



Seeds of South Sudan news UPDATE

Seeds of South Sudan
P.O. Box 232
Arvada, CO 80001

Soss Home Base in Kenya IS NOW UNDER CONTRACT!

Seeds of South Sudan took a major step in March by signing a contract with the seller for the purchase of Home Base in Nakuru, Kenya. The contract and down payment represent significant progress in securing a safe and secure home for the students in our program. It also will provide a stable home during the school breaks for our students who have had very little stability in their lives.

As part of the overseas purchase, Seeds of South Sudan applied for and was granted status as a Foreign Not For Profit Operating in Kenya. We received this approval in March. The SoSS board expects completion of the Home Base purchase before the end of April. This would not have been possible without the very generous donations and support of our sponsors and many donors. The Board of SoSS thanks each and every one of you for making this possible. *Thank you all!*

THE GUARDIANS & angels OF SOUTH SUDAN

BY LINDA AND ALAN FARB

*"This is Maghai."
"I'm Alan. Nice to meet you."
"This is Aguil."
"Hello. I'm Linda. I'm happy to see you, today."*

And so it went: Yar, Aleer, Angeth... More than two dozen beautiful, polite, smiling, attentive teens and pre-teens from Roots Academy. All in a row. Deng Kuany Atem brought us all together. Deng, at 25, is SoSS's managing director, and a former South Sudanese refugee camp dweller. An incredibly gracious and caring host, he twice rode the cramped, nine-passenger mini-bus, three hours each way between the Kenyan cities of Nakuru and Nairobi and back to serve as our Swahili interpreter, ride arranger, guide and friend. He knows every student. The students, all South Sudanese refugees from the unforgiving Kakuma Refugee Camp of over 184,000 women, men and children in northwest Kenya, assembled quietly around a pair of benches, waiting for us to speak.

Linda greeted them warmly, giving some highlights of her life. She organized a "Ray of Sun Girls" group of sisters and friends to sponsor Angeth. She became friends with Colorado-based Arok Garang, a onetime Sudanese "Lost Boy" and Pastor Heidi McGinness,



Linda Farb and Angeth Atem

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NUTURE AND EDUCATE REFUGEE CHILDREN TO BECOME LEADERS OF SOUTH SUDAN

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Proverbs 19:17 - "Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will repay him for his deed."

SOSS UNIVERSITY SCHOLARS SHARE MEMORABLE DINNER WITH SPONSORS

BY ALAN AND
LINDA FARB

After a three-hour matatu ride from Nakuru back to Nairobi with Deng Kuany, Alan and Linda Farb met five of the six SoSS university students. Like the kids back in Nakuru, these young men are wise beyond their years. At our shared meal, they were alternately serious, jovial, witty and introspective. Each plans to return to South Sudan, bringing their education and skills to build their fledgling nation. A couple might become leaders, maybe a president.

But amid the laughter, these young men — war orphans all— bear their history of growing up as youth in the refugee camp. With no books, no paper or pens, they did their lessons in the dirt, making words or numbers with their fingers. If it rained, their lessons washed away. Sometimes, hope washed away as well.

“It was embarrassing,” said one. “Your test answers could be gone.” Even more embarrassing, he added, were the threadbare clothes they wore “where your bare skin showed through.” And the hot, barren earth they walked on in the camp burned their feet because they had no shoes. One university student studying economics commented: “You never knew whether someone had teeth — because no one ever smiled.”

There is reason to smile these days for these young university students. They were the “lucky” ones: found, interviewed, taken from the camp by people like Arok and Deng. Even though they live three in a two-bunkbed room as one sleeps on the floor, they have their studies, their plans and their dreams. And their clothes are not ragged; they have shoes. And they have dignity.

Like their younger sisters and brothers back in Nakuru, they have a future.

These kids — adolescent and university-age — indeed, are the seeds that will sprout, take root and grow strong to be the generation otherwise lost from their war-stricken country of South Sudan. They will be the doctors, educators, airline pilots, political and business leaders, clergy and mover-shakers.

They are the Seeds of South Sudan.



Deng Kuany, Linda and Alan Farb.

Peter 4:10 — “As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace.”



