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RAFIKI FOUNDATION MISSIONARY NEWSLETTER



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Missionary #257

Greetings to our friends and family,

Time flies and it is hard to believe we have completed ten months in Tanzania. We are feeling much more adjusted in our roles and in our understanding of the culture. We know a lot more names and we have developed good friendships with our national staff.

The Rafiki Bible Study has had us progress through Deuteronomy and Judges this year. These are not easy books, but we are thankful for the knowledge and understanding all our students and staff gain through our daily devotions. Everyone in the Village enjoys singing the great hymns of the faith that you probably grew up with.

“For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the Lord..”

(Jeremiah 9:11a NIV). This verse became especially real for us this year. Our original plan when we arrived in August 2022 was to stay in Tanzania until spring 2024, but God changed our plans by providing a wedding for us to attend! We are excited that our youngest child, Angelo, got married on July 1. We were in the U.S. from June 21 until July 11 to visit family, friends, supporting churches, and, of course, attend the wedding. We had a wonderful time of refreshing and catching up with those who are dear.

Secondary school happenings

The first semester has completed and the second semester is underway. Students and teachers enjoyed a well-deserved break for the month of June. John completed formal observations of all the teachers in April/May and he was pleased with the progress they had made with their teaching skills utilizing the classical model.

In May, the students presented an end-of-semester program for the parents. We were very proud to see our students present their activities with confidence, good expression and articulation, and creativity. These qualities are not taught in many schools here in Tanzania (especially public schools), and we know that these skills are just as important as academic knowledge. The classical model of education integrates these skills into every subject so that students have a good foundation to allow them to follow whatever career path God has for them.



Secondary classroom scene

OrphanCare happenings

Gwen currently has forty-five residents in our OrphanCare Program and six Rafiki Mothers who live with them. Gwen has had some difficult discipline issues to deal with, but she uses these opportunities to help the children understand God's love and mercy, and to deal with the heart issues that caused the behavior. We are excited that several of our residents play sports, and many are competing in National and International tournaments. Each night the residents have devotions. We occasionally have time to join them, and it is a blessing to hear their prayers, praises, and insights in God's Word.

RICE happenings

Gwen has been working diligently with the fifteen RICE students by teaching them classes in English and Bible. She is finding that the more she studies Swahili the better she can understand why the students make the mistakes in English that they do, and consequently, how to explain to them the best way to improve. This quarter she is teaching art, which is her true love.

Widows Program ministry

The Widows Program ministry is progressing well. We brought the first order of soap to sell with us when we returned for our son's wedding. Gwen has also been working with the widows to make aprons and robes. The challenge is finding fabrics with patterns that will be appealing to Americans.



Our Tanzania team and visiting short-term missionaries

Love,

Gwen and John Cicone