

# A faithful friend indeed

## Injured man finds challenge in feeding his stray dogs and cats

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**A** ONE-man-squad taking strays from the road and giving them shelter is out on a limb. Literally, after an accident which left V. Ganeson one leg broken.

Ganeson, 57, who became moderately popular for his single-mindedness in trying to find shelter for stray dogs and cats, still moves around on crutches to take care of his charges.

"I cannot be recuperating at home. If I do that, then my mission in life will be over. Whatever good I have done in the last five years will be wiped out because there is no one other than me to take care of the dogs and cats," he said.

When Star Metro visited him at home, Ganeson, one leg in plaster cast all the way up to his thigh, struggled to get up from the couch.

"My wife took a month's unpaid leave to attend to my needs," he said, adding that the only other person who comes to help him is an old friend who drives him to his kennel so he could feed his strays.

Recalling the accident, Ganeson, who left his City Hall job as a general worker five years ago when he found his calling, said a motorcyclist rammed into him while he was waiting to cross a lane in Serdang carrying a stray kitten in one hand.

"It was a bend and the motorcyclist was coming at full speed, went out of control and hit me, throwing me a few feet into the bushes."

He tried to get up but his legs gave way and he realised what had happened.

"Thank God the motorcyclist did not flee. He helped me to settle down by the road side and went off to flag down a passing motorist who took me to the Serdang Hospital."

He said the accident has left him financially dried as he lost the ability to look for money.

"I do a lot of things, brokerage, sell used cars and act as a private driver... this is how I find money to raise my 200-odd cats and dogs."

But now that he has been temporarily disabled, he finds his savings drying up.

"At times I think of abandoning these creatures but I just cannot bring myself to do it," he said, adding that in the last five years many associations have promised to help but only a few kind souls have chipped in to lessen his burden.

Asked what he does with the dogs and cats, he said he brings them to the Serdang Animal Hospital for treatment and then houses them at his kennel until he finds a proper home for them. But before finding this passion, Ganeson, a burly looking hard-talker, was actually a member of City Hall's dog catching unit.

After witnessing acts of cruelty perpetrated against the four-legged animals, Ganeson left his job to care and protect them.

Recalling the day some five years ago that made him dedicate his life to the care and protection of strays, Ganeson pointed to Chinnu, a mongrel and said: "This is the fellow that changed everything for me."

"He was just an abandoned puppy hiding out in the crevices of chunks of boulders and rubble at an abandoned building in brickfields.

"I used to park there daily to avoid paying parking charges and return late in the evening to collect my car, I used to buy this fellow buns and other food whenever I came to fetch my car," he said.

This relationship had been going on for



**Tough times:** Come what may he has to get up and go look after his dogs.

several months when one day he left the car overnight and came to collect it the next morning.

"This puppy refused to eat the bun I bought but kept on barking and running around my car which was parked on a slope," he said.

Ganeson sometimes encountered problems starting the car and had parked on a slope to make it easier if he needed to push-start the car.

"I tried to shoo him away but he kept on barking," he said, adding that when he had checked to see if anything was amiss, he had noticed that several bolts had been loosened from one of his tyres.

After tightening the bolts, he took the dirty, rash-covered puppy to a pet shop for some medication before taking it home and giving it a proper bath.

The next day, as he pulled out his wallet to pay for a drink at a stall, he found the pet shop receipt with six numbers on it staring at him.

He walked next door to a gaming shop and bought the six-digit number and the following day he struck RM100,000.

Soon it dawned on him that there was more to life than accumulating money, buying a big house and fancy cars.

And since then, he has never turned his back on a stray he encounters in the course of his daily life.

"Not that I go and look for strays, but in the course of my everyday chores, if I come across one then I take it in," he added.

Rain or shine he is there for the strays that need him.



**Happier times:** Ganeson at his kennel in Brickfields with his pet Chinnu a few days before he met with an accident.