Mechanical engineering senior John Aza (right) leads an organization that finds volunteers, tutors and donations for clothing, toys and more for Sudanese children. Aza spends time with (from left to right) 9-year-old Jeoffry Odu, 4-year-old Rebekah Odu, 1-year-old Lori Mingain and 3-year-old Lara Mingain.

A HELPING HAND

By Walter E. Staton

John Aza

A helping Sudanese refugees

Aza said he will be speaking about justice and racism.

If the struggle wasn’t made, this meeting wouldn’t be possible,” said Aza, referring to America’s civil rights movement.

Aza is one of three Sudanese refugees studying at the UA. He first came to America by invitation, and then applied for and received political asylum.

Like the 300 other Sudanese refugees in Tucson, Aza was fleeing from an ongoing civil war in southern Sudan, a North African country near Egypt.

He said he is happy to be in a country where there is more justice.

“We are enjoying the fruit from America’s struggle,” he said.

But that doesn’t mean life has been smooth for him and the other refugees living in Tucson.

Aza is helping Sudanese refugees adjust to life in Tucson by directing the Sudanese Resettlement Program and the Southern Sudanese Resettlement Program.

As a result, he spent time with his family, who fled from an ongoing civil war in southern Sudan, a North African country near Egypt. He was able to find work in the U.S. and eventually started a family.

As a result of his experience, Aza decided to work with Sudanese refugees and he has been helping them ever since.

STUDENT HELPS FELLOW REFUGEES

By Dana Crudo

When John Aza came to Arizona in 1996, he was fleeing from an ongoing civil war in the Sudan that has displaced millions of people.

Now, Aza, a mechanical engineering senior, is the director of the Southern Sudanese Resettlement Program and will be speaking at the Martin Luther King Jr. Day Monday to express his gratitude to American society.

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