

HOPE for the HOPELESS

Journeying with a recovering substance abuser



A journey that began with despair and ended with hope: Walking alongside someone who has been abusing drugs for more than a quarter of a century is never easy. I am reminded of the song *"The road is long with many a winding turn, leads us to who knows where, who knows where, but I'm strong, strong enough to carry him, he ain't heavy, he's my brother"*.

This song stuck in my mind as I journeyed together with JW*, a recovering drug abuser who came to Rumah Petros right after his release from Kajang Prison in the year 2007.

I could see that many years of addiction had taken its toll on him, mentally and physically. His stay in Petros was a roller coaster as he succumbed to mood swings and showed signs of hostility and aggression towards the staff as he struggled to learn obedience and humility.

Upon assessment, I found out that he started dabbling in drugs right after his HSC (High School Certificate) in 1978 and that his journey was a vicious *"cycle of death"*, with imprisonments (6 times) and admissions to Drug Rehabilitation Centres (8 times) as he relapsed again and again.

Yet as I journeyed with him, I realized that he wanted to change and be accepted but had no answer to his addiction to drugs. I had to show love and compassion but also had to administer *"tough love"*.

Today, he is still recovering but we have created a bond and our friendship has deepened over the years. He still has his shortcomings and struggles in life, but now he knows where to seek help and he is now part of the Family of Christ.

Character transformation and recovery from drugs is a lifelong process but with Jesus at the centre of it, HOPE for the HOPELESS is possible.

As I reflect on the work of Malaysian Care, many clients that have gone through Rumah Petros in the last 26 years. There have been successes as well as relapses among the clients. But God nonetheless loves these who are considered *"unlovable"* and we are just vessels or instruments of change in His Kingdom.

Malaysian Care's work has always been about bringing the Good News to the poor and needy and never about *"success stories"*, even as we rejoice over their increasingly transformed lives. ■

**name altered in protection of identity.*

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