

David Kuk

Age: 24

Region: Upper Nile

When I was a young boy, I lived in a house with my brothers and sisters. We looked after goats, sheep, and cows. When I was 12 years old, the Arabs came into our village. They took our cattle and burned the village. Everyone ran away. I traveled barefoot for three months with other guys until we reached Ethiopia.

I stayed at the Pinyado camp in Ethiopia. I stayed there for four years. In 1991, I left and went to the Sudan border. From there I went to the Kakuma camp in Kenya. I spent eight years there. In Kakuma, I learned English and Swahili. There was never enough food to eat in the camps.

When I first came to America, I was scared of the cars. I thought, "How can I drive? I don't know the rules!" On June 19, 2001, I arrived in Pennsylvania. I spent three months at my first job putting handles on snow shovels in a factory. I was concerned that the winter would be too cold in Pennsylvania, so I moved to Arizona in the fall.

The hardest thing about living in the United States is that if you don't have a job, life is difficult. If you do, you're okay. I like having a job to work and having a nice home.

Many things surprise me about American culture. In America, you don't have to buy a wife. In Sudan, you would never live with a woman before marriage. In Africa, when we eat meals we don't talk. In America, we gather together and talk while we eat.

I have been studying English and Mat at Phoenix College, part-time, for two years. I would like to be involved in agriculture and farming with cattle in the United States. I also would like to be in the army.