



RAFIKI

FOUNDATION
MISSIONARY NEWSLETTER

February 2021 – Sarah McMahon

Dear friends and family,

Happy New Year from Ethiopia! I cannot believe I have already been here for three and a half months. It has been nice to settle in here knowing that I will not just be moving again soon. I have bounced around a lot lately! From August to October, I served in Rafiki Tanzania. Then, near the end of my three-month visa, my plan was to await the processing of my Ethiopian visa in Florida. That plan abruptly changed when I discovered I could apply online and receive a reply within days! So instead of a very costly and tiring trip back and forth from the U.S., I got to travel directly from Tanzania to Ethiopia. Praise the Lord!

Since my arrival, my main roles have been as music teacher to preschool through grade three, teaching coach for the early childhood teachers on the art and music curriculum, and ChildCare Program Assistant through spending time with the resident children. I have also been collaborating with the other missionaries, running activities alongside them during times the children are not in school. I will continue these things (and undoubtedly more) while I am here.

At the beginning of January, we celebrated Ethiopian Christmas, complete with extra spicy food and presents for the mothers and children. However, the night before we all enjoyed the first Nine Lessons and Carols service held here at the Village. I had the pleasure of planning and leading the service including selections for three choral ensembles (children, young women, and young men), congregational singing, and readings both in English and the local language of Amharic. I am so proud of all the effort and accomplishment they displayed in so little time. I had so much fun directing the choirs and seeing a simple idea work

out so well. What a meaningful and beautiful way to celebrate Christmas Eve.



Leading the young women's choir during our Christmas Eve service

If you know anything about Rafiki, you know that faithful Bible study is essential to everything we do. What most of you probably do not know is that Ethiopia has a secular education system. That means that even private church schools are not permitted to teach the Bible. Our Bible classes have to be held before the official start of the school day, but things seem to be changing. Church leaders in the Mekane Yesus denomination are increasingly interested in our school. Two groups visited and enjoyed presentations by Amy Ketcham, my colleague and the Headmaster of the school, and also some resident students. Amy also had the privilege of speaking at an education conference in Addis Ababa last month. Church and education leaders, moved by her words and the strong evidence of the positive impact of classical Christian education, are now contacting government officials asking to change these policies for the better. *While change is typically slow, please pray with us for these changes and for an increased relationship between Rafiki and these church leaders.*



Eighth graders giving a presentation to representatives of the Mekane Yesus denomination

I need to apologize for the lateness in this letter. Thankfully, I am healthy and happy. In light of both the pandemic and unrest in the north, we all have been very safe here in Mojo. Thank you for your concern and continual prayers for me and everyone here. Additionally, if you missed any previous newsletters (October or earlier), feel free to email me, or you can find them online at <https://rafikifoundation.org/missionary/sarah-mcmahon-247>. I think my distribution kinks are worked out now though.

Gratitude always fills my heart for your numerous prayers and donations that allow me to be here. I truly could not do this without you all. At this point, I am 100% supported through my first year and funds continue to come in for my second year. Also, if God wills, I may be here much longer than two years. If you have been contemplating any sized gift, one-time or recurring, the beginning of the year is a great time to give.

Here are five ways you can join me in prayer:

- *For my continuing to settle in and establish routine.*
- *For wisdom teaching many ages of children who have had very little previous musical instruction.*
- *For qualified and dedicated teacher and mother candidates to fill recent needs.*
- *For peace and stability in Ethiopia and around the world.*
- *For God's Word to be taught faithfully, bringing many to the knowledge of Truth.*

Joyfully serving our amazing Father and Redeemer,

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