

# **The National**

## **Children rally to help build school for peers with special needs**

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Year 11 pupils from Sheikh Zayed Private Academy are raising money to build a school for special needs children in Abu Dhabi.

The Special Care Centre (SCC) of the Good Heart Foundation, founded in 1989, is one of just a few schools in Abu Dhabi that cater to the needs of expatriate and Emirati children with physical and cognitive disabilities.

"We are now in a villa and we have reached full capacity," said Isabelle Le Bon, the head of fundraising for the school. "We have a waiting list of 74. Just this morning, I had to turn away two mothers because we don't have space for their children."

The school was recently granted land to build a new campus and the administrators hope to open the new special needs centre in September 2010. But first, they have to raise Dh25 million (US\$6.8m).

A number of schools and universities are working to help them reach that goal. Among them are Zayed University, American Community School, American International School and Theodore Monod school, to name a few.

The SCC has launched a fundraising campaign called Donate a Brick. At Dh5 a brick, the SCC must sell five million bricks to build the school. Anyone can buy a brick, and the school is targeting corporate and Government bodies as well as individuals.

The girls from Sheikh Zayed Private Academy have already donated Dh139,000 – the proceeds from an auction of their clothes held during Abu Dhabi Fashion week. "We were literally blown away when we visited the school, we were very touched," said Fatima Mohammed al Qabaisi, the co-president of the student activity council.

"When we looked around we saw that it wasn't the kind of building that could accommodate children with special needs. It's a small building and they don't have a playground or a garden. We were very impressed with the school and when we saw that our contribution did help we wanted to do more."

Next month, students from the school will put on another fashion show to raise funds for the centre.