

Fil-Am turns to God after a life of drugs and gangs

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two other siblings, couldn't discipline him.

"She couldn't handle me," he said. "She didn't have the authority to keep me in the house so I would go in these binges and come home tweaked out. I would look out the blinds because I thought cops were coming to get me."

"I was the oldest in the family but I didn't take the responsibility of the oldest. I threw my responsibilities out the window. I didn't finish school and just kept doing drugs."

But even during his late night drug binges and criminal activity, he knew deep inside that what he was doing was wrong.

He said that during his high school years he got involved in a serious relationship with a girl that he thought would help turn-around his life.

"I thought the relationship would help me but it was worse because we started doing the drugs together," he said.

For a good four years, the drugs and the gang life continued. Finally, Rabara's girlfriend at the time was fed up with her own life. She wanted to start over, a new clean life, get away from everything. She asked Rabara to move with her to San Diego.

He promised he would change. He promised to lay off the drugs.

But living in San Diego was just a change in scenery. It's said that old habits die-hard. After a few months of being clean, he couldn't resist the temptation of drugs when a co-worker offered it to him.

"She was doing her part but I wasn't doing mine," he said. "I started doing drugs again, another year of tweeking and getting messed up."

Finally, she had enough of his lifestyle. She gave him the ultimatum and when he chose drugs over her, she left.

And his whole life had been thrown into shambles.

"Everyone was gone," he said. "I didn't have any family here [in San Diego]. My girlfriend was the only reason why I came to Mira Mesa and then she was gone. The drugs got played out in a matter of days. I had nothing to turn to."

But God, he said. A week after asking God for help and sobbing on a pew inside a Mira Mesa church, Rabara went back home to Santa Maria. He ran into an old acquaintance, which in turn directed him to a local church.

It was February 22, 1995.

"I remember the day vividly," said Rabara. "I was sick and tired. I had no purpose. My friends were all doing their own thing. I was alone and empty. I was questioning 'what am I created for?' I should have been dead because of all the drugs I've done but for some reason I was still alive. That day I asked the Lord to be my personal Lord and savior, to be part of my

life." He immediately enrolled in a men's drug rehabilitation program. He stopped partying. He stopped hanging out with people who were bad influences.

His old friends doubted his transformation. Some gave him a week before he turned back to drugs again. But the weeks, turned into months, which became years.

"All of a sudden one year of being clean, became two, then three, five years, now it's been more than 10 years of being clean," he said.

Those old friends were also gone. He became active with the church.

Giving back to the community Once he got back on his feet, Rabara felt he had to give back.



Tim with boxing champion Manny Pacquiao

He went back to school and earned his GED. He's currently working on bachelor's degree in Theology. He realized that his experiences with drugs and gangs are not unique. He knows there are a lot of Filipinos and Fil-Ams in the gang life and ad-

dicted to drugs.

"There are thousands of Filipinos out there in gangs and addicted to drugs," he said.

Rabara felt compelled to help the greater Filipino community.

For the past few years, Rabara

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