



"They cover all the basic needs for refugees from A to Z and within no time, you're ready to go" - Hassan B. Hassan



United Way
of the Midlands

For Hassan, getting to the United States was a chance to start his life again. He was forced to leave his home country for protection in 1992 and became a refugee in Kenya. For eight years, he and his wife Sahra moved from camp to camp and, in 2000, settled in the Kakuma camp in northern Kenya. For seven years, they lived in poverty conditions with constant threat from epidemics, dust storms and searing temperatures. They had the dream of many refugees: to relocate to the United States and a better life.

In 2009, Hassan and Sahra were given that chance. The United Nations first relocated them to the Jacksonville area, but after finding the city unwelcoming, they decided to move to Omaha. Friends of Hassan's had moved to Omaha and it sounded like a much more welcoming place. Upon arrival, he came to the International Center, a United Way Impact Initiative. In no time at all, he was on his way to restarting his life. "I came to these people and they were very wonderful and automatically within one month, I was just like a member of this family," said Hassan. The center helped him obtain his Social Security card, a learner's permit and assisted him in his job search. "I'm just like a normal person who's been living in Omaha for quite some time and it's just one year."

Now, Hassan's in school at Iowa Western Community College working towards his educational goals. He's working with a lawyer at the International Center to bring his sons to the United States. They passed their first interviews and are well on their way to joining their parents. "They will come in six months. I talk to them but talking is nothing. I have to see them." With the help of the International Center and its partner agencies, Hassan will soon be reunited with his children. "All this here, all this I achieved because of these people," said Hassan. "These are people who are meant to be there to work for the people. If maybe I can feel like praising them, it will take me so much time."