



Rafiki Foundation, Inc.

Missionary Newsletter

October 2014 – Carolyn and Doug Koepke



We arrived safely at the Rafiki Village in Jos Nigeria on August 24th.

Dear friends and family,

Thanks be to God!! And thank you for praying for us. The airplane trip was good and all of our thirty-four checked bags arrived with us. Melanie Martin met us when we got off the plane in Abuja and escorted us right through customs with no major obstacles. Our boxes are unpacked and we already feel settled in our new home.

Waking our first morning, we were greeted by the sight of hills of lava boulders surrounding part of the Rafiki Village. We live on a plateau that is the food belt for much of the surrounding area. It's mostly flat like Texas, but every so often there is a gigantic boulder with another boulder on top of it. It's like God randomly dropped rocks when he was decorating the terrain. Some are as big as three-story buildings and some are as small as pebbles.

A wonderful first month has come with many new firsts for us. We ate our first Nigerian meal at our teammate Erica Robertson's house. (Does it count as a Nigerian meal if it was yummy homemade pizza? We did eat it in Nigeria!)

Greetings are important in Nigeria. The first greetings we received were, "You are welcome" and "Well done" or "Sannu" in Hausa (the local tribal language). We found out the correct response to any greeting or question is "Lafia." It means "it is fine." It doesn't matter if you are fine or not. That's always the correct first response.

The first people we met were the Rafiki Mothers and children. What a wonderful, God-loving group! The children are smart and so BIG! We went from having younger children in Rwanda to having mostly teenagers in Nigeria. There are 110 children at this Village. The first Saturday we woke

up to drums. Which grandparents gave our children such noisy toys and then told them to play right outside of our bedroom window? The soccer field is right by our house so we get the privilege of watching soccer (football) matches up close. Nice!



Teenagers at Rafiki Village Nigeria

The weather here is pleasant with a 5,000-foot elevation. It's been in the 70's and 80's since we arrived. There is no need for central heat or air-conditioning. We are finishing up the rainy season, and when it rains, it pours! We have electricity about half the time. We use a big generator a few hours a day to keep our food from spoiling and to wash the children's clothes. The water source is from three on-site wells. We filter the water to drink and to brush our teeth.

There has been a break from school, so many of the older children have been helping paint the schools and cottages. They are enjoying learning a new skill, and the official recognition of being leaders among their peers. At the same time, the buildings that are most in need of sprucing up are getting attention.

Some of the boys and girls who have the desire to know how things work have spent time with Doug as they work together on washing machines, small appliances, and vehicles. Others are working on driving lessons and a select few get to help Carolyn in the clinic.

Dr. Dan Brown just arrived to do yearly physicals. Those children with a desire to pursue medical training are getting a chance to find out what awaits them. Our other team member, Laura Farmer, has also just returned from furlough in the States.



A baby "kid" getting his temperature taken at the medical clinic

Praises:

- Overall, the children are happy and healthy.
- A generous local donation of food and cleaning items was recently received.
- The children are helping with many projects over their extended school break. The older children are tutoring the youngest at school in the mornings. They eat lunch and then help with a Village project for two hours before snack time. After snack, it's time for activities such as soccer, bike riding, volleyball, and basketball.
- Praise God for our safe arrival.
- Several older children are in the process of learning to drive a car and getting a driver's license.
- Dr. Dan Brown returning to Nigeria to complete yearly child physicals.

Prayer Requests:

- The mosquitos here can carry malaria, so please pray for protection of our health.
- Pray for a dentist or dental hygienist who can come to clean the children and staff's teeth. It's been several years since they have had their teeth cleaned.
- Pray for God to send an additional two mothers to train.
- Pray for safety for the children and staff during this extended school break.
- Pray for quick healing for two children who recently needed stitches.
- Pray for Carolyn to remember all the children and staff names!
- Pray for safety for everyone involved in repairing and repainting cottages and schools.
- Pray for God to wake fifteen of our children at night so they have dry sheets in the morning.

Love,

Doug, Carolyn & Sarah

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