

Good evening everyone!

I was born in Liberia an African country on the west side of the continent. Liberia is on the coast of the Atlantic Ocean. The main language is English but it is spoken differently in Liberia. There are 4.73 million people in Liberia. The average income for a person is \$1.25 a day. I spend more than that on my breakfast muffin at school each day. Liberia is one of three poorest countries in the world.

I was born and lived in the capital city of Monrovia with my family. My mom is a doctor and my dad is an attorney. I have one little brother. My school in Monrovia was very big.

School in Liberia is very different than here. Teachers are allowed to hit student's palms with long skinny sticks when we don't have the right answer or talk out of turn. Students who were talkative like me got a lot of whippings. My hands stung and hurt a lot every day. I did well in school though.

We came to the US during the Ebola crisis in 2015. The Ebola crisis was very tragic. It started in March of 2014 and spread like a wild fire because doctors were treating people for malaria instead of Ebola. Many doctors and nurses died until they figured out it was Ebola. The Ebola crisis was very, very scary for me because my Mom is a doctor. I was afraid my mom was going to die. Ebola is very contagious even from a dead person who died from it. Watching the news was horrible because it showed all the families who lost someone they loved or people still fighting the virus.

I remember not being able to go outside, to school, or to the market. My parents were not able to go to work either. The whole country was paralyzed from this horrible virus. We were told to not touch each other. Imagine not being able to

touch someone you love because you are so scared you will get the disease and die. I spent a lot of time really worried about my health and family. My life was being stripped apart. This went on for many months until the virus was brought under control. Nearly 3,000 people died from this virus in my country.

In 2015 it was safe to travel again. My parents decided to come to the US. Fargo was going to be our new home. It was February and it was very cold and snowy. I thought the snow would all disappear overnight. That didn't happen.

I started school right away. My first US school was Madison Elementary School. I was very excited and scared to start the 5th grade in Mr. Wagner's classroom. I was expecting the school to be very advanced and full of technology. US school was very difficult for me because the English spoken here is different. I didn't understand the teachers very well. A lot of tests are given a computer. I never had a test on a computer before. Reading was also difficult for me. I had a hard time comprehending what I was reading. I fell behind in school right away and I was nervous I wouldn't be able to pass my classes.

My parents went back to Liberia for their jobs. They come to the US during the summer when I am not in school. I live with my auntie and cousins now.

I entered Ben Franklin Middle School in sixth grade. I was a very negative person mostly because I felt like a failure and people had trouble understanding my English. I caused a lot of girl drama.

One time in math class I thought it would be nice if I did an assignment for my friend who was sick. I turned it in with her name on it. I got sent to the office and I also got in big trouble at home. Every time I think about that day I feel embarrassed. Doing homework for my friend was cheating. I thought she would

like me more if I did her homework. I was just trying to fit in with the kids at school because I had so much trouble understanding how to do the school work. I felt hopeless about school and my future.

A good friend of mine told me about Legacy in the school cafeteria. I thought it might be a good way for me to get help with my school work. I really wanted to do better in school. I took the application home and I joined right away. Legacy has helped me in a lot of ways. I am more respectful. I am confident. I'm a leader. I am doing better in school. I have a 3.3 GPA. I really enjoy our service projects like the the food pantry. I have improved my reading a lot because of the summer reading program Legacy has given me the past three summers. I hope I speak American English better now too.

Traveling with my Legacy teammates on summer trips has given me a chance to fit in with other kids. I have learned so much about our country too. I have travel to Yellowstone, the Tetons, Mount Rushmore, Medora, and Minneapolis. I have conquered a high ropes course and gone white water rafting too. Uff, that was sooo scary. I learned a lot of things on the Yellowstone trip. We did a lot of hiking and I learned that a stack of rocks called a cairn means you are on the right path. Hiking up or down the mountains was so wonderful. I love nature!

After high school I think I want a career in the medical field. Being a surgeon would be fascinating. I love fashion too so this is a very hard choice for me to make.

Thank you for listening to my story and supporting all of us Legacy kids. I am so grateful that you came tonight and I hope you learned something about my journey and my country. I am so thankful to be in this community and country.