

Students prepare for possible Obama visit to his Indonesian school

JAKARTA Indonesia - Students at the elementary school once attended by President Barack Obama are planning to give him a warm welcome should he visit the school during his March trip to Indonesia.

Obama attended St. Francis of Assisi School from 1968 to 1970, when he lived in Jakarta with his American mother and Indonesian stepfather.

“We do not know for sure if President Obama will visit this school, but we are prepared for the visit,” Maria Yohana, head of the school’s planning team for the visit, told the Asian church news agency UCA News. “We will serve fried rice and rambutan, his favorite food.”

Rambutan is a tropical fruit.

Yohana said students are preparing several cultural performances for Obama, including Jakarta’s betawi dance, which is performed to welcome people home. Students also are rehearsing the pendet dance of Bali, and a musical performance featuring an angklung, a traditional percussion instrument.

The school planned to ask Obama to sign an inscription which would be displayed after the president’s visit. Yohana said it reads, “We respect President Obama as an alumnus of this school. We want to thank him for inspiring and motivating the school’s students.”

The desk and chair occupied by Obama are kept in a classroom, together with a picture of the president and his wife, Michelle.

Yohana said the school has built a leadership laboratory and will ask Obama to inaugurate it if he visits.

“We will invite him to see our leadership program, whose vision is to produce future leaders based on love,” she said.

Students are excited about the possibility of meeting Obama.

Aurel Justina, 11, has prepared a question for the president. “Are you still happy with this school? I am happy to see your smile,” she said she would

tell Obama.

“I want to shake hands (with Obama) and get his signature. I also want to ask him about his favorite subject,” said Stefanus Febrian.

St. Francis of Assisi School was established in 1967. Current enrollment stands at more than 1,000 students from elementary to high school age.