Dealing with the un

Susan Chen

MR MUHAMMAD Abu Sufian caught criminals as a police officer during his national service (NS) days, but he wanted to do more to prevent crime recurrence.

So he applied for the National Council of Social Service (NCSS) Social Work Training Scholarship during his second year at the National University of Singapore (NUS) where he majored in social work at the arts and social sciences faculty.

The 27-year-old recalls: “When I was serving my NS, I always wondered why people committed crime and what would happen to them after the process of law had taken place and the policeman had done his job. I felt that there must be more than just putting people behind bars. What would happen to them after that? How does society prevent a cycle of crime from taking place?”

As the social services industry is a sunrise industry where opportunities abound, he decided to pursue his interest in this field.

“I learnt that male and Malay social workers were in great demand, and I was enamoured by this idea of a job looking for me instead of me looking for a job. A bonus came along when NCSS came down to NUS to introduce the Social Work Training Scholarship. I grabbed it with open arms,” he adds.

Upon graduation in 2008, Mr Muhammad served his one-year bond at Serangoon Moral Family Service Centre under the Thai Hua Kwan Moral Society. He is now working as a social worker at FPIS Vista Sakinah, Centre for Remarriages and Stepfamilies.

FPIS stands for Persatuan Pemudi Islam Singapura, which provides support to couples who are remarrying.

PHOTO: CHONG JUN LING
means Singapore Muslim Women's Association.

As a social service agency, PPIS Vista specialises in remarriages and stepfamilies within the Malay-Muslim community. It caters to couples who are marrying again, and where either one or both parties had previously been married. It also works with couples who have remarried and have formed stepfamilies, providing counselling services and programmes to support such couples and families as they experience the challenges of adjusting to their new family structures, dynamics and roles.

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— Mr Muhammad Abu Safian

For example, in a family violence case, he helped to retrieve and pack clothes for a client's children from a house which had turned into a bloodied crime scene. Another time, he provided support to a grieving client and helped him fold and arrange his missing spouse's clothes in his home.

Yet another memorable experience was chasing a mentally challenged child around the office. They definitely do not prepare you for this in university," quips Mr Muhammad, who thrives on overcoming the challenges his job brings.

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