

Testimonials

Excerpts from some of the letters written by WIRHE students

Letter No 1:

It is great pleasure to be given this opportunity again to thank your kindness of stepping to my rescue by offering me a chance to pursue with my studies. I would like to thank the whole committee of Wits Initiative For Rural Health Education (WIRHE) for making a difference in my studies and life as a whole. Looking at my background to achieve what I want and reach the place that I am now, WIRHE did a massive job.

I'm from Acornhoek under Mpumalanga. I did my matric at Mzila High School at Agincourt. I'm living with my mom and three brothers and one sister. Unfortunately my father passed away when I was doing my matric in 2005. My mother is a self employed and doing some part time jobs. My interests in social and academic is to act like an example to other disadvantaged kids at my place and to have knowledge on helping others to reach the highest level of functioning when their sick or disable, that is why I'm chose to study Physiotherapy at the University of the Witwatersrand.

At present I am doing my second year of Physiotherapy with Anatomy and Physiology. It is kind of a challenging year than the past one but interesting on the other hand because now I'm more into practical. Wits also help to make the courses interesting by making everything to be real than theory. My plans are to find my self in the work place in two years to come.

One of my intentions that I want to accomplish here at Wits, is that when is time to move out I should be having my degree, well socially and mentally developed with also great skills. To accomplish them I have to love what I'm doing, persistence even when it is hard, have a good relationship with fellow students and lectures and ask for help when needed.

I would like to show my gratitude once more. Hope God will multiply and bless your kindness to help others. One of my prayers is to find my self to remember what you're doing now when I completed my studies, so that I can be able to look back and help others. To let you know that is not I alone who thank the work your doing but my mom and family like to pass their thanks. Thanks once more again for stepping into my life for me to be somebody in the years to come. God bless.

Letter No 2:

It is with great pleasure to be given an opportunity to express my gratitude to Dr Marion Bergman who is responsible for my academic financial issues including resident and food, you really made a much impact in my life. I'm really thankful for your generosity; I'm now able to study without stress because you cover all my financial problems I would have encountered as a student. The only thing I had to worry about before was toiletry which now is not the case as you started giving us allowance.

My home town now is BLOEMHOF at North West Bophirima district/region where the organisation actually got hold of me, I was actually nurtured at TAUNG under the same district. I attended high school at 3 different schools Grd 8-9 at Letlhogile middle school at Taung, Grd 10 at Progress comprehensive high school at Pimville(Soweto) and my Grd 11 & 12 at Gaopalelwe senior secondary school at Bloemhof. I only have single parent my mother who is not working but self-employed, is not in a serious business just repairing other people's clothes. My father I only know him I have nothing much to say about him. I have 2 older sisters and 1 younger sister, the first one a sick pensioner with 2 children, the second a domestic worker with 2 children, the younger one unemployed with 1 child. I like going to church and playing soccer. I choose Wits because it was recommended by my sponsors.

I'm currently doing Occupational therapy of which at first I did not know much about but now I'm starting to enjoy it there is no specific thing I'm enjoying about it, I guess I will enjoy it as time goes on. I have joined Bidvest Wits supporters and Wits Volunteering Program. Yes I do plan to pursue my internship.

My intention is to do public health of which occupational therapy is one of the requirements and Wits offers a masters in public health.

I would like to say thank you once more not only for your financial support but also for being example to me that I can also do help others in the future. Not only this wish but I pray as well that God bless you and increase your potential.

Letter No 3:

It is an honour to be talking to you once again about my experience in my chosen career thus far. It is relevant to indicate that as far as the support provided by you is concerned, I'm satisfied, enthusiastic and optimistic about what future holds for South Africa (SA) and the world.

With that said I want to reflect on health care in SA and perhaps justify my optimism I have already spoken. With experience I gained from primary health care centres in our district in the North West province, it is impossible for me to not talk about health care challenges this country faces. HIV/AIDS and communicable diseases like TB are the point in case because not only that majority of people (almost all age groups) are living with these conditions but also do not know what they are and how to manage them. For example, I have been able to talk to some of the ARV patients and was shocked to find that some of them did not know whether they were taking the medication to prevent or to treat HIV/AIDS. Most of them saw the medication as things that give them illness and sickness and they were only complying because they were compelled to. It is obvious that these patients knew nothing about pharmaceutical care, drug toxicities, side effects and complications that may arise as a result of their conditions.

With these conditions, the need to understand the risks, proper nutrition and sounding social life form the fundamental basis to their management. The alarming rate at which infections occur in SA has an impact on the inability of our health care systems to cope with the present challenges. This result in high and increasing number of patients on daily basis while the number of health care personnel remain constant for about a decade or so. This is of the most concern given that obstacles like drug resistance, chronic conditions in our elderly and absence of cure to HIV/AIDS necessitates continuous monitoring of patients.

Given the peak of the mountain we need to climb above, I'm hopeful that with programs like Wits Initiative and Rural Health Education (WHIRE), there is a light at the end of a tunnel. One needs not to mention different health care qualifications that are desperately in demand to overcome the burden on our shoulders as we speak. Health care professionals which are responsive to the needs of the patients are the key in the process.

