

It's a long way from a refugee camp in Kenya to Dorrigo but the local community has now rallied behind this large, proud family and warmly welcomed them at their hearths

# Sudanese mountain home

By UTE SCHULENBERG

MARTIN Majur is not your average high school student.

The 27-year-old Sudanese refugee is currently attending Year 10 at Dorrigo High School and enthusiastically taking part in activities that for most people his age are distant memories.

"Go Martin, go Martin they scream... I enjoy," Martin said,

proudly displaying the blue ribbon he won at the school's swimming carnival.

Acting school principal Ian Willis said Martin was 'enormously valuable' in helping break down cultural stereotypes.

"He is so obviously different in this Anglo-European school," Mr Willis said.

"The kids have been really encouraging. During the swimming carnival the seniors swam behind him while everyone else cheered. It was fantastic."

The Majur/Makur family arrived in Dorrigo last August after many years in a Kenyan refugee camp.

Their arrival sparked community support far exceeding the expectations of residents Susan Allom and Helen Proud, who spear-headed the resettlement.

"We wanted to do something positive and Susan suggested getting a family from Sudan," Helen said.

"We waited for months and then one day Sue Hallam rang from the Sanctuary Refugee Foundation to say they had found us a family of eight who'd be arriving in 10 days!

"We had to find a house and organise clothes and furniture, but it all came together. The town rallied amazingly. In fact, we were overwhelmed with



Finding common ground with other kids in Dorrigo has not been difficult for the six Majur/Makur children, although they admit the temperature has not been so easy to adapt to. Photo: UTE SCHULENBERG 06072608B



Hard at work in the classroom: Martin Majur in Year 10 at Dorrigo High School.

clothes and toys and food."

Since then many in the community have become 'extended family', even to the point of helping with the logistics of

weaning the youngest daughter, Apendho.

"They have become part of our lives and are now contributors to the community."

But it will still take some time before mum Martha stops attracting stares as she walks home from the shops — with her shopping on her head.