

## Juanmarco

When I used to live on the street, lots of things happened to me because we are a broken family. I became a beggar and learnt to do things that I shouldn't do. I tried using illegal drugs, sniffing glue and begging on the street. I stole and sometimes got involved in riots, fighting here and fighting there. I learnt to fight to defend myself. Even if I were in the wrong I would continue fighting, just to defend myself. I had to beg so I would have something to eat and then I would sleep on the cold cement of the street. Sometimes I went to sleep with nothing in my stomach. Do you know what it feels like, the pain of having nothing in your stomach? When I woke in the morning I would go back to stealing, begging, using drugs, fighting with others. It's like you are not thinking about anything except surviving. Then after all that the police catch you. After catching you, they beat up. Once they have finished messing with you, they let you go. That's why we learnt to fight them. I was not scared of anyone. I was not even scared of God. I just knew that what I was doing was right.

Then one day I was caught and taken to Reception and Action Center or RAC. The smell was terrible. Kids were fighting over food and water and this ended up in fights. I thought of escaping from behind the dark bars and so I did. I went back to what I was doing and it was like I had no hope. I had no dream for my life. All I knew was how to fight and steal. That was what kept me alive and I was happy with that. That was how I had been brought up.

I became even dumber when I was separated from my brothers and sisters. But I didn't show my parents how mad I was at them. I just pretended that I had forgotten my problems and sniffed glue until I was so high. I then went and beat up one of my enemies. I could hardly walk. It was lucky my brother was there and helped me. It was then that I started to think that I wanted to go to school so that I could have a dream from my life. From that time I looked for people that would help me until one day a woman came to me and asked me my name. I told her and she said she was a staff of Bahay Tuluyan. She asked me if I still had parents. I said that I did but they did not care about me. She asked me if I wanted to go to school and I said yes, I did. I asked her where I could go to school. She said that there were lots of kids like me at Bahay Tuluyan so I didn't think twice about it.

I went with her without telling my parents. After getting to Bahay Tuluyan I started going to school straight away and I told myself I would change. Now I am in third year high school and a member of the Children's Council. I can say that my life now is complete. I can go to school, I know how to face people and talk to them, even people in a higher position than me. Bahay Tuluyan has been a very big gift to me. It is an instrument for young people like me. Thanks for everything. I want to be a sailor someday.