



RAFIKI

FOUNDATION
MISSIONARY NEWSLETTER

November 2021 – Michelle and David Graves

“We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers...” (1 Thessalonians 1:2).

Dear friends and mission partners,

As we approach half a year in Uganda, we reflect on how much we have to thank God for.

First and foremost for us, is you. You have individually given generously of your prayers and treasure to enable us to join the mission field here in Africa. You are vital mission partners without whom we could not be here.

Our sending church, St. Thomas’ Episcopal in Houston, has given sacrificially to us in support of overseas missions.

Our friend Kay Scholl has organized a group to pray specifically for the Rafiki Village in Uganda each month. And we have discovered that there are other groups praying for us here monthly.

There are countless faithful people throughout the world who donate to support our resident students, to provide university scholarships for our graduates, to assist with the cost of educating our day students, to pay our staff through long COVID lockdowns, to maintain our buildings and grounds, and to cover all of the costs of this mission.

We thank God for all of you and for your faithfulness.

A Few of the Things God Is Doing through Rafiki in Uganda

Since we arrived in July—and for much of the time since March 2020—schools have been closed throughout the country. For most teachers in Uganda that has meant no work and no income. However, God has faithfully provided for Rafiki and we have been able to keep all of our 62 staff of teachers, childcare workers, and support staff employed and on salary.

They have used the time productively helping to

run a successful enrichment program for our 75 residents, organizing teaching sessions in small groups in the community for our day students to keep them from falling behind, and working on a project to demonstrate how our more than 200 volumes of classical Christian curriculum align with and achieve the goals of the Ugandan National Curriculum.



Olivia, one of our residents, reads to neighborhood children outside the gates to the Village. As lockdown restrictions eased, several of the resident students undertook this community service project.

The latter is in pursuit of one of our major goals: having Rafiki’s curriculum approved by the National Curriculum Development Committee for use in church schools. Because many of those schools receive government support, they can only use officially approved curricula. Since July, we have made significant progress towards this goal and are working on a schedule to have an NCDC committee come to our campus for a several day review process. We had hoped to do this before the end of the year, but it looks more likely to

happen in January or February.

The Rafiki Institute of Classical Education (RICE), our teacher training program, was able to resume distance learning in October and on campus instruction in November. This allowed our current cohorts to finally complete their current terms and several to graduate—and has kept Michelle very busy. Ten of these students are currently at our partner university, Westminster Christian Institute Uganda, for a month-long finishing module.

We have also made significant progress towards having our degree programs approved by the National Council of Higher Education. We hope to be submitting the courses to them in the next few weeks.

Meanwhile our resident students continue to amaze us with their talents—and the cheerful spirits they have maintained throughout this lengthy period of lockdown and no school.



Resident student Derrick with his banana fiber self portrait.



A scene from A.A. Milne's *The Ugly Duckling* presented to an appreciative audience in late September and directed by international director Michelle Graves (with lots of help).

Derrick, currently a senior six level resident student, has created some unique and intricate art using only banana fibers. He selects the fibers by tonal value and then spends hours using them to build portraits and other images. He entered them in a juried art show—and was one of a handful of artists selected. Accompanied by two of our teachers he attended the show opening at the Latitude Hotel and has now made a number of contacts in the local art community.



Residents sing a candlelit Christmas song as part of the third enrichment session competition.



As part of the third enrichment session competition, each team submitted original art works based on Luke 1:39-56. The artists showed slides to the judges and other residents and answered questions about each work.

The pig was donated by one of our long-term missionaries, Patti Lafage, who had been in France for medical treatment. By the grace of God she was able to visit us for three weeks. It was a joy having her here—and the obvious love and respect shown by our residents and countless others from outside the Village clearly demonstrated how God can use one person to have an outsize impact on a community. We are praying she will be back with us soon.



Patti Lafage presents a reluctant pig to Team Venus, winners of the third enrichment session competition. The menu for the festive luncheon the next day featured fried pork.

Finally, with the economy completely reopening in January 2022 (we're praying there's no delay), we met with representatives of the 11+ million member Anglican Church of Uganda to organize the use of Rafiki's 30-week Sunday School study of the Book of Matthew in at least 500 of their churches. This is a project that COVID put on hold, but all sides are eager to begin. We are planning on conducting a training/introduction session for those who will be using it shortly after the first of the year. And if you are looking for a biblically sound Sunday School curriculum for all ages and that requires no formal training, you might want to take a look at it. Go to this website for more information <https://www.rafikibiblestudy.org>.

There is much more, but that is a taste. Both of us are busy seemingly all the time as we get a handle on curriculum, maintenance, construction, childcare, finance, animal husbandry, and more. We are thankful for the challenges as they help us learn how we can support and facilitate Rafiki's mission here in Africa. And we continue to be amazed at how even small amounts of money and modest prayers provide outsize returns.

Prayer Requests

- *Thanks for how God has provided for Rafiki Village Uganda spiritually and financially through this difficult time.*
- *That both our pre-K through high school curriculum and our RICE Programs be approved quickly.*
- *Continued care and protection for our Village as we prepare to resume day school and take in new RICE cohorts.*
- *That schools, churches, and the economy will be able to remain open in the new year.*
- *That God will continue to generously supply donors to provide for the financial needs of this ministry.*
- *That God will call new missionaries to join us in the field in Africa, spreading His Word, teaching the Bible, and spreading classical Christian education.*
- *All 250 Rafiki Day Students to have sponsors and be fully funded soon.*
- *For generous giving to the Africa Expansion Campaign. Rafiki is entering a season of exponential growth. We anticipate the thousands that Rafiki is currently ministering to across our 10 countries will turn to tens of thousands. To meet these new opportunities, we are asking God for a 25% increase over Rafiki's current annual budget which could increase Rafiki's impact 10-fold.*

How you can help

If you feel called to contribute, you may do so by logging onto <https://rafikifoundation.org/missionary/michelle-and-david-graves-252> and clicking the "Amount" button. You may make a one-time or recurring contribution. Contributing to us directly covers the cost of sending us into the field and allows Rafiki to use all of its other contributions for orphan care, student tuition, and its other programs. All contributions are fully tax-deductible.

Note: Rafiki is now able to accept non-cash gifts such as real estate or estate bequests. Contact Rafiki@RafikiFoundation.org for more information.

A group of friends led by Kay Scholl meets on the second Sunday of each month to pray for the Rafiki mission. If you'd like to join (in person or by Zoom), please email kayscholl@gmail.com.

If you would like a more detailed account of our experiences, go to davidgraves.blog (Update coming soon).

In Christ,



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