



RAFIKI

FOUNDATION
MISSIONARY NEWSLETTER

September 2021 – Michelle and David Graves

“For nothing will be impossible with God” (Luke 1:37).

Dear friends and mission partners,

We have now been in Uganda for two months—strong evidence that Bible verse is accurate! We are grateful to God and to you for your prayers and support that have made this mission possible.

In May, we went into overdrive, wrapping up at our two schools, getting Nathan graduated from high school and on his way to Virginia Tech, packing three pallets for shipment to Africa, selling and disposing of the rest of our belongings, and putting our house on the market.

In June, we headed to the Rafiki Home Office in Florida. There, we joined our fellow missionaries-in-training for “survival camp”—almost two weeks of training sessions; cooking, serving and cleaning in the kitchen and dining room; and helping at the annual Enrichment Week conference. We survived!



The Rafiki Uganda Missionary Team at the Home Office on July 1, 2021: Kelly Fore, Michelle Graves, David Graves.

On Thursday July 1, we were commissioned as Rafiki Missionaries. On July 3, after last-minute COVID related changes to our travel plans, we were on the first leg of our journey to Uganda. We

arrived close to midnight on July 4, spent the night in a hotel because of the COVID curfew, and headed to the Village on Monday morning.



Looking out our front door

On Tuesday morning, retiring missionaries Peggy and Kent Martin took us in hand and began our real-world training in Village finance, management of property and grounds, security, RICE (the teacher training program), resident childcare, managing the Widows Program, and more. We also began to meet the seventy-five resident children (now mostly teenagers) and the sixty or so staff.

A week or two before we arrived, the government closed churches and schools and greatly restricted travel because of a big upsurge in COVID cases and an acute shortage of vaccines. That has meant that our day school and RICE Program have not been able to meet, but our teachers have been running a successful enrichment program for our resident students. The first session ended with a competition for which the first prize was a goat that the winning team prepared, cooked, and ate.

Michelle is directing a play and has started an enrichment program for our RICE students while David is teaching introductory journalism.



Morning outside Uganda RICE building



A reluctant goat prepares to be presented to the winning team as the afternoon meal for Enrichment Session 2 Contest.

At the beginning of August, travel restrictions were eased, although churches and schools remain closed. Our teachers are working with the families of day students to meet in small groups in the community to help ensure they do not fall further behind.

By God's grace we've also made substantial progress on two of our major projects. We met with the director of the National Curriculum Development Center (NCDC) and have taken a big step forward in getting the Rafiki curriculum approved for use in church schools, many of which also receive government funding. Over the next two months we will be meeting with an NCDC committee to review and answer questions. *Please join us in praying that the process will be*

successfully completed by the end of the year.

In Uganda, students have to take three major national exams at different stages of their schooling. In the 2021 round, our students did remarkably well at each of these levels. Since we do not cherry pick students—and since none of our students come from wealthy families—their success is even more impressive. We believe their success helped open the door for us at NCDC.

We have also had several productive meetings with our partners at Westminster Christian Institute Uganda. Rafiki is working to make sure our teachers training curriculum meets all the Ugandan requirements for granting a college degree in education at our campus. God willing, that too will come to fruition in the next few months.

Around the Village, we have tackled various projects including improving the security of our fence line by planting Kei Apples—an intertwining plant with vicious thorns which should both beautify the fence and make it much more difficult get through.

We are also learning unexpected skills. Michelle knows a lot more about goat management now and David is trying to master the mysteries of keeping both three-phase and single-phase generators working together.



Outside Namirembe Anglican Cathedral in Kampala

In sum, there is plenty for us to do. We are blessed to be working with our dedicated national staff. Hearing them discuss what classical Christian education is doing for their students is truly

inspiring. And it has been a delight serving with our other long-term (and more experienced) missionary, Kelly Fore.

Prayer Requests

- *Schools and churches be allowed to reopen in September, or as soon as possible.*
- *More COVID vaccines to become available in Uganda.*
- *That COVID eases here and throughout the world.*
- *For the NCDC to approve Rafiki curriculum for use by the end of 2021.*
- *That the final steps for approval of our RICE curriculum as a degree program in partnership with Westminster Christian Institute Uganda be completed by the end of 2021.*
- *For our Houston house to sell.*
- *That God watches over and guides our children back in the U.S.*

How you can help our mission and get more information

Our work here is made possible by your prayers and financial support. We are humbled and grateful to all of you who are supporting us. If you feel called to contribute, you may do so by logging onto <https://rafikifoundation.org/missionary/michelle-and-david-graves-252> and entering your gift into the "Amount" field. 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.

A group of friends led by Kay Scholl meets on the second Sunday of each month to pray for the Rafiki mission. If you would 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.

And, finally, please consider whether God might be calling you to missionary service with Rafiki, either short or long term. We would love to have you join us in this great adventure.



Alive and well in Uganda

In Christ,

Michelle and David Graves
PO Box 12714
Kampala, UGANDA
EAST AFRICA

E-mail: DavidG@rafikifoundation.org
MichelleG@rafikifoundation.org

Missionary #252