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GRAD STUDENT IS HUMANITARIAN WITHOUT BORDERS

"Being a good person is not about just feeling sorry for people in bad situations but actually doing something," says Ben Guillaume RN, BSN, MSc, who is pursuing an MS in Nurse Anesthesia through a Saint Joseph's University program offered in conjunction with Nazareth Hospital in Philadelphia. Guillaume resides in Abington but was born in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, and came to the United States at age thirteen; he is a firm believer in the importance of giving back, and his work, life and studies reflect that core belief. Equipped with a background in nursing, he joined Explorers Sans Frontières (ESF), a humanitarian organization founded by Shonta Collins, to address his desire to give back. His first mission with ESF was in March, to Haiti, two months after the earthquake and tragedy struck the nation. "I felt very overwhelmed at times, but I told myself, 'instead of feeling bad, why can't I make their situation better?'"



Guillaume

ESF, a Philadelphia-based non-profit organization, offers numerous programs including working with healthcare professionals abroad in hospital and clinical settings. ESF has conducted medical missions in Senegal, Jamaica and Haiti, and it will open an office in Port-au-Prince on Jan. 25.

"I've always wanted to do humanitarian work, and Shonta had been doing it but always wanted to expand, and I was able to link up with her and we became good friends," says Guillaume about his involvement with ESF. "I chose anesthesia because it was challenging and it will allow me to help with surgery; a lot of surgical patients in Haiti don't have anesthesia, so I would like to be able to provide that."

In addition to his work with ESF, and studies at Saint Joseph's University, Guillaume is a nurse in the cardiac intensive care unit at the University of Pennsylvania's Hospital. "My ultimate goal is to be an anesthesiologist, work in an operating room and conduct humanitarian missions at least two or three times a year, a few weeks to a month at a time".

He led an ESF team to Haiti last month in order to provide medical, psychological and educational care to cholera patients in orphanages and clinics. "We stayed in tents, we lived around people that lived in tents; we'd wake up at five in the morning and go to bed at ten at night but everybody was still smiling, having a good time and felt good about helping other people" says Guillaume. "We're all in this together, we're all human beings. If people have the basic needs of food, water, love, family and education, the world will be a much better place."

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