

Manulife Life Lessons Scholarship recipient Connor S. - video transcript

00:00:03 This tree appears to be flourishing. 00:00:05 It is capable of supporting the animals by providing shade, but what the animals cannot see are the tree's damaged roots. 00:00:12 As the days pass, the disease in the tree's roots dwindles away at its leaves. 00:00:17 The shade that the tree once provided diminishes and without protection, the animals begin to suffer from the intense heat. 00:00:23 As my dad began to lose his strength, my family started to burn in the sun.

00:00:27 The worse part about it was that his disease was in his roots, invisible to us until it was too late. 00:00:33 I was told about my dad's alcoholism during the fall of my grade 10 year. 00:00:39 Things would occasionally begin to improve, but he was never able to shake the disease. 00:00:44 I was always a hardworking student and despite my messy family life, I continued to get good grades. 00:00:51 My family's financial situation meant that I had to work as a lifeguard to pay for tuition. 00:00:56 I had large aspirations and hoped to pursue a career in business. 00:00:59 I wanted to become successful in the business world so I could make money and ensure that my kids wouldn't have to experience the same stress that I did. 00:01:09 I knew he wasn't healthy, but I didn't know that things could change so quickly. 00:01:17 Before I knew it, my dad was in critical condition, he couldn't breathe on his own, let alone communicate.

00:01:22 I'm not sure if he could even hear my final words, but I promised him that I would do my best to prevent other people from suffering the same way he did. 00:01:29 It was then that I decided I would switch from business to psychology. 00:01:33 A career in psychology will allow me to help people who suffer from mental illness. 00:01:37 I want people to learn how to cope with their daily battles so they don't have to suffer the same way my dad did. 00:01:43 My dad's passing left us with some insurance coverage, but it wasn't enough for us to keep the home that my sister and I grew up in.

00:01:53 Moving houses was another change that added stress to our already stressful lives. 00:01:58 Focusing on my first year at university became even more difficult. 00:02:01 If we had adequate insurance coverage, it wouldn't bring my dad back, but we would have been able to grieve my dad's passing in our family home, the place where all our happy memories were made. 00:02:12 When dealing with grief, financial constraints are the last thing you want to be worrying about. 00:02:17

Although I know now that I can't blame myself for my dad's death, I also know that I can't live with myself if I don't try to prevent other people from suffering in the same way. 00:02:32 I want to pursue a career in psychology so I can study ways to prevent addiction and the Manulife Life Lesson Scholarship will help me achieve my goal. 00:02:45

Thank you
Connor S