

In my home country of Liberia when I was about two years old, a terrible civil war broke out. My dad disappeared and my mom was forced to run with me and my brother Sunny. I don't have very many memories about all of this, but I do remember small groups of people running anywhere to find safety. There was gunfire all around us. We lived in a refugee camp for about one year and then we came to Fargo. We now live in a country that gives its people freedom. This is a sweet place to call home. No one has to run for their lives.

Freedom is the word that comes to my mind when I think of the phrase home of the brave. There are people in history that fought for freedom, not just for themselves but for the whole nation. Today there are soldiers defending freedom around the world. Families have sacrificed a son or daughter so that they don't have to be scared or run for safety. I am thankful to all these brave soldiers so that I can live in a free country.

As I am growing up I have face a lot of struggles and difficulties.

Sometimes I tell myself I can't do this, or I won't succeed because I'm not good enough. I'm standing in front you right now because I never believed those words. I found courage through my struggles and obstacles and said to myself, "Don't you ever give up!"

My family is the most important thing in my life. If I were to lose them it would be like losing everything. Probably the bravest woman I have ever met in my life is my mom. She has taught me how to have strength, faith, and courage to always believe in myself. Thank you mom! (pause and look at your mom)

Each person in our family is a precious gift from God that he has given us. Sometimes we take our families for granted until one of them dies. Then we know how important that person really was.

There are a lot of children in this world that are less fortunate than me. Some kids grow up and don't even know if they have a family to love and care for them or be there when they need them.

So always be grateful for the wonderful people in your life, that raise you, teach you about freedom and who fight for our country. Because of brave and courageous people like the soldiers in this room and my mom, children like me get a chance to be free.

I am very thankful that I am citizen of this country. I'd like to finish now with all of us singing God Bless America. Please stand as we sing this song together.