

## Helper at Heart

After only his first year at Gwynedd-Mercy College, Michael Brown '13 set off to the University of Cape Town in South Africa to absorb the sights, sounds and smells of his first global experience.

"My mom traveled abroad multiple times when she was younger and said that they were the best experiences of her life," Michael says. "For this reason, I've wanted to travel the world at a very young age." Michael jumped at the opportunity to study abroad last summer through financial help from the Elizabeth Powers Carlino Scholars Program. "I am so grateful. I would have never had the money to do it on my own," he says.

And Michael is a deserving recipient of the scholarship because, put simply, he likes to help people. He chose to study at the University of Cape Town mostly because of the community service component in its study abroad program. Though Michael is enrolled in the radiation therapy program at Gwynedd-Mercy College, he wasn't concerned about going someplace where the academic program coincided with his major, he says. Michael was more interested in gaining a global perspective and contributing back to the university and its community in some way.

During his six weeks in South Africa, Michael shared an apartment with 13 Americans and a native who helped them make the transition to the country. He took a debate course, "Power and Poverty in Post-Apartheid South Africa, A Study of Community Development," and tutored eighth and ninth grade students in math and English for community service.

The students that Michael tutored would often speak their language, Xhosa, when they didn't want him to understand what they were saying. So he took it upon himself to learn some of the language from his friend and fellow tutor from South Africa. One day following a crash course in the language, Michael had surprised one of his students when he responded to something that she said in Xhosa. "She spoke English around me from then on," Michael remembers. "She even taught me a few Xhosa words. You never realize how important a language is until you use it as a tool of connection."

Michael hopes to return to South Africa to help the poor and see more of the country that he missed out on due to his incredibly busy school and tutoring schedule. When he was there, he visited two clinics where doctors volunteer their time to diagnose and provide care for members of the poorer communities, which he considers doing after graduation. "I don't know if there would be a position open for me being a radiation therapist, but it would be interesting to find out."

Michael continues to help others back at Gwynedd-Mercy College through Mercy Works activities and a work-study position in the financial aid office. He reflects on his study abroad opportunity especially during his work-study experience. "I like to see how the financial aid office makes a difference in students' lives, as it did in mine," Michael says.



On his last day of tutoring, Michael says goodbye to Shile (Bridget), who is over his shoulder.

### MICHAEL'S SCHOLARSHIPS

#### Gwynedd-Mercy Scholarship

Michael receives the Gwynedd-Mercy Scholarship, a partial tuition award based on academic achievement and financial need.

#### Elizabeth Powers Carlino Scholars Program

He also receives support from the Elizabeth Powers Carlino Scholars Program, which provides scholarships to two incoming freshmen students. The Carlino Scholars receive a renewal of scholarship funding through their undergraduate educational program which typically includes four years of study. Through a special feature of the program, Carlino Scholars will receive grants for travel/study abroad. Students use these funds for international travel that includes a combination of academic and cultural experiences.

Michael also receives a private scholarship/grant.