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Not wasting his second chance

■ **By M. Hamzah
Jamaludin**

KUANTAN: For years, he celebrated Hari Raya Aidilfitri alone — sometimes under a bridge, or in an abandoned house.

The 33-year-old was shunned by his family because he was a drug addict and HIV positive.

Nizam (not his real name) started taking drugs when he was 16 and in 2003, he was diagnosed with the human immunodeficiency virus.

He has been in jail six times for snatch theft and robbery, crimes he committed to support his habit, he told *New Straits Times*.

But an incident six years ago when he was in Perak made him realise he was destroying himself.

“My health deteriorated and I was admitted to hospital. I was told I only had a few months to live.

“For three months, I lay in bed waiting to die. I accepted that I had done wrong, causing pain to my family. I asked God for a second chance.

“And with God’s help my health began to improve, surprising my doctors.”

When he was discharged from hospital Nizam vowed that he would lead a healthy more meaningful life.

“I also vowed to help others, especially drug addicts,” said Nizam, who immediately joined the Drug Intervention Community here in 2004.

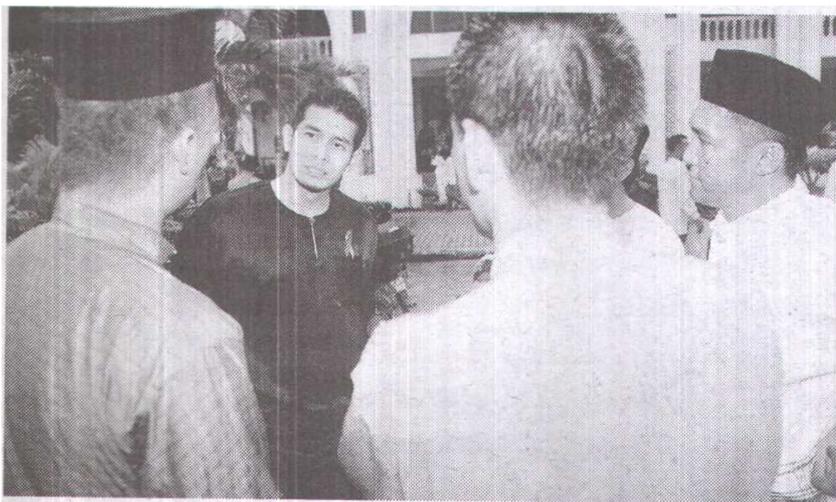
He is now an active DIC volunteer. He helps non-governmental organisations that work with former drug addicts and those with HIV/AIDS.

“I also share my experi-

ences with others. I give talks in schools because I don’t want the youngsters to choose the wrong path,” he said.

He feels blessed, he said, because God gave him these extra years to repent and help others.

“And my seven brothers and sisters have accepted me back into the family, and I now celebrate Hari Raya with them.”



TV personality and actor Fahrin Ahmad with some of the former addicts at a buka puasa function hosted by the Malaysian Aids Council and the Pahang government at Sultan Ahmad Shah Islamic College, Pahang, recently.