

Display problems? [Open this email in your web browser.](#)

Littleton Public Schools

Dr. Kelly R. Clenchy,
Superintendent

33 Shattuck St.
Littleton, MA 01460



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, Dec. 4, 2018

Contact: John Guilfoil
Phone: 617-993-0003
Email: john@jgpr.net

Littleton Students Attend Presentation by Former Sudanese Refugee



John Deng spoke to Littleton sixth grade students about his journey as a refugee fleeing conflict in South Sudan. (Courtesy Photo)

LITTLETON -- Sixth grade students had a long awaited chance to bring a book they recently read to life last week, when they attended a presentation by one of the Lost Boys of Sudan.

John Deng joined sixth graders in the Littleton High School auditorium Friday morning to recount his experience fleeing from his home village in South Sudan as a young boy. After leaving home, he and others lived as refugees in Ethiopia and Kenya before he was finally relocated to the Boston area as a teenager.

Deng shared his memories of spending much of his childhood simply trying to survive, moving from place to place amid violence and political strife in his native Sudan.

"People died of thirst, hunger and fatigue... I was determined to survive, and I did," Deng said. "So my message is to be hopeful and be resilient, and you can achieve anything."

His visit coincided with the students' recent completion of the book "A Long Walk to Water," about another Lost Boy's experience. Deng surprised the students when he revealed that he knows the man portrayed in the book, and lived with him for a time in a refugee camp.

The book chronicles the intersection of two stories, including that of an 11-year-old girl - Nya -- who makes multiple hours long treks to the watering hole nearest her village, and Salva, the lost boy who fled much as Deng did before resettling in the U.S.

Deng discussed being separated from his parents and siblings as a young boy, and recalled barely recognizing his own mother when he finally saw her again as a young man.

"I feel lucky to see my family three times every day, go to school, eat three times a day, have clean water, a roof over my head and that I'm not in a ton of danger," said sixth grade student Kiera Rowe.

Following his presentation, Deng took questions from students and discussed the challenges he's faced, the transition to living in America and the way his life has changed.

"John's presentation was really special, and I think the students will remember this for a long time," sixth grade teacher Lilly Ogden said. "I told them before we started reading the book that he would be coming, and they've been looking forward to this ever since."

According to the International Rescue Committee, the lost boys are a group of approximately 20,000 boys from the Nuer and Dinka tribes who were displaced by conflict in the late 1980s.

After resettling in the U.S., Deng attended Boston College. He now lives in Arlington with his wife and four children and works as a social worker in Boston.

###

A message from Littleton Public Schools

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Manage subscription](#)

5/2/2019

Littleton Students Attend Presentation by Former Sudanese Refugee

John Guilfoil Public Relations LLC

8 Prospect St.

Georgetown, MA 01833

617-993-0003