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RAFIKI FOUNDATION MISSIONARY NEWSLETTER



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Missionary #252

***“Let us then with confidence
draw near to the throne
of grace, that we may
receive mercy and find
grace to help in time of
need” (Hebrews 4:16).***

Dear friends and mission partners,

Thank you for your prayers for what the Lord is doing through Rafiki in Uganda. It is hard to believe we have only been here nine months—and that it has been four months since we sent our last newsletter. Here are a few of the great things God is accomplishing here with your support.

For two weeks in November and December, two teams of eleven evaluators each, stayed with us and spent five days each reviewing our curriculum for approval by the National Curriculum Development Committee. In February, we received their 150-page report, which said that our curriculum was suitable for Ugandan students. Praise God! We are now working on a few, relatively minor additions they would like to see. We hope to have those submitted in the next week or so—and we are hoping for formal approval by this summer. *Please pray with us that timetable happens so we can start distributing this Christ-based curriculum to hundreds of Christian schools throughout the country.*

Drama is alive and well here. Our residents performed *A Wiser Miser*, a rhyming, musical version of Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, in beautiful African accents.



Rafiki Village Uganda drama club produced Dickens' classic Christmas tale, updated.

Ten students in the teachers college graduated with their certificates or diplomas after a finishing module at Westminster Christian Institute of Uganda, our mother campus. We have started two new small classes who are learning to love being read aloud to after Bible study from *The Chronicles of Narnia*. *Please pray that God will continue to send us qualified students for the college as we recover from two years without an entering class due to COVID.*



Michelle rejoiced with ten Rafiki teachers college students, graduating at long last.

However, God's greatest gift to us has been that after a lockdown of two years — the longest anywhere in the world — the economy and schools fully reopened in January. Our campus is filled again with the sound of young voices singing and playing, as children walk in neat lines and rake up piles of guavas during breaks in the afternoon. Our enrollment grew

by over 30% with waiting lists for most levels while we were on COVID hiatus—another testimony to God’s grace, to our teachers going into the community and working with their students, and to the example the community sees our students set.

Our Rafiki Mothers have stepped up to handle this increased load filling in as teachers’ assistants in the preprimary classrooms and cooking in the kitchen for all those extra mouths.

Four of our graduates finally started university after many COVID-induced delays. They are thriving at Makerere University and have told us several times how grateful they are for generous sponsors who have made this possible.

Finally, with the full reopening of churches, we have been able to conduct several training sessions in how to use Rafiki’s Matthew Sunday school curriculum with our partners at the Church of Uganda and the Presbyterian Church of Uganda. We have distributed almost all of the 550 or so sets we had in stock (one per church, so those 550 are reaching far more people). *Pray that this effort continues to bear fruit as this is a biblically sound, in-depth study that allows the whole family to learn together at an age-appropriate level.* And if you want a great Sunday school curriculum for your church, check it out at RafikiFoundation.org.

I hope that gives you a small sense of how busy we have been, although with wonderful missionary and national colleagues, it is all joy. We have managed to pack in some personal experiences as well.

Since writing last we have celebrated our first Thanksgiving, Christmas, and birthdays here. For Thanksgiving we did manage to start a small fire in the oven with the apple pie. There seemed to be no ill effects from eating a feast lightly dusted with fire extinguisher overspray. And after some judicious scraping, the apple pie tasted very good.

Miranda and Nathan visited at Christmas while Emma was stuck at home with COVID. Our sunrise hot air balloon ride over magnificent Murchison Falls



Our children are back learning again.



Mama Christine loves her new apron made by Ugandan widows.



Fireman David saves the day.

Prayer Requests

- *That the final steps of our curriculum approval process will be completed by summer.*
- *Thanks for our increased enrollment and a very successful return to full-time school*
- *That God will continue to generously supply donors to provide for the financial needs of this ministry.*
- *That God will call new missionaries to join us in the field in Africa, spreading His Word, teaching the Bible, and spreading classical Christian education.*
- *All 340 + Rafiki Day Students to have sponsors and be fully funded soon.*
- *For good health and energy so that we can complete the tasks God has set for us.*
- *For God's watchful care over our children and other family in the US and around the world*

National Park ended in a gentle crash landing. We all ended up piled on top of David, as the basket slowly turned onto its side after dragging along the ground.

The residents surprised David with boisterous singing, a paper crown, flowers, a handmade card, and a cake for his birthday, which he thought no one knew about.

Our house in Houston sold at the beginning of December to a couple who hope to fill it with children.

Michelle's parents survived COVID in February, sustained by the Lord through the fervent prayers of their Ugandan "grandchildren."

And, sadly, David's sister-in-law Nancy died in March. Through God's mercy, we were able to make a whirlwind one-week trip home for the funeral. David's brother John told him that Nancy felt the power and comfort of prayer from countless people in the Rafiki community from around the world.

How you can help

If you feel called to contribute, you may do so by logging onto <https://rafikifoundation.org/missionary/michelle-and-david-graves-252> and clicking the "Amount" button. You may make a one-time or recurring contribution. Contributing to us directly covers the cost of sending us into the field and allows Rafiki to use all of its other contributions for orphan care, student tuition, and its other programs. All contributions are fully tax-deductible.

Note: Rafiki is now able to accept non-cash gifts such as real estate or estate bequests. Contact Rafiki@RafikiFoundation.org for more information.

A group of friends led by Kay Scholl meets on the second Sunday of each month to pray for the Rafiki mission. If you'd like to join (in person or by Zoom), please email kayscholl@gmail.com.

If you would like a more detailed account of our experiences, go to davidgraves.blog (DG keeps promising updates—pray the Lord gives him time to do so).

Love,



Michelle and David Graves



Some Graveses in a basket aloft.



The residents showed their joy in celebrating David's birthday.