine those eligible for the scheme.