

To whom it may concern,

My name is M'kia Kolbe I am currently a LLB student and was BALaw student at UCT when I applied for this Bursary. I applied for this Bursary because I am one of three children to a single mother who makes slightly over the financial qualification for NSFAS. And although I worked two jobs whilst studying this was only enough to cover my living expenses and financially assist my mother. Every year up until I received my bursary was filled with angst, turmoil and debt, I had to consider dropping out of university because my family and I simply could not afford tuition. Luckily, just in time I was awarded this bursary, without it I would not have been able to finish my qualification.

This financial program has helped me in a myriad of ways. Naturally, this program enabled me to complete my qualification, removed the angst, turmoil, emotional and physiological toll that tuition costs had on both myself and my family. However, it had done so much more, it instilled a new sense of dignity in me; by this I mean that looking for financial assistance can often induce a lot of vulnerability and make known many struggles that would otherwise remain private. This program, both in its application process and its financial reward was life-giving and uplifting.

Additionally, the program offered me quarterly meetings to check in on me, not only on an academic note but in a holistic fashion. In these meetings I felt seen, heard, and encouraged; my goals were recognized, and my personhood was acknowledged. I was not treated as a number but person who experiences life's throws and encouraged to get back up. This financial aid was the embodiment of someone saying I believe in you! You got this! And this was desperately what I needed, and I did not know it at that time. The financial aid was not merely the handing out of money but instilled in me a sense of pride and the belief that someone out there, not having met or known me, believed that I am worthy of my goals and desires and most importantly they believed I had what it takes to succeed and achieve. For this I cannot fully articulate in words what it meant and had done for me.

More than this, the program set me up with a 'Big Sister' who was wonderful and supportive in her own right and allowed me grow in academic, personal, and emotional areas in my life.

In terms of my future plans, I have been accepted and have registered to complete my final 2 years of my LLB. A journey that I am nervous and excited to undertake. In terms of my long-term goals, I am not exactly certain what that will look like for me. However, the reason I choose the degrees that I have was because I desperately wanted to understand how the world works and why it works the way it does, hence my Majoring in Political Science, History and Law. Concurrently, my own personal life experience and seeing some of the things that others around me experienced allowed me to realize just how broken our system is, and how the voices that should matter most, are often muted. I have experienced the legal and justice system fail me and many around me, I have experienced looking too leaders for guidance only to make empty promises. Therefore, for me, my one true goal is to be a voice for the voiceless, to make substantive change to the social and legal field, to ensure that no voice ever be silenced, and

that no other girl ever experience what I did. My goal is that no matter what work I do, that I assist in the process of justice being served, and that no persons are left behind, forgotten, or ignored. This is how I intend to use my BA. I do not wish to change the world, but perhaps make the world around me, better for everyone's benefit.

Finally, I cannot thank my donors and 18twenty8 enough for this opportunity, for believing in me, supporting me, and taking a chance on me. This program did not merely provide me with financial assistance, but at the risk of sounding dramatic, saved my life and future; literally and genuinely. One million thank you's would not be enough. I can only hope to pay forward and to be what you have been to me to someone else.

Kindest regards,
M'kia Kolbe