



# The Rafiki Foundation, Inc.

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## **Taken Away by a Strange Truck!!!**

At the beginning of December, Dennis and Vivian went to a place about six hours away called Kitui, to bring six children from a babies' home to their new home at Rafiki. As you might expect, they were pretty nervous. They didn't know what awaited them. All six children cried as soon as they got in the truck, and all their friends there did, too. The long ride to Rafiki gave our six kids a chance to settle down a bit, but it was still pretty upsetting for those left behind in Kitui. All they knew was that their six friends were taken away by two white people in a Pajero (a Mitsubishi Montero), never to be seen again. On January 16th, Margaret, one of the teachers at Kitui, came to our dedication. She related that the children in Kitui were drawing pictures of Pajeros full of crying children. When she returned to Kitui, she talked to all the children there about what Rafiki looks like, how beautiful it is, how she got to talk to their six friends who live here now, and that all of them were very happy.



The Rafiki Pajero

On January 30th, Dennis and Vivian went back with another Pajero to pick up three more children. This time Margaret was able to tell Vivian that the children were still drawing pictures of their friends in a Pajero—only now the truck is filled with smiling children. When our newest children arrived that day, the first six Rafiki children greeted them. There were lots of waves, calling out names, and smiles. We are still praying for Mary. She tried to get in the Pajero with her three friends, but had to remain

at Kitui because papers for her have not yet been signed. We want her to be wherever God can love her the most. At the end of the first week, all of our newest children are calling Susan "Mama", so we are thanking God for giving these children confidence that they are now a family with a mama.

## **Dedication of Rafiki Village Kenya:**

The dedication went smoothly. Tents were up on time, the caterers brought enough food for an army, and all the speakers showed up (one was about 40 minutes late since he didn't take into account the condition of our road, but no one seemed to mind). The Kenyatta family donated some artifacts of the former President Jomo Kenyatta, and all our guests enjoyed seeing them—from Jomo's leather jacket, sandals and corduroy pants, to his military dress uniform with gold plated sword, to his leopard cape and hat. The girls from the Rafiki Girls' Center came over and looked and whispered, since they have only seen pictures of these things in history books.

Mama Ngina Kenyatta (former First Lady of Kenya) seemed pleased with the various parts of the dedication—the speeches, ribbon cutting, unveiling of a plaque, etc. But when she was finally able to walk down to a cottage and hold Morris, one of our children, she just beamed. The newspaper had a photo of Mama and Morris, so now there is a laminated copy of this picture in his scrapbook for him to enjoy a few years from now. On Sunday, Mama Ngina came back with seven of her grandchildren to show them around and hold babies. It felt good to watch her sit with and talk to these children who just a month ago were orphans.

## **Quarterly Rafiki Community Clinic:**

Today the clinic opened to the community for the second time. People were lined up a couple of hours early, sitting on a telephone pole laying near the clinic, mostly mamas and babies, and a few other women. No doubt many of these came to the last community clinic. A few of the local partner churches have graciously sent us

more than enough volunteers, who are helping with registration and translation. A table is set up in a corner of the courtyard with a TV/VCR. Rebecca and Sarah have quite a few animated Bible videotapes, which they've donated to the cause (although they don't know it yet), and the kids in the clinic courtyard watch just as intently as American kids do. Some know a bit of English, while others don't, but it doesn't seem to make much difference. The volunteers are keeping sidewalk chalk in reserve, in case the kids start getting too bored. Kenyan children are generally very respectful and even a bit quiet or reserved, so its hard to imagine any of them getting out of hand.

### **Getting into Routines:**

Today things are getting back to normal at the RCC. Lately, Timothy has started leading mealtime prayers in English. The others still mumble along in that same pattern of words their mothers have taught them to pray, but they all know when to say amen! After breakfast, the kids go to school. Lorine, Timothy and Catherine are in kindergarten; Margaret, Kelvin, Samuel, Joseph, and Josiah are in nursery. Timo, Morris, and Grace are too young even for the nursery class. Rose Allinder and her Kenyan teacher counterpart, Joy, are teaching the children English and Kiswahili (most of them only know the Kikamba language), ABC's and 123's, and shapes & colors. This week in Bible class they learned about Mungu na watoto (God and children). They listened to the story of Mary and Joseph and their baby Jesus. They seemed most interested in telling each other that Jesus has a neck. I seems that their hokey-pokey song about body part names is spilling over into other areas. On Thursdays, the children have a chapel class in Kiswahili. Lorine enjoys being song leader, and all the others chime in quickly and loudly. Whenever they sing, they can be heard quite a distance away, even in the workshop where Doug is spending most of his day lately.

### **Vocation Training School for Teenage Boys?**

By the end of January, permission was given to begin the next phase of new construction. A Boys' Center, primary school and duplex have been approved for 2004. Mama Ngina has graciously extended our borders to include a

triangle of land that will become the site of the Boys' Center. Lots of work needs to be done as far as planning, surveying, water and power supplies, and preparing for bids on these buildings. One of the existing buildings has served as our workshop and will need to be torn down. This week we moved the workshop to a better location and began disassembling the old one. All of the corrugated roofing and ceiling boards have been given to a local partner church to be used for a Sunday school building. Our previous donation of sheet metal has been used to complete their church building (shown in the picture on the first page). This is a "daughter" church of the one we attend in Mwiki.

### **The Koepkes are coming to visit in July 2004:**

We would like to visit you in South Dakota, El Paso, Abilene, Amarillo, Midland-Odessa, and the DFW areas. If you would prayerfully consider hosting a coffee in your home or church, please e-mail us. We want to schedule our time with respect to your busy schedule.

Working with you for Him,

*Doug, Carolyn  
Rebecca, Sarah*

Doug, Carolyn, Rebecca & Sarah Koepke

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