

# The Recipe of a Changed Person

9 years ago, the Regional Rehabilitation Center for Youth or RRCY in Magalang Pampanga, assumed custody of "Michael" (not his real name), who was brought by the jail officers in Zambales. At a young age, a rape case was charged against Michael.

Not one of his relatives accompanied Michael during his transfer. He was very thin and timid. His eyes cannot blink off the fear he had been carrying. The young was placed in jail before learning about his real age, and he remembers when he first set foot in RRCY on the 6<sup>th</sup> day of February 2010 with a little more feeling of security.

Michael hails from a mountainous community in Zambales. He experienced humiliation and criticism in his past. Love was rather distant from him, especially during the most difficult stage in his life. His siblings did not support him except his mother who never got tired from believing in him.

Through the different interventions conducted by RRCY, Michael found his motivation to start anew. He exhibited utmost obedience and internalized good manners. He was given the opportunity to continue his formal education at Andres Luciano High School. He passed the Alternative Learning System in 2011 and accelerated to college.

Seen with determination, he was enrolled at Pampanga State Agricultural University (PSAU). He took the Bachelor of Science in Hotel and Restaurant Management (BSHRM) and proved his worth by equipping himself with practical skills through TESDA such as Food and Beverage Service and Hairdressing NC-II every weekends or summer breaks.

Michael is always trying to pay back by helping out in housekeeping, utility work, food preparation and farming activities. During special events in the center, he helps in cooking and serving. His rehabilitation was going well only to be faced with a heart-breaking news.

On September 25, 2014, he was devastated when the court released its decision: finding him guilty beyond reasonable doubt and sanctioned him with twenty-years of imprisonment. In January 2015, all of his hard work broke down to nothing when RTC Branch 71, Iba, Zambales directed RRCY to transfer him to Agricultural Camp under the Bureau of Correction.

RRCY sought for legal possibilities to prove the developments in the character of Michael, and that he is now far from the corrupted child he became due to unfavorable social circumstances. A series of consultation was done by RRCY's social worker and a case conference with Honorable Judge Consuelo Among-Bocar, Michael's legal counsel Atty. Chao-ayan, the court social worker and the clerk of court was held. After his reformation was proven by the significant changes in his behavior, he was issued with an order to remain under the custody of RRCY. Bursting with happiness, Michael cried his heart out at the court and said his promises to be the best person he can be.

Michael got back up again and got his college diploma in BSHRM on April 24, 2016. He was also awarded as Top 10 Student for Best Practicum by the university. Recently, he was hired by PSAU in their university cafeteria as freelance food service crew. His family also learned to forgive him which made him more motivated than ever to be reunited with his family.



"Michael" with Mr. Larry Ocampo, Center Head of RRCY  
When the law closes his case, he dreams of working in a cruise ship and contribute well in the improvement of his family's well-being. He remains a good role model for children in-

conflict with the law. Further, fuels the passion of the workers in RRCY in helping their clients become the productive, well-meaning, socially functional individuals they are ought to be.

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