

James Garang

Age: 29

Region: Upper Nile

I was thirteen when I left home. The government was having a problem between the SPLA and the Arabs. The SPLA told us to go to Ethiopia because of the fighting and my mom told me to go. My brother, Peter, and I left and the rest of my family stayed in Bor.

We walked with a lot of other boys and we didn't have food. The most difficult thing about traveling was the hunger, not having water, and walking around even though you are tired. You don't have good sleep, you are afraid that the lions will come and eat you when you sleep. It is the bush and you don't have anything to kill the lions.

I stayed in Panyido. I went to school. I was a good place. We stayed in groups and played soccer. Every six months, we mixed the camp to make friends and to make everyone know each other.

In 1992, we went to Pochala, then Kapoeta, Narus, Lockichokio, and then Kakuma. In Kakuma, we were in bad conditions and many people died of disease. We didn't have doctors or medicine.

I came to the U.S. December 21, 2000. When I was flying in the air, I felt fine. But when the plane was landing, I felt scared. It felt good to get off the plane.

In America, you work. When you get sick, you have good hospitals and you get treated well. You can drink good water, eat good food, and drive your car to work. Living here is hard if you don't have parents. It's hard to live by yourself in your room. When you live with your neighbors, you don't go to their house and get to know them. In Sudan, you live with your family and you know everyone around you.

I went to Africa from March until May 28, 2008. I saw my mother and sister for the first time in twenty years. It was wonderful. They were very happy. They made celebrations and the whole family came to see me.

I need to finish my education. I would like to study international relationships. I would like to help my people and work with the American Embassy. Right now, I work with Trident Security at Phoenix Corporate Center and BSS at the Bryman School.