

MALAY MAIL 2818
Breaking the chains of drug addiction

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By STEPHEN NG

WHEN 23-year-old Petaling Jaya boy, Yong Siang (not his real name), first came to the Breakthrough Rehabilitation Centre in Section 17, Petaling Jaya, he resented the idea of having to stay there for the next 18 to 24 months.

Most of his friends would have been working and wasting their lives away in some entertainment outlet every weekend.

But after four months, Yong is thankful that he ended up at the centre.

"All my life, I haven't learned what it is to be disciplined," he said. "Now I have learned that in order to be successful in life, I have to be disciplined. I'm grateful for that."

He believes that what he has learned at the centre will eventually help him to be more successful than his friends.

"I now believe that we can make a difference in our lives and change. I'm glad I'll be learning to take charge of my life over the next two years while I'm

Each week we highlight the needs of a charitable home, in the hope that generous Malaysians will extend a helping hand



here at Breakthrough."

Yong has been a drug addict for the past three years. He was arrested once in connection with a serious crime.

"Thank God, I wasn't involved in the crime at all," he said. "But, it is the kind of friends that we hang out with that can sometimes get us into trouble. Once bitten, twice shy."

There are eight other people like Yong Siang living at Breakthrough, a centre for the rehabilitation of dadah addicts. According to Samuel Krishnan, the centre's co-ordinator, each of them has a different story.

"We come from different backgrounds, but we are in here with one thing in mind: to be totally set free from drug addiction," he said.

Yong and other students have to wake up at 5.30am to wash up. After their morning Bible devotion, everyone has

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breakfast together at 8.30am.

"Soon after that, it's chapel, housework, gardening and games throughout the day," Yong said. "No time is wasted. We learn how to manage our time."

This lifestyle has added a new dimension to his life.

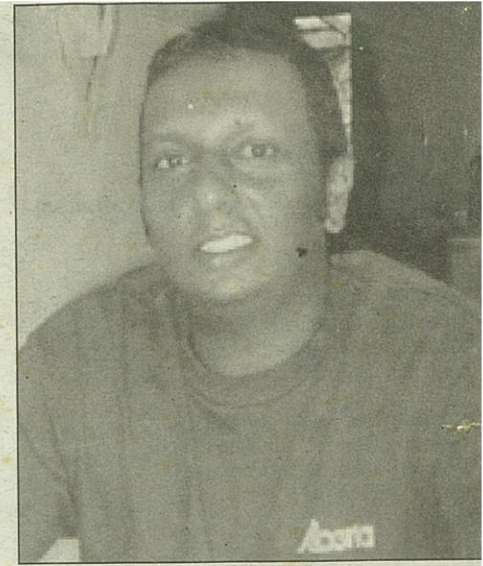
"I see myself become a whole person again, instead of loitering around and wasting time as I used to," he said.

Krishnan believes that the residents at the centre must go through a transformation from the inside out before they can see a breakthrough in their lives.

"Dadah is often not the whole problem. The root cause of the problem lies in people's attitude and character," he said. "We have realised that once we change someone's attitude, we can solve the problem of dadah addiction."

The work, he added, is important, but the people involved in helping in the rehabilitation process are few.

"We need support from time to time, in



cash and kind," Krishnan said.

Donations can be made by cheque, issued to "Community Excel Services", at 34 & 36 Jalan SS25/28, Taman Mayang, 47301 Petaling Jaya. Or contact Samuel Krishnan at (012) 233-6857.

□ If you are running a charitable institution, or know of one that needs help, send details to smail@nstp.com.my or fax (03) 2284-9133