I recently got an e-mail from a friend I hadn’t heard from in a long time. “Your farm life sure paid off for you”, she wrote. I hadn’t really stopped to think about it myself, but in so many ways, she is right - my life and the choices I have made, have prepared me beautifully for work in South Sudan.

Growing up on a farm in Montana, water was often scarce and we learned to value and conserve it. Farm life also taught me the joys and importance of growing our own food. It gave me a sense of pride – just as it does here in South Sudan.

When I was a young novice, I was sent to an elementary school and worked with the Sister who taught first grade. I was hooked on teaching from that experience, and because of my love of nature I chose science as my area of specialization. Now I am teaching science at Solidarity Teacher Training Institute in Yambio.

I never planned to be a missionary in Africa, feeling that there was so much to do in the United States. However, when I read Sr. Sue Miller's letter regarding a donation made in the name of the Sisters of Charity to Solidarity with South Sudan for our 150th jubilee in 2008, something stirred inside me. The last line of her letter was, “If you feel called, I encourage you to volunteer.” This was when I knew that Southern Sudan was calling me. Three years later, in April 2011, I arrived here – three month before it became the Newest Nation in the world with the name of South Sudan.
Now it feels like I’ve always been in South Sudan and this is home. During the very first months of my stay, I spent some time in a small village living with Our Lady of Victory Sisters, a local community of only four members. They shared with me the story of their community and the bad times during the war when they had to flee into Central African Republic. They taught me about their life, shared their food, and made me really feel welcome and appreciated. I will always treasure those weeks spent with them.

**Students at the Solidarity Teacher Training College are from different tribes and have different backgrounds. It gives me joy to see them become friends.**

My teaching experience at the Solidarity Teacher Training College in Yambio has been nothing but exciting. Living and teaching at the college with students has taught me a lot. We have students from many tribes in South Sudan, different age groups and gender, some women, even, with their children staying at our Solidarity compound. I have had the joy of seeing students from different tribes starting to interact during the daily life at the college and later, on festive occasions, sharing their heritage in song and dance, and even participating in performances of other tribes. They have become friends.

"Sometimes I worry that teaching people who are so eager to learn has spoiled me for teaching anywhere else!"

We had many obstacles to overcome when we started the Solidarity Teacher Training College in Yambio. We had space and water problems, limited teaching supplies and even food was very simple and scarce at times. But I have never heard a single complaint. Sometimes I worry that teaching people who are so eager to learn has spoiled me for teaching anywhere else!

"Working with Solidarity with South Sudan has truly been a life changing experience beyond my wildest expectations"

Working with Solidarity with South Sudan has truly been a life changing experience beyond my wildest expectations. **With all my heart I will encourage others to consider sharing in the joys of a journey with Solidarity in South Sudan.**