

In Their Own Words

The following essay is a part of Efren Bernal's responses to the William O. Smith Scholarship Application.

What do you have to offer that distinguishes you from other candidates?

I was able to graduate top of my class and procure a coveted spot at Mayo Clinic as a Registered Nurse. My ability to interact with medicine and underprivileged populations was imbued with a sense of practicality and opportunity. Deemed as the best hospital in the entirety of the United States, I was able to witness and learn the culture and atmosphere it takes to deliver state-of-the art care. Along with my professional endeavors, I have devoted a large portion of my free time volunteering at clinics abroad, such as in Mexico, Peru, Ecuador and Cambodia. My responsibilities included teaching children and families about sex trafficking, building infrastructure to deliver potable water, to walking miles in uncharted neighborhoods to immunize an entire village. I was also under the tutelage of an Amazonian Shaman, learning how to deliver culturally appropriate care and introduce compatible allopathic medical practices. Nearing the end of my medical school experience, I hope to bring together all of these lessons for the betterment of children and their families.



Former ASSF Preschooler Efren Bernal is now in his 4th year at the UA Medical School. Efren and his mom were at Granada Primary from 1993-1994.

Rev. William O. Smith Memorial Scholarship

In 1989, the Rev. William O. Smith and many spirit colleagues began A Stepping Stone Foundation in the hopes of making our community a better place through quality education for those families with young children who needed it most. When he passed away in the fall of 2018, many supporters wished to name a special scholarship in his memory which would recognize one or two outstanding applicants who were visionary thinkers and had a passion for making our community better.