



RAFIKI

FOUNDATION
MISSIONARY NEWSLETTER

October 2020 – Laurie Eastup

“In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 4:10).

Dear friends and family,

This month marks two years of living in Tanzania! What an enriching, joyful, faith-building two years it has been. I am thankful beyond words that God has allowed me to be part of the work here at Rafiki Tanzania. His faithfulness and provision are evident every day. Many of you have asked me what my plans are after these two years. I am overjoyed to go ahead and tell you that my plan is to stay and continue the work. *I am currently in the process of renewing my permit and visa, so you can pray with me that they will be processed in a quick and timely manner.* My hope is that this newsletter will give you glimpses of just some of the many reasons why I am thankful to continue living and working here.

Every day I get to see students engaged in a variety of learning opportunities. It is amazing for me to see the progression from our youngest preprimary students up to our oldest standard seven students. If I want to start the day with total cheer, I start in preprimary. It is a chance to join in while they sing with all their hearts, whether it be a praise for the day that the Lord has made, or a song about the days of the week, months of the year, or the weather. If I pass by later in the day, they might proudly show me the puzzles they are working on, the vocabulary book they have made, the alphabet they created with their magnet letters, or their ability to do a somersault on the mat. Each week everything is tied to a unit theme. Just recently, the preprimary 3 class completed a unit about transportation and car safety. They were thrilled to practice putting on an actual seat belt. We know these are the foundations of all that they will build upon as they progress to each new grade level.



Preprimary 2 arranging the alphabet with magnet letters



Preprimary 3 learning how to wear a seatbelt

As I spend time in the primary school, I get to see students applying these foundational skills. They are able to read, write, and speak with increasing fluency in both English and Swahili. This opens up the ability for them to read about world history, discuss important topics from all subjects, debate controversial ideas, and share what they have learned with their families and communities. Standard two has been studying the world history surrounding the Exodus. As a culminating activity, the teacher organized a Passover meal for the students and invited me to attend. I was amazed as every student was able to list the ten plagues in order and explain what each element of the Passover meal represented. The funniest was watching them try the bitter herbs (slices of fresh horseradish).



Arguing that words are more important



Arguing that numbers are more important



Standard two dipping the “hyssop” in the “tears”

Standard four recently held a passionate debate. The students debated whether words or numbers are more important in life. I must say, it was a very proud and encouraging moment as a school administrator. Their ability to reason, develop logical arguments, maintain order, and speak persuasively was evidence that their education is leading them towards the eloquent, winsome individuals we desire them to become. Of course, they still have much to continue improving, such as developing more robust and mature arguments, but they are well on their way.



It is also a delight to see students playing and bonding as classmates. Sometimes it is an impromptu dance or chant and other times it is going out to complete a class project. We learn and develop from all of these things, don't we?



I love seeing that our students are blessed to have art and music classes with very capable and talented teachers. I would say that teachers in these subject areas and schools with art and music classes are rare finds. The recent artwork I have seen from students has been a beautiful display of creativity and how interdisciplinary art lessons can be. I am so thankful that our students get these enriching experiences.



Art students replicate an aerial view of the Village



This month, our standard seven students are completing their primary school years. They get to apply what they have learned from those foundational preprimary school years up through their final primary school year as they take their national exams. I look forward to getting their results and seeing their continued progress in secondary school. *Please keep praying with us to receive our secondary school registration soon so that these nineteen students can stay here at Rafiki for their secondary school education.*



Even though our current secondary students are not able to attend school here, I still get the pleasure of watching them work on their gardens, which are growing just a short distance away from my porch. Each night I get to enjoy their chatter as they water and weed the beds. They have nice crops of cabbage, eggplant, greens, and tomatoes right now. I enjoy getting to see them learn how to care for different types of plants and get a little bit of business experience.



As much as I love our students, I equally love the teachers that I get to work with. They play a large part in my desire to continue working here. We are constantly sharpening one another as we do our daily Bible study and Thursday trainings

together. They challenge me to freshen up my understanding of English grammar and explain why things are the way they are. They provide me with so much laughter. They are always eager to learn new things, even if it is challenging. They teach me how to love and care for others. They make quite the Rafiki family.



One final thing that I will share is that I am so thankful to be here because of the unexpected opportunities I am given to see God at work in my life. We have been studying 1 John for the past ten weeks. In week eight, we were asked the question, “How do you see God’s working in your life from eternity past to present?” It is an amazing question to sit back and ponder. I see how God has been at work in my life from eternity past, before the foundations of the world (Ephesians 1:4), by reading of His mighty works of creation and redemption in the Bible. I see Him at work in the present as it seems like He asks me to use everything that I have ever learned in my life. Even my two years of learning to play the French horn in middle school recently came into use for a music class. Can you believe that?



I see Him at work in the present as He provides for all of my physical, emotional, and spiritual needs. I see Him at work as He sorts out matters that arise from state-side that might cause me stress or concern. He takes care of them before I even have time to worry. What a loving God I serve! He is the reason I am here, and I am a thankful recipient of all of these precious gifts.

I want to end by saying thank you for being part of this ongoing journey. Please know that every prayer, note of encouragement, donation, e-mail, phone call, text message, or any other form of support has been priceless to me. Your continued support will be vital as I keep serving here, so please keep journeying with me. Like this chameleon we just discovered in my bush, I believe there are many more surprises and wonders ahead!



With love and joy,

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