

JULY 2023

RAFIKI FOUNDATION MISSIONARY NEWSLETTER



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Missionary #252

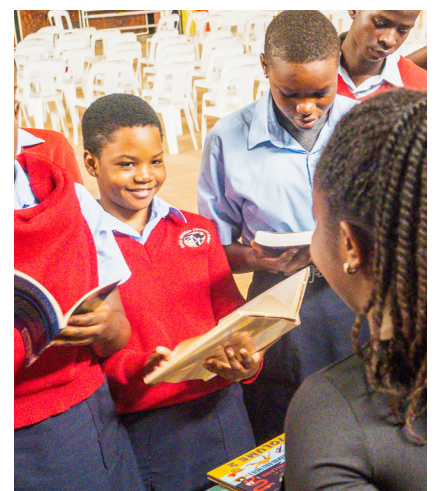
Dear friends and family,

Since we last wrote you, we have completed two years of service with Rafiki and look forward to many more. We have been incredibly busy spreading the gospel here in Uganda in many ways: teaching 411 students (including 56 residents) in our classical Christian school, working with church partners to begin using our curriculum and Bible studies in their schools, working to have new degree programs in our teacher training college (RICE) approved by the government, distributing almost 25,000 Bibles in partnership with Crossway Publishers' One Million Bible Initiative and another 4,000 Reformation Study Bibles donated by Ligonier Ministries to the Church of Uganda, and much, much more.

But we would like to focus on just one event that shows how our initiatives work together to glorify God and introduce our students to truth, beauty, and goodness.

As a capstone project as they prepare to graduate from the RICE Program, our senior teachers-in-training host a book fair for school children in grades four through eight. The idea is that children of this age sometimes lose their affection for reading, if they ever had it to begin with. Such a jolt was especially needed in our case because our primary library had been inaccessible for some time. In addition, our last RICE class graduated during the COVID lockdown when there were no students on campus, so Becky and Richard were the pioneers for hosting a book fair at Rafiki Classical Christian School Uganda.

We had recently been blessed by donations of choice books by friends at our home church and schools in Houston to supplement those already given by Rafiki donors. Loving supporters in Paris gave towards new bookshelves and lighting. God had provided three dedicated Ugandan librarians—for the primary, secondary, and RICE collections. We had caregivers, short-term missionaries, and teachers to help catalogue, label, and shelve our books, and barcode scanners to make checkout efficient.



Deciding which book to borrow

Becky and Richard chose the theme “Space Explorers.” They thought adolescent students could use help in appreciating science. From all three libraries they selected as many books as possible touching on the theme, with the goal of having enough books for every student at the fair to check out one.

The books, a mix of nonfiction and fiction, were eventually sorted into five piles, which were placed on tables spread along the back gym wall:

- The River of Air in the Skies (Weather)
- Creatures of the Air (including dragons)
- Air Travel (including hot-air balloons)
- Otherworldly Places (planets and beyond)
- Travel Between Worlds (including spaceships, angels, and C.S. Lewis’ Space Trilogy characters)

Onstage Richard and Becky presented a skit, playing the roles of the ancient Greek thinker Archimedes and his patron King Hiero. In the drama, dressed in Ugandan togas, they debated whether theoretical or practical knowledge was the more important. Archimedes kept being distracted from the debate, eager to write down the new ideas constantly popping into his head. (If you think ideas matter more than application, you are in Archimedes’ camp!)

Nevertheless, to show that he was perfectly capable of mere applied science, our Archimedes set up a heavy box of blocks. Caleb, another RICE student, groaned in trying to lift it by brute force. Then Archimedes added a pole and chair to demonstrate how the primitive technology of a lever allowed him to lift the weight with one hand. Then he called up to the stage a young girl to show that she too could easily lift the load with the fulcrum (the chair) moved closer to the blocks. Archimedes claimed he could even move the whole world if he had another place to stand and a lever long enough.



Checking out a book



At the Air Travel table



Reviewing books about weather



Archimedes Richard demonstrates a lever to King Hiero Becky at Rafiki Uganda Book Fair

