

Peter Ngor

Age: 24

Region: Southern Sudan

I was seven years old when I left home. I was living with my parents, but when we were attacked, I started running. I walked to the border of Ethiopia and Sudan, and then to Kenya, where I lived for eight years. Travel was difficult because I didn't know where I was going. I thought Sudan was the only place, but my elders knew better and I followed their lead. I was scared because I didn't know if my family was safe. While in Kakuma, I received a letter that my parents and sisters were in Nairobi, Kenya. My father passed on in 1993, but my mother and sisters are still in Nairobi.

The best things about the Kakuma refugee camp was getting an education. It was also difficult because there wasn't enough water or food.

I came to the United States on December 4, 2000. I arrived here with my cousin. There were six in our group that came to Phoenix. Catholic Social Services met us at the airport and showed us our new apartment. I was a bit nervous because I didn't want to burn anything with the electricity. The United States is a bit different than I thought it would be. I thought everybody was Christian and there was no crime. Sometimes it surprises me the way Americans dress, especially women. In Sudan, the women must cover their skin, but here they do not.

I like the United States because I have independence and I can do what I want. The opportunities are real. I've also learned that sometimes making a decision on what to do is harder than starting what you want to do.

I am going to Gateway Community College and I want to be a physician's assistant.