

Daniel Akech

Age: 24

Region: Upper Nile

When I was a little boy I was playing at my friend's house. The war came and I saw people being shot in my village. I saw people running so I followed people and ran away. I did not go back home.

I traveled with strangers and walked in the forest. The people suffered. There was no food or water. We drank urine. We just ate tree leaves. Once I saw a lion in the forest, about thirty feet from me, so I ran away.

We went to Ethiopia to Panyido refugee camp. The UN brought us beans, wheat flour, maize, and cooking oil. At first, we went to the Gilo River to bathe and to get drinking and cooking water. They eventually put a water tank in the camp for us to get water.

I stayed in Panyido until 1991 and then came back to Sudan and stayed in Pochala for six months. I went to Kakuma in 1992. I didn't like anything about Kakuma except the school. I liked Panyido better because I liked the school better. I lived in a house in both camps. I made money in Kakuma by reselling blankets and wheat flour.

I didn't know what the U.S. would be like. I knew the U.S. was a good place and didn't have any war. I came to save my life and start schooling. Everyone is busy here. I have to work to pay rent and pay for school and for my car insurance. In Africa, the UN took care of me and brought my food, let me go to school for free, and gave me clothing, shoes, and a place to live.

Right now, I'm not going to school because I have to work to pay bills. I work at Daystar warehouse doing stocking. I also work at IBC, International Bait Company, in the warehouse loading the trucks. I work nineteen hours a day, from 11pm to 7am and from 7am to 6:30pm. I don't work on Friday nights or Saturdays. I just sleep two hours every day.

In January '06 I will start GED classes and after I get my GED I will go to Glendale Community College. When I go to school, the Lost Boys Center can help me pay for the classes. I would like to work as a computer technician.