

JULY 2024

RAFIKI FOUNDATION MISSIONARY NEWSLETTER



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Missionary #257

Dear friends and family,

Flexible—Able to change to suit new conditions or situations (Dictionary.com).

Being a missionary requires many qualities and one of the most important is flexibility. Situations and responsibilities change, and we must be able to adapt and continue moving forward. In June our dear friend and fellow missionary, Laurie Eastup, left Rafiki and returned to the U.S. to continue a new path God has prepared for her. John has assumed the role of Village Administrator in addition to continuing as the Headmaster of the Rafiki School. Gwen has added working with the early childhood teachers to her responsibilities.

We are thankful that we are familiar with our new roles, but it will take time to become efficient at executing our new responsibilities. Laurie spent time reviewing her work with John before leaving, and she graciously answers questions via email. Our Home Office staff is very encouraging and supportive as well. We are amazed at how God gives us strength, patience, wisdom, and joy as we stumble forward.

While our roles have changed, we are excited to continue our work in Tanzania. God is moving in amazing ways, and we continue to feel that we are in the right place at the right time. Space does not permit us to share everything, but we gladly provide a few highlights to encourage you.

New Beginnings

Last year we connected with a new school called New Beginning. This school was started by Americans, and they have been very interested in the Rafiki Bible Study (RBS) and the Rafiki Education System (RES). They have hired several of our Rafiki Institute of Classical Education graduates, and they currently use the RBS and Early Childhood Curriculum from the RES.



Previous RICE student now teaching at New Beginning School

Rafiki has always had a vision of having other schools use the RBS and the RES. The connection with New Beginnings is a huge answer to prayer in this regard. We look forward to a long and fruitful relationship with this school.

Rafiki School

God has blessed us with about 380 students and forty-five teachers and administrators this year. We are currently working through I and II Kings in our daily Bible study. The students are learning how God is faithful even when we are not, and how we need to follow the example of David, Elijah, and Elisha as obedient servants of God regardless of our circumstances. Our "Virtue of the Month" (July) is obedience which fits well with our study.

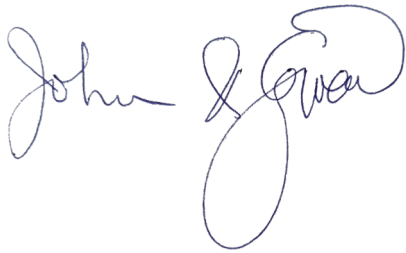
We hired a guidance counselor this year, Mr. Patrick. He has been a teacher at Rafiki for several years and he is a godly man who has a heart for the students. We are so thankful for his efforts in developing the spiritual life of our students. In May he held the first Career Day at our school by bringing in about a dozen men and women from different professions to discuss what they do and help students understand what skills and training are required to be successful.

Short-term Missionaries

We are blessed to have several people who come each year to serve with us in our Village. Some stay for a few weeks and some stay a few months. Since April, we have had a steady stream of short-termers who have aided in tasks that need to get done but cannot with our current staff. They also are great at ministering to our residents by playing sports, eating meals, and doing devotions with them. Their friendship is a real encouragement to us. Thank you!

We appreciate all your prayers and support. We trust that this brief update encourages you to serve God each day as we all work to grow His Kingdom.

Love,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John & Gwen". The signature is stylized, with the first names written in a cursive-like font and the last name "Cicone" written in a more formal, blocky style.

Gwen and John Cicone

