

Joseph Buom

Age: 25

Region: Upper Nile

When I was 11 years old, the Northern Arabs bombed our village killing many people. The UNHCR sent lost minors to Ethiopia to get help and an education. I was there for 3 years. War broke out and we had to run back to Sudan. I lived on the border with over 1,000 young boys. We were attacked frequently by the Northern militia. In 1992, The UN helped with food and transportation and transferred us to the Kakuma refugee camp. Life was very hard in the camp.

There was much disease in the camp. We had to walk 10 miles to the nearest hospital. I became very sick and was near death before receiving a blood transfusion.

Opportunity, independence, the chance to get an education, and learn about leadership is what I like best about America. Most important is when you respect yourself, you will respect others, they will respect you and then there will be love and unity in the community.

The Lost Boys Center helps communicate with American friends. The Center helps us with scholarship money, teaches us computer skills, helps with job placement, and other problems. I'm working as a security guard. I study economics at Phoenix College. We need to develop business in Sudan so it can evolve.

After I came to the U.S. in 2004, I learned my parents were alive in Sudan. I called an elder in our village, known to everyone, who contacted my uncle in Khartoum. My brother, Buoth called me. I'd like to help my brother's wife and children leave Sudan and move here or Australia.