

Kuwa's Story

"Tourism matters because it gives me a job, it's better for business and it changed my life."



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Kuwa Harin
Steward/Dishwasher
Bahia Resort Hotel

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Life didn't start out easy for Kuwa Harin. At nine years old, he was kidnapped by a rebel militia during the second Sudanese Civil War and forced to fight as a child soldier for almost a decade.

Kuwa eventually escaped capture, but the hardships didn't end there. He lived in the Nuba Mountains for nearly six years before finding a refugee camp in Ethiopia. After six months in the camp, Kuwa was sent to the United States in January 2006.

Without knowing a word of English or where he was going, Kuwa arrived in San Diego and his caseworker helped him find work as a steward and dishwasher at Bahía Resort Hotel. For Kuwa, this was a turning point in his life.

"Working at the Bahía has made me very, very happy," said Kuwa. "The people here are like family to me. God has changed my life, [by taking me] from the jungle and sending me to America."

Today, Kuwa is known as a joyful and committed employee, always getting the job done with a smile. Since starting at the Bahía, Kuwa has taken multiple English classes, which allowed him to expand his roles at the property to include boat maintenance. Working at the hotel has provided Kuwa with stability and the opportunity for a better life that he never had as a child.

"Tourism matters because it gives me a job, it's better for business and it changed my life," said Kuwa. "I love San Diego; I love my job. Now, my life is up."