

UC San Diego

UC San Diego News Center

By Jade Griffin Nov 07, 2011

‘Lost Boy of Sudan’ Among Former Foster Youth to Benefit from Sony Electronics Gifts

Technology packages donated to former foster youth attending UC San Diego



Photos by Erik Jepsen/UC San Diego Publications

Deng Bol counts himself fortunate to be a student at the University of California, San Diego. Born in Sudan, Bol survived the horrors of civil war, refugee camps and a dangerous trek through the African continent—all before he reached the age of 13.

Civil war in Sudan separated Bol from his family in 1987. He walked with a group of children for a month across Ethiopia, surviving on wild berries and bad water, and sometimes sleeping in trees to avoid predatory animals.

“When we were in the savannah with no trees around, the kids would all sleep together in groups, with the youngest in the middle to protect them from wild animals,” recalled Bol, who was among the youngest in the group, at age 10. Along the way, Bol witnessed friends being carried away by river currents, killed by crocodiles, disease and crossfire, and more. Bol lived in refugee camps until 2004, when he was able to move to the United States.

Today, at 35, Bol is a senior majoring in philosophy at UC San Diego and is preparing to apply for law school. He hopes to return to the newly established Republic of South Sudan as a law professor specializing in the constitution.

Bol is one step closer to his goal thanks to gifts—a top-of-the-line technology package comprised of a Sony VAIO notebook, Webbie high-definition camera with 16-gigabyte memory card and Walkman® MP3 player—from Sony Electronics, with the support of Intel. In total, Sony donated technology packages to five UC San Diego students who at one time lived in foster care, as well as to two junior faculty members at the university. The gifts are designed to support the studies of the UC San Diego students and faculty members in a time when technology plays a key role in academic success.

“Every aspiring student deserves an opportunity,” said Ed Wallace, vice president for community affairs at Sony Electronics, at the on-campus donation ceremony Nov. 5. “We are pleased to recognize deserving students and faculty through this scholarship program, which will give them the necessary tools to continue to achieve academic excellence.”

Bol was thrilled with the gift, noting that the laptop will save him time traveling to campus to work on homework on the university’s computers. He also plans to use the gift when he applies to law school.

“Technology is playing an ever-growing role in the learning process,” added Steve Zimmer, business development manager for education at Sony Direct. “During these challenging economic times, we want to help promising students and junior faculty members focus on what’s really important –



Deng Bol

education.”

Along with Bol, students who received the technology packages include:

- **Barrett Blake**

A senior majoring in theatre, Barrett Blake’s goal is to become an actor and advocate for human rights. Prior to entering community college, Barrett served five years in the U.S. Army. Barrett has been involved in a wide range of campus activities including completing the Passport to Leadership program and Clinton Global Initiative University.

- **Carmynn Crites**

Carmynn Crites is a third year student with a major in literature/writing, and a minor in educational studies. Crites is a resident and peer advisor at Eleanor Roosevelt College and works as the equipment supervisor at RIMAC. She also recently joined the UC San Diego cheerleading squad. Crites hopes to become a language arts teacher at the secondary school level.

- **Irene Macedo Ekdahl**

Irene Macedo Ekdahl is a senior majoring in dance. In high school, she was actively involved in Latin dance competitions, where she received numerous awards and competed internationally. Ekdahl is mother to a 6-month-old boy. Upon graduation, she plans to pursue a master’s degree in business administration and open a dance studio specializing in world dance.

- **Lizbeth Montiel-Gonzalez**

Lizbeth Montiel-Gonzalez is a physiology and neurosciences major who plans to double major in psychology. As a youth, she was frequently left alone, but used this time to study. In high school, she independently utilized tutors and after-school programs to improve her grades. She dreams of becoming a leader in the foster care system to make it a better place for youth.

To ensure that promising junior faculty members have the equipment they need for leading-edge research, Sony also donated a VAIO notebook, Sony HD Camcorder with 16-gigabyte memory stick, Sony Reader and 26-inch display BRAVIA television to the following:

- **Eun-Young Jung** An assistant professor of music, Eun-Young Jung is a classically trained pianist. Her recent research deals with musical lives of Asian American communities in the U.S., including issues of race, ethnicity and cultural identities among Asian American hip-hop artists. Prior to UC San Diego, Jung served as the assistant director at the Center for East Asian Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

- **Liz Losh**

Liz Losh is director of the Culture, Art and Technology program at UC San Diego’s Sixth College. She specializes in digital rhetoric and focuses on electronic communication in e-government, e-learning and e-commerce. She is the author of “Virtualpolitik: An Electronic History of Government Media-Making in a Time of War, Scandal, Disaster, Miscommunication, and Mistakes.”



Coordinating the gifts of student technology packages is UC San Diego's Guardian Scholars Program, which is committed to supporting former foster youth in their efforts to gain a college education. In addition to providing assistance with scholarship applications and financial aid, the program helps students orient themselves to university life, gives them year-round access to campus housing, and assists with career planning and job opportunities. To learn more about the UC San Diego Guardian Scholars Program and how you can help former foster youth achieve their dreams of a UC San Diego

education, please call (858) 822-1536.

The faculty gifts were coordinated by the Office of Corporate and Foundation Relations. For more information on corporate partnerships and giving, please call (858) 822-6602.

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