

# Peerless Peer Compassion In South Sudan

Teens mostly worry about themselves: Am I beautiful? Likable? Who are my friends? Will I pass my exams? What kind of life will I have after finishing school?



*Gloria during her freshman year in high school.*

Gloria Ajwoka is not a typical teen. When a fellow student's father died (we'll call her K), Gloria knew that K was losing not only a parent but the one who paid her school fees. K's grief and anxiety caused her grades to slip, and she did not score well enough to merit a high school scholarship. Gloria knew that K would be at high risk for an immediate forced marriage if she could not pay for high school.

Gloria stepped up. As a freshman in high school on a Mercy Beyond Borders scholarship, she took the initiative to rally dozens of fellow Mercy Beyond Borders high school Scholars. She convinced each of them to voluntarily pledge a portion of their own Mercy Beyond Borders pocket cash\* to pay for K's annual tuition and school fees, essentially providing K with a scholarship funded entirely by her peers.

How awesome is that?

Gloria led this effort every year for four years. K will graduate this month from

St Bakhita Girls Secondary School. Gloria, one year ahead of K, is now pursuing a business degree at Mt. Kenya University. We salute Gloria for her creative, compassionate solution to K's dilemma, and for inspiring her peers from many ethnic backgrounds to pitch in together. That's Mercy (going) Beyond Borders at its best!

Gloria told Mercy Beyond Borders staff recently, "Mercy Beyond Borders has made me somebody in my community. My parents have lived in a refugee camp since 2013. They never had any formal schooling. I yearn for more. I yearn for university!" Thanks to YOU, she's living her dream.

Note: The pocket cash provided by Mercy Beyond Borders to each Scholar is a mere \$100 for the entire year. Out of that, Scholars must care for all personal needs such as hygiene supplies, clothing, sandals, wifi access, and travel to/from home during school vacation months.

This article was first published in the MBB eNews in December 2023. All photographs are by Sr. Marilyn Lacey. For further information on the work of Mercy Beyond Borders, please visit their website [www.mercybeyondborders.org](http://www.mercybeyondborders.org)

