

# The Impact of Giving

By Jessica Allen



While growing up as a child and adolescent, we always think we know what we want to be when we grow up. Sometimes we may be guided by our parents and join their career paths, and this had been the case for Junior BBP, Connor O'Sullivan. Connor had planned on following in his father's footsteps and becoming a police officer; however, an incredible, life changing opportunity that his aunt, a nurse, presented to him, led to a change in plans.

Connor's aunt always had a passion for giving back to others through nursing, which allowed her to pursue this passion by working with Blanca's House. Blanca's House is a non-profit organization that provides medical care to less fortunate communities in Latin America. While his aunt was on a mission trip in Ecuador, she met a two year old girl named Angie who needed several surgeries due to congenital defects and multiple clefts on her face. Angie's case was very severe and for this reason, Connor's aunt decided to bring Angie to the United States to live with her over the course of 7 months to receive the care she desperately needed.

During this 7 month time frame, Connor developed a strong relationship with Angie. She became family to him; however, after Angie received the crucial surgeries, she went back to Ecuador to be reunited with her family. Connor missed Angie greatly and because of this, he decided to embark on his first medical mission trip with his aunt so that he could see Angie again.



While on this mission trip in Ecuador, Connor got to scrub in during one of Angie's procedures with a plastic surgeon. In this moment, Connor's future plans for himself immediately changed as this was when he realized he wanted to pursue a career in nursing.

Since then, Connor has completed his first semester of nursing school, in addition to completing 14 mission trips through Blanca's House. Connor has also become a volunteer coordinator for Blanca's House, in addition to holding numerous leadership positions within Student Nurses' Association.

Connor is immensely grateful for having had the opportunity to go on numerous mission trips. He has developed the same passion as his aunt: giving back and making a difference in people's lives during the most difficult times. With this growing passion, he has also experienced academic growth. Through all these mission trips, he's become very knowledgeable on different cultures and diversity. Thus, he has become more culturally sensitive and is able to communicate more effectively when working with patients during clinicals. Connor looks forward to more medical missions to come in the future, and he is excited for what the future of nursing is going to bring.