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RAFIKI FOUNDATION MISSIONARY NEWSLETTER



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“When I thought, ‘My foot slips,’ your steadfast love, O LORD, held me up. When the cares of my heart are many, your consolations cheer my soul” (Psalm 94: 18-19).

Dear friends and family,

Salutations and greetings Malawi fans! I hope each one of you are doing very well. I also am doing very well. Not a whole lot to talk about this time, but I assure you that you will not be bored reading this... unless reading boring things bores you. Over the past couple of months, I have mostly been continuing to serve the school and the Plant Maintenance and Grounds team (PMG) while still being able to enjoy a couple days of vacation in the mountains.

School

I have made huge progress in sorting the books mentioned in my last newsletter. Out of three storage locations, I have fully gone through two. Now I am left with the largest stack of boxes of all, but I march toward it with a bold glint in my eye, a pep in my step, and gumption in my gumption spot. School finished its second term on April 11, closed for a two-and-a-half-week holiday, and resumed to start the third and final term of the year on April 30. On April 10, the school had its Sports Day. All the students in grades one through twelve participated in eight teams of about twenty-five, competing in tug of war, relay races, and other games. Everyone said it was a tremendous success, better than any other Sports Day. (I did not say it, but many people did.) I also continue to run errands into town and other tasks whenever called upon. Recent errands have included picking up orders of paper, delivering outreach material to the post office, and swapping out pens for cheaper pens at one of the outdoor hardware/stationary markets. And those are just the most recent errands!



Some snippets from Sports Day

Plant Maintenance and Grounds (PMG)

The PMG has undergone a change in leadership, and while one manager was going out and the next one coming in, I got to help the Village Administrator in overseeing the work. In my brief time as assistant to the temporary manager, I oversaw the construction of a new guard shack, the completion of a student waiting area extension by the front gate, and the beginning of a new housing for our south generator. I continue to do check-ins on their work and their projects, but they are hard workers and do not need me getting in their way.

Vacation

We took a couple days after Easter to go up into the mountains of the great David Livingstone. It is called Livingstonia despite the fact that Dr. Livingstone was never actually there. Livingstonia is the area above the mosquito line that Dr. Robert Laws founded when he came to Malawi with his missionary group from Scotland back in the 1800s. It is a beautiful location, and is the site of the main University of Livingstonia campus where several of our Rafiki graduates are enrolled. We spent most of our time at the Mushroom Farm. We hiked up to the Chombe plateau which gave a very beautiful view of the lake. Then from there we hiked down to the Manchewe waterfalls, the tallest waterfalls in Malawi. The Mushroom Farm Eco-Lodge itself was a serene and verdant place, with delicious (although vegetarian) meals. There were a lot of people there... mainly Europeans spending "gap years" traveling Africa. With no vehicle issues and spending my first couple nights outside the Rafiki Village, it was a very nice respite, 10/10, would recommend to a friend!



Me back on the plateau

When we got back from Livingstonia, a chilling sight greeted us. Trees all over campus cut down left and right. In that moment, I had the slightest taste of what Sam Gamgee felt upon returning from his journey across Middle Earth and back. I had forgotten while up in the magnificent arboreal wonderland of the Livingstonia mountains, that ever since school went on break back in April, there have been contract workers here chain-sawing all the eucalyptus trees on this side of the campus. The idea is to get these trees out, sell the lumber, and plant new trees that are better for the soil and more conducive to farming. In the meantime, while it looks depressing, soon the new trees will be planted and flourishing.



So that is just a brief update on what shenanigans I have been getting up to way out here. If any of those things sound particularly interesting to you, then you are most welcome to reach out to me and ask any further questions you may have. If you have any interest in knowing more about what is going on in the school, RICE, or other Village projects, you are welcome to also read my fellow Rafiki Missionaries', (Anna Liebing, May Nealey, and Bryan and Alexis McDaniel) newsletters which can be found at RafikiFoundation.org under "Our Missionaries" and Malawi as placement. I would particularly appreciate prayers for me to make the most of the last few months I have here, prayers for me to obey the great commission in every area of life as best I can, using the abilities that the Lord has given me, and prayers that the Lord would work through me to bless the lives of all those around me. Thank y'all for your continued prayers! 'Til next time!

Love,



Joshua Espinosa