CELEBRATING 10 Years Educating South Sudanese Youth

Top left: John Gonder was emcee and Arok Garang and Roger Vadeen presented the program at the Montview luncheon. Top right: Rev. Nathan Doerr, senior pastor at St. Philip Lutheran, speaks live via Skype with Garang Maniyok Giet in Kenya. Middle right: Adam Waite, minister of music at Montview, provided dinner music. Bottom: Gilbert McKenzie greeted some of the Montview guests.



GUARDIANS AND ANGELS continued from page 1

who helped free thousands of slaves in Sudan. Linda also now chairs the Coalition Against Global Genocide.

From my smartphone, I showed video of Native Americans in full traditional regalia performing at the Five Points Jazz Festival in Denver. The students passed the phone along, quickly taking more than 30 selfies and videos of themselves. Kids learn fast.

Meanwhile, others gathered in groups around Linda and me. We had a fun, open discussion with students. We laughed and had a delightful time. The less shy students asked poignant questions about the U.S. and life as we know it.

Our fortunate, privileged lives, are a dream, a hope they keep for themselves, for their futures and for what they hope will one day be South Sudan's future: one with peace, freedom, human dignity and voices that can speak up without fear.

We again saw the Roots Academy students when we dined at an impressive homemade feast. It was prepared in our honor by Anon, the home's cook, who later jump-danced with me at meal's end. We met Arok's wife, Ayak Ayuel, and their young children. We exchanged personal gifts, bid them well and good night. Will we ever see them again? The kids say if it's God's will. I see them in my thoughts.

I am REALLY THANKFUL, FOR I KNOW THAT OPPORTUNITY IS a BIRD THAT NEVER PERCHES.

Mading Deng Ghaj, Roots academy student

They are kids, yes: 11, 12, 14 years old. And they are already wise in their youth because they have had to be. Refugee-camp kids; their given aptitude, inquisitive or studious nature, elan, even the luck of the draw — call it what you will — they were found, selected — saved — among the desperate thousands. Given literally the opportunity of a lifetime. Arok Garang and Deng Kuany Atem, have aided these children to leave the misery, uncertainty and poverty of the camp to live among friends (who are like family) who offer them hope, love, care, education and most of all — opportunity.



VOLUNTEERS make IT HAPPEN!

DO YOU HAVE SOME TIME AND ENERGY TO GIVE?

We are most in need of event planning help this summer. We are so grateful to Mark Lefkowics and Wendy Satsky, along with Linda and Alan Farb, for naming Seeds of South Sudan as the beneficiary of their Valentine Card and auction event this year. If you have an idea for an event or would like to be part of the team that plans celebrations and fundraisers please reach out to Sue Counterterman, sue.counterterman@gmail.com, Denise Taylor, denise@seedsofsouthsudan.org, or Peggy Gonder, peggy@gonderpr.com



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SoSS is Now Educating 100 STUDENTS!

When Arok founded Seeds of South Sudan in 2008, his goal was to educate 100 students. In the 2019 school year we have now graduated from high school or are currently educating 100 students!

These include 21 students who have graduated from high school and 74 who are currently attending elementary or secondary boarding schools in Kenya. Four SoSS students emigrated to Australia where they had family. One student returned to South Sudan without graduating as he was seriously ill.

Our goal has expanded to educate or train all our high school graduates to earn a certificate or degree so they can contribute when they return to a peaceful South Sudan. Five of our high school graduates are attending the University of Nairobi and Africa International University.

One student, John Matiop Mayen, received a full scholarship to study medicine in Canada. He was supported by SoSS through high school graduation and two years of pre-med in Nairobi.

Your donations and sponsorships help us realize the dream of each student receiving a post-secondary education. Thank you!



April 16 at Arvada Steubens for SoSS Student

Steubens Restaurant, 7355 Ralston Road (at Wadsworth), is hosting a fund-raiser to benefit David Mayen Kuir, an SoSS student who is studying economics and statistics at the University of Nairobi. Eat breakfast, lunch or dinner on SoSS Day, Tuesday, April 16, and SoSS receives a percentage of the sales from 8 am to 10 p.m. For more information, contact Tom Melander at 303-818-0602.