



Bridging Refugee Youth & Children's Services

BRYCS Youth Conversations: Ali, a Somali Teen

In January 2017, Ali shared his resettlement journey and experiences with BRYCS staff on what it's like to be an immigrant teen in the United States.

Family Background and Migration Story

I was born in Somalia. There are six children in my family and our mum and my father passed away due to illness. I left my country when I was young and moved all the way from Africa to Europe. The journey was not easy and it took me close to a year to get to Ukraine, but I was not satisfied because it was not my final destination.

Life in the U.S.

My transition was not easy because I had to overcome lots of difficult language and culture differences and I did not have parents to support me. There is big difference between the U.S. and my country. Here, there are many laws, but my country was lawless. But my life is good at the moment, I graduated from high school and am in college using every possible opportunity I get.

I wish I knew that life here is not as easy as you think and you have to work your butt off. But, the hardest part was the long process of waiting at the camp to be resettled.

Advice for Parents

I attended many community and school programs, including an after school tutor. My piece of advice is that parents should encourage and motivate their children to go to school and attend these programs and also should be in touch with their teachers and counselors. America is an open society with many opportunities and they should use them because they are lucky to be here.

Advice for Teachers

My senior English teacher made my transition easier. She is an inspiring teacher, she motivated me a lot, and has a sense of humor. Teachers should get to know their students well and help them with classes, homework, and some students' fear to speak in public.

Advice for the Community

Get to know refugees. They are people like you and they need people to talk to, to be loved and cared for.

Advice for Immigrant Teens

Work hard and never get into drugs and alcohol; it will ruin your life. Just pay attention and do what is right.

Future Goals

I have many future goals. I just did a documentary movie about my life and right now I am in college. I want to study international relations so that I can help the U.S.' relations with the rest of the world and one day want to go back to my country and contribute to transforming and make it democratic, like it used to be before the civil war.