

JANUARY 2025

RAFIKI FOUNDATION MISSIONARY NEWSLETTER



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Missionary #258

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come"
(2 Corinthians 5:17).

Happy New Year, friends, and family!

Although the old year has passed away, we are thankful that a new one has been granted to us all. Here are some highlights from the last month.

A chance to re-charge

After five weeks of intensive preparation and teacher training facilitation for the 2025 school year, Crystal and I were able to slip away for a 96-hour recharge "up country." We traveled approximately three hours to the Great Rift Valley—a geological spectacle known by some creationists for the fossils discovered near Lake Turkana. But most know of the area because it is part of the Great Rift (a landform sunken or depressed below the surrounding area) which stretches around 4,000 miles in length on the east side of Africa. The Great Rift Valley could be compared in some ways to the Grand Canyon in America: both are gigantic geological markers, and both are natural wonders.



Bug Hats came in handy in the Great Rift Valley!

While there, we stayed at a lodge in the mountains where we were able to read, write, rest, and reflect. Although Theo had recently hiked the challenging Seven "Hills" of Ngong, it was only after this venture that we were both able to appreciate the majestic magnitude of the mountains alongside the depths of the valley. It was well worth the trek to take in these inspirational vistas; but it was also very humbling. Psalms 95:3-4 declares:

"For the LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods. In his hand are the depths of the earth; the heights of the mountains are his also."

That is a good perspective to have at the start of any new year. Every hill, valley, and student is in His hands. Thank you, Lord.

A blossoming graduate

Last week, Crystal and I were blessed to bump into one of the graduates named Sharon when she visited the Village. While growing up at Rafiki, she was enamored with the natural beauty of God's handiwork. She enjoyed studying the intricate details of the plants and flowers. Some of the trees that she encountered here were: *Bambusa vulgaris* (Bamboo), *Mangifera indica* (Mango tree), and *Eucalyptus globulus* (Eucalyptus). And the wide array of flowers included *Saintpaulia* (African violet), *Actaea racemosa* (Black cohosh), and *Aloe barbadensis* (Aloe Vera) which

still blossom here today. To her, they were silent, scented masterpieces from the Creator in the scenic surroundings she had called home. Even the animals that were being raised in the Village at the time (goats, chickens, and rabbits) stimulated her curiosity.

Sharon's sense of wonder inspired her to pursue a course in agriculture/horticulture after her days at the Rafiki Village were finished. This gentle, joyful, soul is still enthusiastic about the course she "gets to" study. She has a keen eye and understanding of the flora and fauna around her—as if she is already a fully-trained gardener, botanist, or zoologist! She sees things that many others do not and takes the time to express her gratitude to God daily.

Farewell, fellow-laborer

We are glad to spotlight our dear friend Callister. However, we are sad to do so as he prepares to depart. After many years of service as a national worker at Rafiki Village Kenya, he has been called up country to care for his mother and manage the family affairs.

He began working with Rafiki missionaries in 2003 just as the Village was getting started. He served under the supervision of Rafiki Missionaries such as: Tom Kreamer, Doug Koepke, Yeen-Lan Lam, Rose Allinder, and our current colleagues, David and Julie Pederson.

Callister has been very helpful to us as well. He was wise, trustworthy, and efficient in his work, and very well-acquainted with the local highways and byways. In fact, he was the one who picked us up from the airport on our first night in Kenya as Rafiki long-term missionaries.

Without the affirming can-do attitude of nationals like Callister, we would all have had more challenges completing the tasks that were required of us. He has been a pillar, a stalwart, and a faithful and true brother in Christ. He will be greatly missed, but not forgotten.

School staffing

Our time here has flown! In the 737 days that we have been in Kenya serving as Rafiki School Administrators, we have been blessed to interview and hire fourteen "Zillennial" teachers. According to sociologist Deborah Carr, these are young adults that were born between 1992-2002. They are a microcosm of the 23% of the nation's high school graduates who were accepted into university to continue their academic studies. Our zillennials graduated from Mount Kenya University, Almate College, Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology, Carlile College, Machakos University, Shilido Training College, Maseno University, Rafiki Institute of Classical Education, and Kenya Methodist University. To commemorate their first day as Rafiki Classical Christian School teachers, we captured a Kodak moment with them. Now, they have 290 days to instruct, encourage, nurture, prune, and pray over their pupils before they pass them on to the next grade. May the Lord bless them as they undertake this bold adventure in teaching!



Crystal with Rafiki graduate/horticulture student, Sharon



Theo with Callister



Grammar school open house



New teachers' first day of school

We are so grateful to work alongside faithful laborers in the ChildCare Program who are still guiding the orphans like Sharon as they make their way in the world. We are also grateful for those in Village maintenance and transportation who, like Callister, keep things working and moving. And lastly, we are ever so grateful for the school staff who model Christ and ignite wonder in young minds.

Thank you for your prayers and financial support, as we enter year three of the mission.

Love,

Theodore and Crystal

Theodore and Crystal Wilson



Goat "traffic" on the way to church