Of course, the funders and administration of WHIRE and equivalent programs play an important role in the life of each an every patient everywhere in SA in one way or another.

Letter No 4

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the scholarship that you have given. It is a great privilege and honour to be part of it. I think I am speaking for all members of my family when I say that we are immensely and truly grateful for this wonderful opportunity. A lot of ease has been brought to our lives and a huge burden has been lifted off our shoulders and for that I can never be grateful enough.

I come from a family of five consisting of my parents, brother, sister and myself. My brother is in tertiary, my sister in school and both my parents work. Although my parents have always been able to provide for us I knew it would be difficult for them to finance my brother and I as tuition fees are quite high. I then made a decision that I would work hard in order to apply for a bursary and the rest as they say is history.

Growing up I was quite a shy person but I seem to have worked on that because I am a more confident person. I did quite a lot of sport in high school including netball, soft ball, tennis, and ladies soccer and even tried my hand at chess although the latter did not exactly work out. I do not have a lot of friends and that is not because I am anti-social but rather because I choose to associate myself with people who have a positive influence in my life and inspire me. I believe that it is the only way I am truly succeed in life if I socialize with people who want to succeed as much as I do and who also have similar goals.

Currently I am studying the MBBCH degree. I still have a couple of years to go but I will hopefully one day qualify as a general practitioner. It would really make me happy if I could continue to study because I would like to specialize in the field of cardiology, which I have always had great interest in. I am not part of any particular organization at the moment but I used to take peer counseling classes. These classes will were very informative and have come in handy and will probably be useful once I am in practice. When I graduate I will probably pursue my internship/community service at Thusong hospital where I often do my vacation work.

The next four years of my life will be very busy as I will be completing my degree, and this is of course all thanks to you. I've learned that in order to be successful in life you need to adapt certain characteristics such as discipline, dedication and most importantly to be a hard worker and put in the extra effort because that is what separates the ordinary from the extraordinary individuals. If put in that extra effort I will achieve all my goals, and will gain that title of cardiologist. Someone once told me that the only job where you start at the top is when you are digging a hole, well I started at the bottom and you have lifted me up so that I feel like the top is not out of reach.

I probably can never stress this enough but I truly am grateful and thankful for this wonderful opportunity. I feel blessed to be a part of this and will eternally be grateful. My cup of joy overflows because I know that there are people out the who care and would like to see me succeed. Thank you once again and God bless all of you.

Letter No 5:

It is with sincere gratitude that I hereby acknowledge and appreciate your financial assistance. This noble gesture has indeed brought relief as far as financial constraints are concerned. Not only has it given me an opportunity to further my studies, but it has also introduced me to one of the most challenging and influential places in South Africa. This has given me a new perspective of things, and has helped me to mature in a whole lot of areas, including giving me an insight into the kind of person I really am. It is undoubtedly an open secret that without your generosity, all this would have been limited, or rather impossible.

I was born and raised in an isolated, almost non-existent part of a very huge village called Signal Hill in Mafikeng. Currently, I live with my aunt and cousin and my two sisters stay together somewhere else. The elder one works at Mmabatho Tusk Hotel, whilst the younger one is still at school. And the rest about my family, as someone would say, is history, or rather not important. Personally I believe four things are important to beat the odds-discipline, humility, loyalty and respect. If all human beings could possess these qualities, the world would be a much better place to live in.

As for my ambitions, visions and passions, my heart beat lies with young people. I consider youth development and empowerment an essential part of building a healthy, motivated, innovative and independent society. I believe it is crucial in helping young people to identify their potential and endless life possibilities, in order to enrich their minds and lives. Although for some this could sound like a futile exercise, an intelligent man once said "Not every closed door is a locked door" (Unknown). Having said that, it is only fair that I disclose the fact that this scholarship is doing an exceptionally applaudable job in this area. Since I am not immune to the responsibility, I am hoping to rightfully give back to the community in any way possible, an impartation of skills, knowledge etc, to continue the legacy.

Currently I am doing third year (MBBCH). Even though the amount of work has increased tremendously, it is the structure of the syllabus I find intriguing. Nevertheless, nothing gives more pleasure than studying here and now. Otherwise it would be incredibly naïve of me to ignore the fact that everything has its own challenges, even life itself is a challenge. Simply put, third year for me means more work, more responsibility and ultimately more faith in God to carry me through.

The major reason I joined this career is because I experienced, first hand, the shortfall of the health system (Details are of no relevance). As a result, I have come to realise how limited and restricted medical practitioners are. Either being due to, poor management, bad policies and worse still-lack of proper work ethics. Based on the above, specialization would be a non-profitable idea. That is, it would fail to provide me with the necessary influence to revolutionise the health system. At the moment, I am still exploring different dimensions of the system, and how I could make a large scale

difference to it. I may not be sure now what route to follow, but it is definite that it has to be a vehicle to transformation of the system, to say the least.

Once more, your generosity is highly appreciated. Hence I thank you once again.