

## Ngathe's Story

Ngathe arrived to MN with his wife, their two young children and his elderly mother-in-law in fall. Ngathe and his family were refugees, who fled violence in their home to be resettled in the United States by Catholic Charities of Southern Minnesota. The family arrived in Rochester from a refugee camp in Kenya with only a few bags of necessities. They were greeted at the airport by two Catholic Charities case managers and by family members that had traveled from Austin MN to greet them. Ngathe said that after a long and difficult journey he was immediately encouraged and inspired by the words of his case managers, both of whom were former refugees themselves. Although at first he says he was intimidated and afraid, Catholic Charities staff and volunteers helped to orient him and make him feel safe in his new community.

Over the course of their six month service period with Catholic Charities, the agency was able to help Ngathe's family secure stable housing, furniture, clothing and household necessities. Ngathe and his wife participated in orientation workshops to help them learn American systems and customs, and in one-on-one job development sessions to help them find work. He and his wife both found good jobs, and Ngathe was able to enroll part-time as a student in community college, where he is working to earn a Certified Nursing Assistant license. His wife, Akello, is enrolled in English and computer classes and hopes to obtain her GED. Ngathe received his drivers permit, and is working with a Catholic Charities volunteer to get his license. To accomplish all of these great things over a period of only six months required tremendous dedication, courage, and hard-work from Ngathe and his family, but Ngathe says that he was inspired by the kindness of the community and by the example set by former refugees. He says that "what I have gone through is great, but what I can be here is greater". Ngathe and his wife now volunteer as mentors with Catholic Charities for a newly arrived refugee family because Ngathe believes that it is important for new refugees to feel supported and valued by their communities.