True grit in the face of adversity

Grad credits achievements to dedicated carers at orphanage

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PETALING JAYA: Sporting a beaming smile from ear to ear, Abdul Hadi Samsi may seem like the average cheerful person you meet on the street.

Apart from the fact that he has a PhD in politics and government, the 34-year-old's journey has been one of heartache, perseverance and an immense will to succeed in life.

Having lost both his parents before finishing his secondary education, Abdul Hadi grew up in an orphanage from the age of seven due to his family's financial constraints, mStar reported.

His never-say-die attitude, the care he received at the orphanage and a mentor's words of wisdom have made all the difference.

"I lost my father to bone cancer at the age of five, leaving me with only my mother, who sold nasi lemak for a living, along with six other siblings.

"Due to financial constraints, three of my siblings and I were moved into an orphanage in Kuang, Selangor," he said.

At 16, he then experienced the heartbreak of losing his mother to stomach cancer.

"Her passing left me feeling empty and hopeless for the future; I kept it in for the longest time," he said.

The turning point in his life came during a conversation with the orphanage's founder and principal, Ustaz Suhaimi Dzajuli.

"He told me, 'There is no one who can change us but ourselves. If we are poor or without knowledge, nobody will bat an eye at us'," he recalled.

These words, although simple, were powerful enough to spark hope in Abdul Hadi, who then set his sights on changing his life for the better.

Upon completing his Form Six, he pursued a degree in human resources at Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) before completing a Master's in politics and government at the same university.

Following this, he successfully obtained a PhD in politics and government and received his scroll at the university's 45th convocation ceremony in March.

Abdul Hadi dedicated his achievements to his family and teachers at

Words of wisdom: Abdul Hadi (right) sharing his graduation joy with Suhaimi.

the orphanage, who had cared for him like their own child, during his 13 years there.

"I may not be able to repay you but I am determined to give back financially and through my knowledge to my brothers and sisters there," said Abdul Hadi, who is currently working as a special officer to the UPM deputy vice-chancellor (student affairs and alumni).

He said he hopes his story could serve as an inspiration to teenagers or orphans to not allow their status to deter them from achieving success.

"We must strive to prove to our donors and society that orphans can be successful as well.

"Remember that only you know what you want and dream of," he said, adding that success also did not come to those who merely relied on the sympathy and empathy of others.

"There is always a lesson behind everything.

"Once you achieve success, never stop doing good for others," Abdul Hadi said.