

Shelter of hope for man's best friend

By **DESIREE TRESA GASPER**
desiree@thestar.com.my

JOHOR BARU: Most people would cringe at the sight of dogs with skin disease, fungal infection and maggot-infested wounds but Josephine Mary Paul spends all her time caring for them.

Josephine, 40, who has been running a makeshift animal shelter in Plentong for the past 10 years, gives them love and tries her best to tend to them until they heal.

"I feel that just like humans, dogs too deserve to be cared for. We cannot just give up on them and put them to sleep when they contract a disease," she said.

Josephine has more than 100 dogs in her shelter and most of them either suffer from severe skin diseases, are lame or blind or have other health problems, including cancer.

"I treat them like my children. I hug them, talk to them, play with them and slowly try to nurse them back to health," she said.

She added that she wanted to set

an example to the community on how animals should be treated.

Josephine said although it was tough to care for so many animals, taking care of them has brought much joy to her life and it was a chore that she truly loved.

"I have been bitten many times by some of the dogs but I never give up trying to gain their trust.

"I understand that they have been through a lot, especially those that were abandoned or abused by their owners," she said.

Josephine spends 90% of her time with the dogs and knows each of by their names, their traits, likes and dislikes.

She said she was grateful to the Sai Baba and other associations and non-governmental organisations that have come forward to help her.

However, she said besides financial aid, she needed more volunteers to look after the animals.

She said anyone with a love for animals was welcome to volunteer at the Humane Touch Animal Welfare Society Plentong or contact her directly at 016-7450618.



Dog's best friend: Josephine hugging one of the dogs at her shelter in Plentong, Johor Baru.