

Achai Garang
Age: 43
Region: Bahr Al Ghazal

When I was fourteen, I was sick, so I left Gogrial to get medicine in Khartoum. I was waiting for the train in Gogrial and I had guns. My uncle told me the guns were from the SPLA fighting in the war. I stayed in Khartoum for ten years and then went to Egypt to get medicine and see doctors. I had a stomach operation in Egypt.

In Egypt, I was a church volunteer. I cleaned and was part of the women's group at the Catholic Church. We made shirts and blankets there were sold and donated the money to the church. I didn't go back to Sudan because I heard a lot about the war and I knew people who died in the war. I heard Americans were helping the Sudanese. My husband and I went to the U.N and filled out forms to be refugees. Six months after we filled out the forms, we passed an interview to come to the U.S.

My husband Dut Lual Akot and I came to the U.S. August 28th, 2000. We wanted to learn English and get jobs. We want to help our people. My husband is back in Sudan.

I received my citizenship June 13, 2007. I am excited to vote in the presidential election.

When I got back to Sudan, my people will be surprised because I can read, write, and speak English. I couldn't do that before. I couldn't write my name.

I thank America for helping me. When I came here I was sick and I was able to get social security and medical care. I had an operation July 26th and they paid for my operation.

I go to Rio Salado College full time four days a week. I am studying English and learning to use the computer. I work twenty hours a week, from 10:00 p.m. until 2:00 a.m. as a security guard at West Island Shopping Center. If I see something, I report it to the police.

The Lost Boys Center helped me. When I don't have gas, I get a gas card. I have volunteered at the Center. I have met a lot of people and I love them like my family.