



Coming to Philadelphia – Seven Stories

John Kidane

John Kidane immigrated to Philadelphia as part of the first wave of African refugees to be resettled in the United States in the early 1980s. He came from the part of Ethiopia that became the independent country of Eritrea in 1991. After fighting in the Eritrean independence movement against the Ethiopian government, John fled to Sudan in 1980. He worked in Sudan for Chevron Oil Company until his refugee resettlement application was approved by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Given the choice of Australia or the United States as his country of resettlement, Kidane chose the U.S., primarily because he felt a bond to the African American population. John chose immigration work as his new career, and now works for the Nationalities Services Center in Philadelphia. Kidane is very involved in the Eritrean Community of Philadelphia and currently serves as the programming coordinator for the Eritrean Community Center in West Philadelphia. He lives with his wife and son in South Philadelphia.