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RAFIKI FOUNDATION MISSIONARY NEWSLETTER



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***"May the God of hope
fill you with all joy and
peace in believing, so that
by the power of the Holy
Spirit you may abound in
hope" (Romans 15:13).***

Dear friends and family,

Season's Greetings!

We are thankful for your partnership and prayers. We are filled with joy and thanks as we look back over the year and the past few months. God has been so faithful to us, providing everything that we need in a timely way.

How sweet is it?

In Tanzania, November and December is a time of graduations. One of the traditions during the high school graduation is for the graduates to feed small pieces of cake to their loved ones. It is a lovely token of their love and appreciation for what that person has done in their life. In this picture, you see one of the graduates feeding his Rafiki Mother, affectionately known as "Mamas". The Mamas are an important part of their life, caring not only for their physical well-being but also their emotional and spiritual development. We are thankful for the tireless service of our mothers.



Innocent feeding Mama Elizabeth graduation cake while Mama Mary looks on.

Additionally, our kindergarten celebrated their graduation from pre-school into the full day primary program. What a joy to see these children grow and develop. When they arrive for the three-year-old program, most of them know no English, yet when they graduate from kindergarten they are chatting away in English, as well as learning the basics of reading. We are thankful for the Rafiki curriculum that provides such a rich classical and Christian education for these little ones.



Mr. John and Madam Amy are handing out the kindergarten graduation certificates.

Thanks for a successful year

***"Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with
praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name!" (Psalm 100:4).***

December also indicates the completion of the Post Graduate Studies

(PGS) Program run by the Rafiki Institute of Classical Education (RICE). This year we had nine students make it through the forty week program. Many of these students spoke English infrequently and read the Bible even less frequently when they arrived last January. Through the program, they were immersed into an English only environment and a daily Bible study in addition to their coursework in classical Christian education philosophy and methods. We had a celebration lunch this past week to mark the end of their time with us. Rafiki gives each of them a Reformation Study Bible and a Rafiki Hymnal to help them continue their growth as Christian educators. Several of them already have teaching positions for the coming school year and we are praying that God will provide positions for all of them soon. We also interviewed nine potential students for next year's class. We hope to interview the rest in January so that we might reach our goal of twenty. *Please pray that our church partners would help send qualified candidates to us.*



Graduates of the 2025 PGS program and their teachers.



Upendo giving words of wisdom to the RICE graduates.

Changes and Challenges

"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope" (Jeremiah 29:11).

We are assured that God has good plans for us here. As we look at 2026, our jobs will shift a bit to take advantage of the addition of fellow Rafiki Missionaries, Amy and Tekle. John will continue as the Village Administrator, but Amy will take over as the Headmaster of both the secondary and primary schools. Gwen will continue as the RICE Dean and widow's coordinator, however, her responsibilities as ChildCare Administrator will be shared with John in the following way—Gwen will continue to work with the Rafiki Mothers and the resident children, while John will focus on maintaining our graduates as they continue with their educational scholarships. Thankfully, John is already aware of many aspects of this work. He also has a good relationship with the Assistant ChildCare Administrator, Beatrice, and the guidance counselor, Patrick who are responsible for all the communication with the graduates. We are thankful that God has provided us with fellow missionaries and committed national staff that make this fruitful work possible.



Tekle receives graduation cake from Baraka while Amy looks on with a smile.

Challenges are a constant part of this kind of work, however, this fall brought us a new challenge in the form of political protests. The national election in October was followed by demonstrations. Thankfully, our area saw little protest. But we were without internet five days, and school was canceled during that time. *Please pray for calm to return to Tanzania!*

Blessed by His goodness

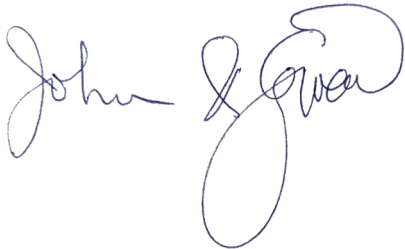
Daily we are reminded of the many blessings we have here: good work, lovely friends, wonderful environment and climate, beautiful culture, and God's ever-present love for His people. As a special gift to us this year, our Executive Director encouraged us to take three weeks during December to visit with family and friends during this holiday season. We hope to see many of you! We are thankful that Tekle and Amy will be able to keep everything going at the Village while we are away. What a blessing to know that God has provided such experienced and gifted teammates.

Prayers and petitions

- Thank you for all the prayers and support we have received this year. We could not do this work without you.
- Thanks to God for preserving us through difficult challenges this year.
- Thank God for all the national workers and Short-Term missionaries who have served us and the Village so well in 2025.
- *Please pray for safety and calm during the political demonstrations.*
- *Pray for our Rafiki children as they stay with their guardians that they would be helpful and loving to all that they encounter.*
- *Pray for our children who are struggling academically that God would strengthen them and make a way for their future education.*
- *Pray for safety on the roads and in the air as John and Gwen will travel in five states in the three weeks that they are in the States.*

"And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him" (Colossians 3:17).

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John & Gwen". The signature is stylized, with the names written in a cursive-like font.

John and Gwen Cicone