Glory and Grace: An American Dream

Glory and Grace had dreams come true on the same day. Twin brothers from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gloire Kakuru and Grace Ndovia, were granted United States citizenship together in a ceremony at the Linn County Courthouse in Cedar Rapids on August 16, 2019.

Kakuru, whose first name Gloire means "glory" in French, credits Catholic Charities for helping to make his dream come true. Gloire is pictured to the left with the Judge who conducted the ceremony.

"I am so glad that I came through Catholic Charities. They know what they are doing and they get work done with results," he said. "I want to thank Catholic Charities as they are always there to help people with their needs."

Torn apart by decades of civil war and corruption, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is a central African nation of 91 million people, the second largest country on the continent. Kakuru, along with his mother, sister and twin brother, spent over a decade in a Kenyan refugee camp before making it to America. He was only 14 years old when he arrived here. Literally thousands of Congolese immigrants have flooded into the United States over the past two decades seeking refugee status, American citizenship and a new way of life.

Kakuru volunteered through AmeriCorps and worked with Catholic Charities through a refugee resettlement program, helping people transition to life in the States. "Gloire wanted to get citizenship and learned what Catholic Charities was doing. He came to us for a consultation and later helped his brother do the same thing," said Yer Vang, Legal Director for Catholic Charities, said. "It is a remarkable story." The fact that Gloire was volunteering and giving back to help others, while at the same time seeking a better life himself, speaks volumes about his integrity, care for others and deep desire to be part of American life and the American dream.

Kakuru received citizenship after just nine months, but the process can sometimes take years and includes a formal application, submission of a myriad of detailed documents, fingerprinting, a background check, and then finally, a civic, written and oral exam.