By Judith Tan

His condition was so embarrassing that it nearly drove him to suicide. And he endured merciless taunts, which means he did not have an anal opening. Even now, after finally fixing the problem, the memory of what he went through is painful.

After his birth, surgeons made small openings or stoma in his belly and attached the ends of the intestines to the openings to fix his defect. This allowed him to pass motion into a pouch attached outside the body. It was not until he was three that doctors surgically created an anus for him. The problem seemed to be fixed. But it left him with a terrible and embarrassing side effect – bowel leakage.

“I still wore diapers when I went to K1 (first year of kindergarten) and because of that, the children teased me. It got so bad I didn’t want to go back. I dropped out of K1,” he said.

The teasing continued when he went to primary school. “Spotty loved me unconditionally. He never judged me,” he said.

His only friend while growing up was his dog Spotty. “Spotty loved me unconditionally. He never judged me,” he said. His loneliness soon grew up to become “an angry teenager”. “I picked fights and was aggressive. I was also sitting near the door,” he said. His only friend while growing up was his dog Spotty. “Spotty loved me unconditionally. He never judged me,” he said.

“I was relegated to the back of the class where I sat alone. No one wanted to sit with me or be my friend. They said I was stinky. I was also seated near the door in case I needed to go to the toilet fast,” Mr Nesh recalled.

“I was at my lowest then... My parents could not continue like this and brought me to the attention of the Parkway Pantai group, in the hope that he would be given an artificial sphincter un-

The procedures, which included the cost of the implant and hospital expenses, came up to more than $100,000. They were fully sponsored by Parkway Pantai.

Mr Nesh, who now lives with his eldest brother and older sister in the west, picked himself up and started over.

He studied part-time and took up odd jobs, working as a security guard. Then a motorcycle accident while he was doing his national service worsened his condition.

“My incontinence became bad. I wanted to improve my situation. So I did my own research and found that I could actually opt for a pacemaker to be implanted. But the pacemaker alone costs $45,000. Besides, I would need to change the battery after three to five years, and that would cost between $7,000 and $8,000. How could I afford it?” he asked.

So Mr Nesh picked a cheaper, subsidised option – a colostomy and stoma bags – and had the surgery in 2013. He paid only a small amount because the operation was subsidised and he used Medisave.

Checks with hospitals show that the surgeon and hospital stay for a private patient would cost $30,000. It is between $2,400 and $3,500 for a subsidised patient. The operation meant Mr Nesh’s stools were drained from the intestines via the stoma, into a bag attached to his abdomen.

Not wanting to live with the smell, Mr Nesh changed the bag every day. “Because of work, I used the better grade bags, which cost $250 a month,” he said.

Mr Nesh changed the bag every day. “Because of work, I used the better grade bags, which cost $250 a month,” he said. Post surgery, Mr Nesh completed his O levels as a private student. With four credits, he studied for a diploma in logistics and operations management, and later got a job in a shipping firm.

While he was doing his national service, his surgeon, Aileen Seah, felt Mr Nesh could not continue like this and brought his situation to the attention of the Parkway Pantai group, in the hope that he would be given an artificial sphincter under its Life Renewed Project.

Mr Nesh then underwent a series of operations over four months this year.

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Mr Nesh, who recently married his girlfriend of four years, said he is happy with the result. “I got a second chance to make something of myself. I will definitely make sure I will live up to my late parents’ expectations.”

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LONELY CHILDHOOD: Mr Nesh was born without an anal opening, and was teased during his school days. PHOTO: THE NEW PAPER