

APRIL 2024

RAFIKI FOUNDATION MISSIONARY NEWSLETTER



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EAST AFRICA

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Missionary #252

“You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit may abide...” (John 15:16).

Dear friends,

Last night we had the privilege of attending an Easter concert by the Kampala Singers Choir at the beautiful old Namirembe Cathedral. John 15:16 is printed on a large banner at the front of the Cathedral; it is the 2024 theme for the Diocese of Namirembe. As we listened to a wonderful rendition of Schubert’s Mass in G Major, it was humbling to think that we are not here because we chose to be. And Rafiki is producing abundant fruit.

National Exam results

Each October and November, students at three levels take national exams.

- Grade level seven takes the Primary Leaving Exam. Unlike most schools here, we focus on our curriculum rather than just this test. Nevertheless, all of our students passed, most in the two highest grade categories.
- Students at senior four level take the Uganda Certificate of Education Exam. All of our students scored well enough to continue for two more years to prepare for the Uganda Advanced Certificate of Education (UACE) and eligibility to go on to earn a degree at University.
- At the UACE level, all thirteen of our resident and day students earned scores qualifying them for University. Two of our residents, Agnes and Alex, scored 18 and 17, respectively, out of 20. These students are now working on university applications and determining courses of study. The Rafiki School was in the top 3% nationally, competitive with elite private schools that can pick and choose their students.



Rafiki Uganda 2024 residents who have just finished UACE exams on their last day at Rafiki

Reintegration

Rafiki has been blessed to attract extended family and members of our partner churches to care and mentor our residents during school breaks. Not only is this invaluable experience for our residents in learning how to live in the real world of Uganda, but when the residents finish their UACE level they become members of their host families through a process we call reintegration. In December, we said farewell to ten of our residents as they moved out into the world.

We are now working with each graduated resident as they apply for Rafiki scholarships—an all-expenses-paid college scholarship available to qualified former residents.

Since there is about eight months between when they leave Rafiki and when the college term starts, we encourage and assist them to take courses that provide vocational skills. Among the skills this year's group is working on are music teaching, hair dressing, tailoring, and agriculture.

The Rafiki School

We are now a few weeks away from the end of Term 1 of the 2024 school year which began on February 5. Our enrollment increased from 412 to 490 students with waiting lists in most grades.

A few months ago, one of our bank officers was visiting us for the first time. She was impressed with the beauty of our grounds and the behavior of our students. She asked if we had an opening. Just that morning, one of our students had to withdraw because the family was leaving the area. Now she thanks me every time she sees me as her son is thriving here and actually looks forward to coming to school. This year two more of that bank's officers have enrolled their children.

Of course, we Christians are also promised suffering. This first term it seems that it is our soccer—sorry, football—team that has been suffering for us. At the first-round area tournament, the boys emerged with three losses and one tie, failing to advance. Teacher Derrick, our Headmaster Assistant and biggest booster, suffered all the way with them, although he is now determined that they will be better conditioned next time, so there may be more suffering ahead.



2024 Area Football Tournament Rafiki team planning second half strategy



Rafiki Netball team competes in a friendly match with a local school



Rafiki Preschool students race to fill bottles during First Term Field Day competitions



Rafiki Uganda Chess Team plays a warm-up match preparing to compete in the Father Grimes National Chess Tournament

Rafiki Teachers College (RICE)

We have had a significant enrollment increase in our RICE Program for teacher training. We filled a holiday top-up program which we are offering for the first time. This allows full time teachers to come study during their term breaks and earn a degree in three years. By 2029, all teachers in Uganda must have a university degree, so there is a big demand. We are considering starting a second cohort in August.

Our application for a Provisional License is before the National Council on Higher Education (NCHE). Michelle and I met with their technical committee in late January and are working on submitting requested corrections and modifications. The process can be time consuming because NCHE does not always have the personnel available to move as quickly as we would like.

Personal

We were blessed to be able to spend time in Houston and Seguin, Texas, at Christmas. Michelle's parents were celebrating their 90th birthdays. Most of the children and grandchildren were able to be there including the other missionary couple. Michelle's sister Rene and her husband Mark are serving in Tahiti.

Our good friends Lisa and Bill Schwartz kindly lent us their remodeled second floor while we were in Houston visiting friends and supporters.

In March, we attended Enrichment and program meetings at the Rafiki Home Office in Eustis, Florida. Wonderful Bible teaching and fellowship! On the way there, we stopped for a couple of days with Miranda in New York City including a performance of *Turandot* at the Metropolitan Opera where Miranda has been working. On the way back, we spent Easter weekend in Cambridge, England, with Emma and Daniel (he has been working there temporarily for the last three months). A highlight of that stay was Easter service in King's College Chapel.



Michelle in line for Easter service at Kings College Cambridge on a cool, wet morning

Thanks and prayer requests

We are grateful to God for all of you and the generous support in both prayer and funds you have provided to us and to Rafiki to sustain our mission here.

Please pray for

- Full financial support for us to continue serving in Uganda, visit <https://RafikiFoundation.org/missionary/michelle-and-david-graves-252> to donate.
- Rafiki to grow to seventy missionaries on the field by December 2024.
- All Rafiki teacher training colleges—particularly ours here in Uganda—to be filled up and accredited by June 2024.
- Completion of the primary curriculum accreditation process.
- Rafiki Foundation to attain full funding of 3,500 Rafiki students and orphans by end of this year.
- All of our children and students to come to know God early and become godly contributors.
- 100 schools in Africa to be using the Rafiki Bible Study and curriculum by June 2024.
- The Rafiki Classical Academy in Eustis, Florida, to continue to grow and be a model for other schools and for training new missionaries.
- Wisdom as we steward all the resources God has given us and the distribution of every Bible, Bible study, and the curriculum would bear much fruit.
- Our ten senior six graduates as they complete their national exams and reintegrate into their communities.
- Continued safety and protection for the Uganda Village.
- Awakening in the church around the world.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David & Michelle". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michelle and David Graves