Prayer Requests

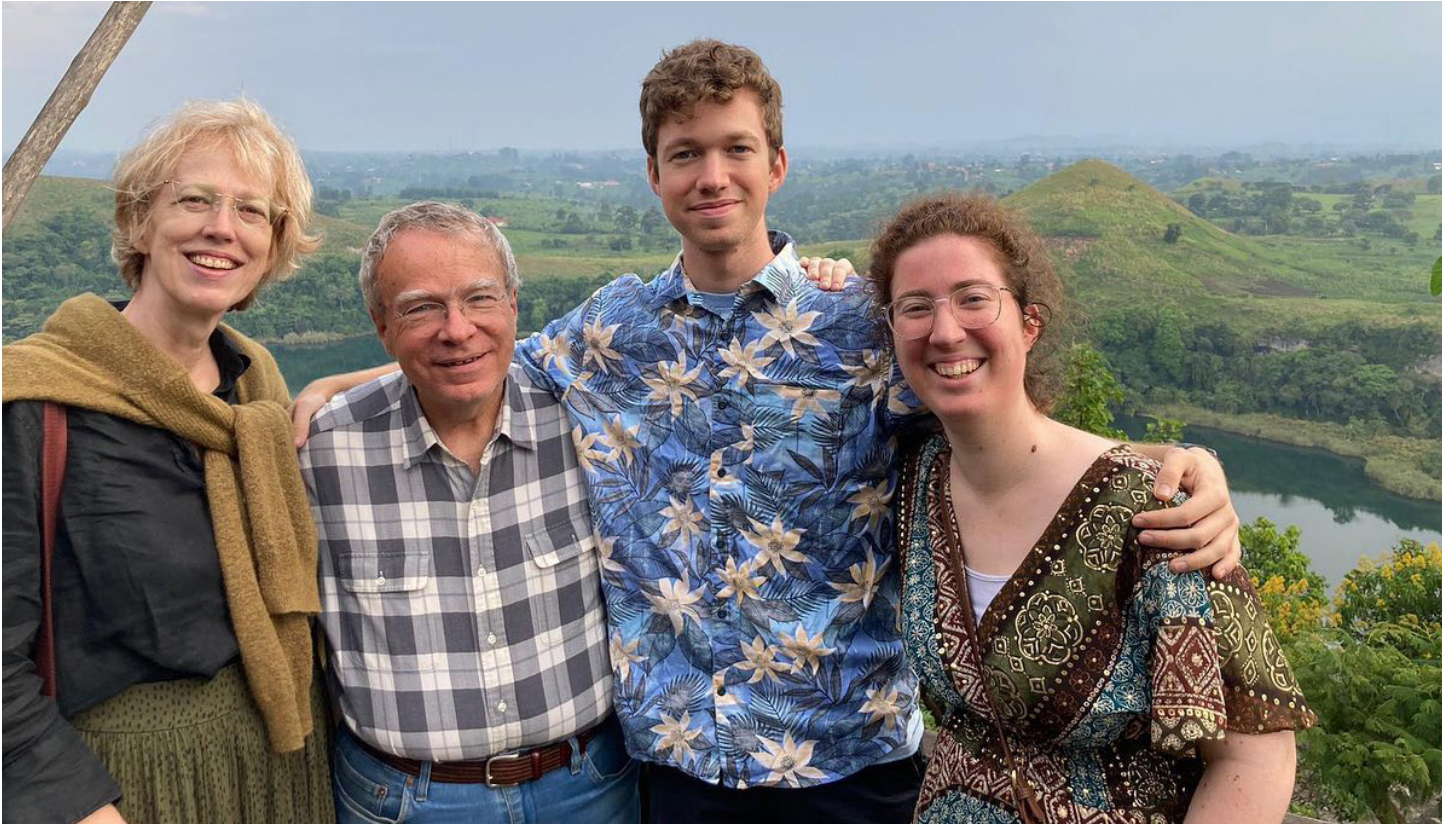
- Full financial support for us to continue serving in Uganda (<https://rafikifoundation.org/missionary/michelle-and-david-graves-252>).
- Rafiki to grow to 70 missionaries on the field by December 2024.
- All Rafiki RICE Programs to be filled up and accredited by June 2024.
- Rafiki Foundation to attain full funding of 3500 Rafiki students and orphans by end of this year.
- All of our children and students to come to know God early and become godly contributors.
- 100 schools in Africa to be using our Bible study and curriculum by June 2024.
- The Rafiki Classical Academy in Eustis Florida to open with 48 students in September 2023.
- Wisdom as we steward all the resources God has given us and that the distribution of every Bible, Bible study, and the curriculum would bear much fruit.
- The October 2023 classical Christian conference in Uganda and Kenya to have full participation and help accelerate the classical Christian movement in Africa.
- Awakening in the church around the world.

The student audience was hooked. They rotated from one book station to the next, each hosted by a RICE student dressed in a kitenge toga fashioned from the curtains in their classrooms.

Finally, students filed youngest to oldest to select a book to check out at one of the three librarians' stations along the gym's west wall. Classroom teachers led them back in orderly lines, heads bent to pore over new treasures of knowledge open in their hands.

Richard and Becky are now teaching full-time at our school, and Richard is the one students turn to for recommendations on what to read next.

We are grateful to God for all of you and the generous support in both prayer and finances provided to us and to Rafiki to sustain our mission here. We would particularly like to thank the communities at St. Thomas' Episcopal Church and School and Trinity Classical School in Houston, Texas, and The American Church in Paris, France, for their contributions of books and financing to improve our libraries.



A lovely week in Uganda hanging with some of the family and looking at beautiful scenery

In Christ,

David & Michelle

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