

To Whom It May Concern:

Re: Thank You-2019 Women of the World Displaced Women's Scholarship

My name is Thando Lillian Naluyima. I am a nursing student at Salt Lake Community College. Women of the World Displaced Women's scholarship has allowed me to pay for tuition to further my education and to get closer to achieving my goals of becoming a registered nurse. After completing my nursing training at Salt Lake Community College, I will transfer to the University of Utah. I plan to start the nursing program at Salt Lake Community College in the spring. In the meantime, I will be working as a CNA. The Scholarship increased my self-reliance and helped me attain leadership skills as I took a public speaking class as well as helping me to pay for my education. It allowed me to spend more time working to help nonprofits based in Utah that do work in Uganda.

As you may know the cost of tuition for international students regardless of nationality is about 2.5 times higher than what American students pay. I come from a middle-class family in Uganda and my family is not able to pay my tuition. I work very hard to apply for scholarships and work to help pay for school. I want to become a nurse trained in the United States because one day I would like to eventually become a Nurse Practitioner. In Uganda there is one doctor for every 25,000 people. These facts inspire me to be part of the medical field so that I can use my expertise in Uganda and the USA therefore there's a huge need for trained medical professionals. Additionally, there are few hospitals that specialize in care for women and children. I would like to become trained in the United States of America and work in both places.

The scholarship has allowed me to have financial freedom and focus my energy on excelling in my classes. As a Ugandan in Utah, life is not easy, I have to navigate spaces in a skin tone that does not afford me many opportunities or room to make mistakes. By being able to continue to pursue my education at Salt Lake Community College due in part to this scholarship I am able to have access to opportunities to work and education that I would not otherwise have. I currently work as a Womxn Ambassador at the Gender and Sexuality Student Resource Center at Salt Lake Community College. We help to ensure that womxn, minorities, and the LGBTQIA+ community have resources and know that they have advocates at the College. I work doing research and writing resource manuals for the college. The scholarship allowed me the opportunity to continue to work for the college and make a difference in the lives of some of the most vulnerable members of the student body.

The scholarship provided by Women of the World gives displaced women the opportunity to focus their energy on helping others and their studies. In addition to being able to study and work, this scholarship allowed me the freedom to continue to work with three different non-profits doing work in Uganda. These include: Interethnic Health Alliance (IHA), Pink Triangle Uganda, and Ubuntu Healing Arts. Thanks to this scholarship, I had some free time to help IHA establish family planning camps in eight different rural villages in Uganda. Over 500 men and women participated in family planning educational sessions and received treatment. Just recently IHA sent money to over 50 families in Uganda as the government has failed to provide proper funding and food allocation to rural areas. Many families in Uganda are bad off and only have access to one meal a day. As a board member of IHA I have played a crucial role in ensuring that food is transported and distributed safely following the COVID guidelines to our communities. Please feel free to check out our website and the projects I have been involved in: <https://interethnichealthalliance.org/>

In addition to working with IHA, I just recently founded and received accreditation for 501(3)(c) status for Pink Triangle Uganda, a non-profit that specializes in providing opportunities to LGBTQIA+ people in Uganda. We work with fellow non-profit organizations to provide: public policy solutions, education opportunities, resources, entrepreneurship opportunities, and celebrate local artists. Pink Triangle Uganda plans to employ members of the LGBTQIA+ community in the very near future. We sent money to help Queer individuals during the COVID pandemic as the conditions in Uganda are not good and there is a scarcity of

food as the shilling has drastically inflated. Last summer we provided a four-day all human rights camp to 45 members of the LGBTQIA+ community and provided top trained professionals in: human rights law, reproductive health, mental health counseling, cyber bullying, and the history of the LGBTQIA+ movement in Uganda. The workshop brought people together from all over the country and provided a new sense of solidarity and allowed people to exist in a “safe space” for a few days. We are working specifically to help people in the Trans community as they are some of the most persecuted and marginalized people in the world. From job opportunities to daily persecution for being themselves, they bear a burden of being a cultural “punching bag.” They deserve to be treated with love and kindness and complete equity. For far too many members of the LGBTQIA+ community in Uganda they are separated from others like them and live in rural areas where they are misunderstood or face harsh discrimination. Thanks to the scholarship by Women of the World, I was able to build partnerships and work with my board members to establish Pink Triangle Uganda. It has been a long way coming but we just recently released our website (changes are still being made) please check it out: <http://www.pinktriangleuganda.org/>

A quote that sums up my personal inspiration and mantra I tell myself daily is a quote by Maya Angelou, “Hate, it has caused a lot of problems in this world, but it has not solved one yet.” Having experienced my share of hate and burdened with weight as a queer African woman to dispel stereotypes about black women and excel in a STEM field is no easy task. I am tired of hate, suffering, ignorance, and living in a society that is not mindful and conscious of all of its members. I strongly believe that until we help the most vulnerable members of society, we will not be able to truly realize love and spread equity. As a person of African descent and a woman I face hardships that many other members of society may or may not understand. I have been marginalized and often erased from existing in certain spaces however, I do not want others to suffer as I have.

I plan to use my education and background in non-profit work to help women, children, people with disabilities, and the LGBTQIA+ community in Uganda. I believe my skill set will allow me to be a leader for change in the future. I have been inspired by the founder of Women of the World. Samira is an amazing example of what I hope to be one day. It is so nice to have a scholarship where women are supporting fellow women. I truly believe that the future is a place where this is the norm and not the exception. We need more opportunities like this. I cannot thank you enough for your support of Women of the World. They are doing amazing things and breaking down so many barriers. We need more women and non-gender identifying people in leadership positions if the world is going to become a better place. Women of the World is leading the world towards this realization one person at a time.

Thanks so much for your support,



Thando Lillian Naluyima

