



RAFIKI

FOUNDATION
MISSIONARY NEWSLETTER

August 2021 – Laurie Eastup

Dear friends and family,

As usual, the past few months have been busy and an exciting mix of events. It has continued to be a joy to see all of the students growing and changing throughout the first semester. Mid-year is when the young ones, especially, begin to blossom into more confident speakers and readers. It has been quite a delight to see the secondary school getting further established and getting to see all that is possible at the secondary level. Towards the end of the first semester, the secondary school held its first formal debate. One of our aims for students is that they would be able to speak eloquently and persuasively with sound reasoning and logic. To see it happening before my eyes with our own students was a beautiful thing. I am eager to see even more debates as they continue to improve in their abilities with further practice and experience. I am thankful for their teacher who is guiding them, training them, and giving them the opportunities to engage in such meaningful education.



Secondary student debate

The semester closed with our usual sports day and recitation. Students were full of energy as they came to school in their sports clothes and participated in a variety of activities: soccer, basketball, volleyball, rope pulls, running races,

relays, and more. Students are very thankful for the soccer field where they can play their friendly matches and experience games on a regulation-size pitch.



Sports Day soccer match



Pre-primary sack race

A very good turnout of parents came on the last day of the semester to see student performances and an awards ceremony for Honor Roll, Dean's List, Christian Character, and Most Improved. We were all amazed as the Standard II class delivered a recitation about what they had been learning about plants in their science class, spouting off words like "cotyledon", "monocotyledon", and "dicotyledon". They sounded more like twelfth graders than second graders. Imagine what they might be able to do as they progress in their education!



Standard II Plant Recitation

With the end of the school term also came a special visitor for me! My cousin, Andrea, had planned to visit me in June 2020, but that was obviously canceled. So I was absolutely thrilled when it worked out for her to come this June instead and spend the school break with me. We had an unforgettable time exploring Tanzania together and enjoying what this beautiful country has to offer. It was a blast to have an adventure buddy and a blessing to now have another person who has seen life here. It makes a huge difference.



Cousins in Tanzania

It also worked out for us to fly back to the States together at the end of June so that I could attend my first Rafiki Enrichment. I am so thankful that I had the opportunity to attend this year. The name is very fitting because I walked away from the three days feeling very enriched. We had great Bible teaching, got to connect and reconnect with Rafiki Missionaries from the other countries, met the new missionaries who are going out to countries soon, and visit with our Home Office

staff who love us and support us so well. It was also a treat to spend time with the couple that leads my Rafiki Prayer Group in Colorado, Charlie and Julia. Their prayer group meets every month to pray for us, and they have been a tremendous blessing to me over the past three years.



Enrichment with Charlie and Julia

While I was away for a few weeks, life in Tanzania obviously continued on. During the school break, quite a few of our secondary students were selected to compete in district, regional, and national sports competitions. They competed in soccer, basketball, and volleyball. We ended up with 16 students going all the way to the national competitions in Mtwara, which is way down at the southern tip of Tanzania. Opportunities like this are so valuable for them as they get to bond as a team, meet players from many other schools, and see new parts of their country.



Rafiki Foundation Secondary School boys' and girls' soccer teams

About one week before returning to Tanzania, I found out that two of our secondary school teachers had taken jobs elsewhere. That left us with gaps in Swahili, physics, and mathematics. Thankfully, we had a teacher in training who

was immediately ready to take all of the Swahili classes. Within a week of my return, we received an application for a qualified teacher to begin teaching the physics classes. That was an answer to prayers! We are still searching for a math teacher, so please *be praying with us that we can find a good, qualified math teacher*. On the bright side, it has given me the opportunity to teach Form 4 Math! That is the equivalent of eleventh grade. I had no idea how much I would enjoy it. As I began studying and preparing my lessons, my brain was wonderfully stimulated. My starting topic was Transformations. Anyone remember SOHCAHTOA? (Hint: A trigonometry mnemonic for right-angled triangles.) This oldest group of kids is quite special, so I have been glad to have the extra time with them.



Form 4 Mathematics

One of my favorite parts of my role here as Education Administrator is getting to observe classrooms. A recent observation will be one that the teacher, the students, and I will never forget. The topic was Fire Extinguishing. The students first learned about the various types of fire extinguishers and for which class of fires each of them would be used. Then came the practical portion of the lesson. We all went outside where the teacher had prepared a large pile of dry, cut grass. He proceeded to light the pile on fire and told the students to extinguish the fire with their sand buckets. The students quickly got to work filling their buckets with sand and throwing it on the fire, but very soon realized just how difficult it is to extinguish a fire. When sand wasn't working, they resorted to buckets of water. While I have to admit I was a bit nervous at times for their safety, I was very glad they were able to develop a true appreciation for the seriousness of fires and the challenges of extinguishing even a small brush fire.



Form 1 Chemistry extinguishing the grass fire

To give you an update on the new primary school building, it is nearly complete! It won't be long until we will be outfitting the classrooms and doing in-take of the 100 new students that the classes will accommodate. Every time I go take a look at the progress, I think of how amazing it's going to be in January when they are filled with precious little ones. *Please pray for us as we prepare for the expansion. Please pray that God would provide just the right teachers for each class who will love each child and nurture them with truth, goodness, and beauty.*



Progress as of August 7



Looking good!

The work is not always easy and the days are sometimes long, but I am daily sustained by God's grace and strength and the unexplainable joy of being part of His work. And at just the right times, it seems like I get unexpected encouragements. Sometimes it's a silly conversation at lunch with the kids. Sometimes it's witnessing a lightbulb moment for a student or teacher. Sometimes it's a text or email from someone far away. Sometimes it's sweet cards from early childhood students. I count them all as blessings, and I am daily thankful that God allows me to be part of all of this and share it with you.



School Helper thank you cards from EC2 students

With love and joy,

Laurie

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