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RAFIKI FOUNDATION MISSIONARY NEWSLETTER



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Missionary #257



A particularly beautiful morning view of the mountain

Dear friends and family,

Heri ya Krismasi!

Wishing you the best during this Christmas season and many thanks for your prayers and support for us during 2024!

In Tanzania, the school year follows the calendar year. In November, we wrapped up the national exams and our Form 4 students graduated from the Rafiki School. Most of our graduates will continue to complete the advanced level of secondary school at a boarding school. Others will finish their education at vocational school. It is an emotional time for all the residents as their big brothers and sisters will be moving out of the Village for the new adventure God has prepared for them. For the graduates, they are excited to make it to this point, but they also have fears about the future. *Would you pray for all these young adults as they leave behind what is familiar for what is new? Pray that they would rely every day on the one thing that never changes which is God's love for them.*



Looking serious about their futures!



Seniors dancing into to the graduation ceremony



Our seniors cutting their cake at the farewell dinner

We also said goodbye to Mama Martha, retiring after working as a mother since 2007! We all expressed our appreciation for her work and the children even thanked her for making them follow the rules! She will be missed. She waited until this year to retire because she wanted to see our youngest children be confirmed in the Lutheran church. This will happen in early December, and we will have a nice dinner celebrating this special step in their lives! Next year all the residents will be in secondary school. This means we only have four more years remaining with residents in the Village.



Mama Martha feeding us all her good-bye cake



Me and Mama Martha

As the residents graduate, there is no longer a need to use all the cottages as residences. But as our residents decrease, we add more day students to our school, allowing even more children to receive a classical Christian education. Each year, we add a class to the primary school. In December we will convert another one of the cottages into early childhood classrooms. In 2025, our pre-primary and primary schools will educate 340 students with another 70 or so in the Rafiki Secondary School. Even with this growth, we are not able to accommodate all the families who would like this education for their children. Africans are keenly aware of the advantages of a quality education for their children that supports their spiritual, educational, and physical needs.

It has been a blessing to see another school adopt the Rafiki Education System this year. In 2025 two more schools are planning to implement this system with their youngest students. These schools hired graduates from our Post Graduate Studies Program to help



RICE students enjoying the RICE library



Classical hands-on learning in the Early Childhood Program

teach and implement the curriculum and methods. In addition to these schools, over a dozen schools adopted the Rafiki Bible Study this year and more will begin in January. God has been opening doors and allowing His word to go out into these Christian schools. They have limited access to systematic Bible studies written at different educational levels, so this is filling a great need.

John and I gratefully received our updated resident work visas this fall. This was another exercise in faith as we worked through the system. Now we are approved to work in Tanzania until Fall 2026! Thank you to all who prayed. *Please continue to pray that God will raise up more missionaries to serve with Rafiki in Africa. Pray that those who are considering it now will trust that God will provide all they need to get here including the finances necessary.*

This reminds me to thank all of you for your countless prayers and generous financial support. We know that you all have many demands on your finances and your time, therefore we want you to know how grateful we are for all your support. It is such a blessing and demonstration of love to us.

This Christmas we have a special visitor—our daughter Regina! We are looking forward to sharing our life here with her and exploring more of Tanzania together. We miss our family and friends more intensely during the holidays, so this is a special gift to us. *Please pray for our safety as we travel. Also, pray that the ongoing construction work will proceed nicely while our Assistant Village Administrator acts as a general contractor in our absence.*

May God richly bless you during this Christmas and throughout 2025!

Warmly greeting you from the foot of Mount Kilimanjaro!



Love,

Gwen and John Cicone



Happy to have our resident work visas!



John with Emmanuel the Assistant Village Administrator