



GIVING BACK: CEDRIC'S STORY

During the 2014 Washington DC Experience, Rick and the group made a connection with a bellman at the Holiday Inn Capitol where the group was housed for their week's stay. Cedric Nwafor (a young man from Cameroon in Africa) and Rick stayed in touch through email, Facebook, and texting.

Cedric and his family came to America through a state lottery won by his sister. In his words, "Everyone from Africa dreams of coming to America." He is currently working on becoming an American citizen, which he hopes to complete within the next year. He has moved from the Holiday Inn to the Ritz Carlton in Georgetown, one of the nicest hotels in the District, where he works now in a management position.

Cedric will graduate in May from a community college where he serves on the student council, and in the fall he will continue his education at the University of Maryland to study business with an emphasis in agriculture. His family was involved in farming in Africa and he loves agriculture. His goal in life is to work in the United Nations (UN) and eventually return to Africa to help his family and others learn how to raise food to feed many hungry people in their country.

Cedric joined the 2015 Washington DC Experience group for dinner on Sunday evening. He spoke to the group and answered questions about his education, life in Africa, and goal of returning to Africa to help his country. He also shared his desire to come to Idaho and visit in the summer of 2015. Working toward this goal, Cedric has been saving his points (earned through his job) and figured he was about half-way toward what he needed for a plane ticket.

The Development Director and the LIA alumni who heard Cedric's story were so touched by his passion, drive, and commitment to agriculture that a discussion ensued about how to make his dream of coming to Idaho a reality. The Development Director suggested that the LIA Foundation sponsor Cedric's trip and the group pledged to contribute funds toward making that happen. Rick made this announcement to Cedric that evening at dinner and he was completely overwhelmed with gratitude and appreciation. The following email came from him the next day:

Hi Rick,

I will like to thank each and every one of you for the amazing dinner last night and the amazing gift. Words can't even start to express how grateful I am. All the people I met yesterday were filled with so much love, it was almost overwhelming. When I got back home, I thanked God for choosing me to move your room that night at the hotel.

Am so anxious to come to Idaho as soon as I start working in at the Ritz, I should be able to give you a date.

Please greet Benjamin, Kyra, Kendra, Chris, Dorita, Nate, Ann, Marcus and everyone I cannot remember the name right now. (Don't tell them I could not remember their name)

Thank you very very much.

Cedric

The LIA Foundation plans to coordinate a full schedule for Cedric, including an alumni gathering, during his visit to Idaho. He is looking forward to experiencing Idaho agriculture first hand and was wondering if he might see "just piles and piles of French fries."

LIA is often referred to as so much more than a leadership program. This was once again demonstrated through the desire and commitment on the part of these alumni to give Cedric his "opportunity of a lifetime," affirming that the LIA experience reaches far beyond just four weeks of training.

As an organization, we succeed by the generosity and gifts of others. It is a proud moment for the LIA Foundation to be able to pass along that generosity to this very deserving young man.

