

Finding Your Way Home to America – Salome Mwangi, Patrick Wangoi, and Palina Louangketh

Home is where the heart is. But what happens when one can no longer go home? Not because you do not want to, but because you cannot. And along the way to seeking some semblance of home, what if you are reminded that you do not belong? And are treated like one who has the plague, and banished to live in the remotest parts of your host country, as you wait.

But what are you waiting for? A new home? A new life? A new dream perhaps? A new start?

For many refugees, coming to America is not the dream that they longed for, but a way to find their way, find their way home... perhaps. Perhaps, they can start anew, dream anew, build a fresh start... Maybe, they can find their way home... to America.

These are their stories...

Salome Mwangi is a Kenyan-born American speaker who inspires, challenges and equips others to overcome their real or perceived obstacles, live up to their full potential, work with diverse teams and grow professionally and personally.

Drawing from her own experiences Salome seeks to encourage, build up and support others as they journey through their own lives. Her life is a living testimony that regardless of what life hands you, only the smallness of your dreams limits your opportunities.

She resettled in Boise, Idaho in 2004 as a refugee, where she lives with her teenage daughter. The values, tenacity and spirit of never giving up that were instilled by the “village” as she grew up have not only helped her navigate life as a single parent, but also her work as a Cultural Broker, working with Limited English Proficient clients and their service providers.

Patrick Wangoi was born in the Democratic Republic of Congo and has lived a life of resilience and hope, one of not giving up on ones dreams. After 15 years along the west bank of the Lualaba River in Kongolo, war broke out and Patrick fled the country with his mother and three brothers. After five and a half years in Tanzania, Patrick and his family were granted entry to the US in 2010 and settled in Boise. He began to learn English and earned his high school diploma while working part-time at Walmart.

Patrick Wangoi is an undergraduate senior student, majoring in Social science at Boise State University. He plans to continue his education by attending grad school for Mental Health Counseling at University of Idaho. He works as a professional staff supporter at SI Start, where he takes care of people with developmental disabilities. Patrick has been engaged in public speaking since 2015 by sharing his personal life experience to breakdown the cultural bridge between Americans and refugee community.

Palina Louangketh (*‘loo-on-gate’*) is a former refugee from Laos with the trials and tribulations that naturally come with the journey to become a US citizen. She is a first-generation college student, and a career woman. She contributes her successes to her mother’s courageousness, the enriched community environment, and the grace and kindness of the people in Idaho.

On a professional note, she’s a seasoned healthcare leader who comes from the nonprofit and government sectors. An alumna of Boise State University, she completed both a Bachelor of Science and Master of Health Science. Committed to her Bronco roots, she teaches as an adjunct professor. Palina is a 2nd year doctoral student in the Doctor of Strategic Leadership Program from the School of Business and Leadership (Regent University in Virginia Beach, VA) with a concentration in Strategic Foresight. She founded Sapphire Unicorn Consulting – a management and strategic leadership advisory company. Because she lives, breathes, and speaks *strategy*, Palina is comfortable in complex and changing environments.