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RAFIKI FOUNDATION MISSIONARY NEWSLETTER



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Missionary #247

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“But Jesus called them to him, saying, ‘Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God’” (Luke 18:16).

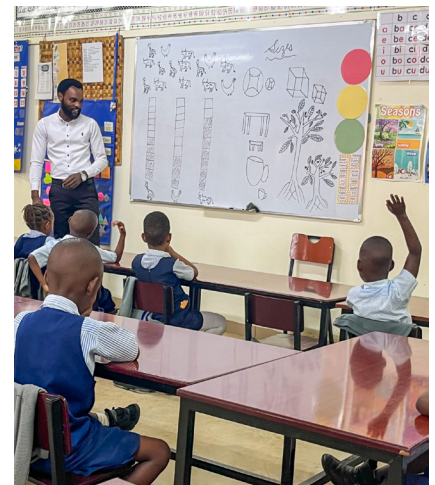
Dear friends and family,

As an education administrator, I see the value of reflecting on the benefits of what I do and what I stand for. While few people would argue against education as a whole, there is more disagreement regarding formal education at the early childhood level. Some may say that sending children to school before the age of six is unnecessary, and that young children need to spend most of their time playing at home. I myself never attended a preschool, and I could say that I “turned out just fine” without it.

While I do agree that the youngest students need to spend most of their time playing, there is strong evidence for developing and maintaining high quality early childhood (EC) education. Studies show that children zero to five years old with exposure to rich experiences have better physical and mental health, are less likely to exhibit risky behaviors, and are more likely to successfully complete school. However, many homes do not have the resources to provide such experiences for their children. The reality for children of low-income families not enrolled in preschool, including in Rwanda, is neglect, exposure to dangerous circumstances, and often stunted intellectual growth.

Facts like these were carefully considered when Rafiki was building its schools and curriculum. The lessons taught by our EC teachers are detailed and inspiring. Children not only learn numbers and letters, but also art, music, large and small motor development, and social skills. Most importantly, every lesson points back to our good and loving creator God who is worthy of our praise and thanksgiving. Our students memorize Bible verses through song, listen and respond to Bible stories, and learn from the earliest age how to see the world through a Biblical lens.

And it is working! Consider Dylan*, one of our EC level one students. He began school last August and was completely non-verbal except when talking with his twin sister. His previous day-care had even punished him for not speaking. However, through consistently loving interaction with his teachers and the multitudes of rich experiences I



Kindergarten students learn to graph in math class.



EC children develop large motor coordination through games during P.E. and field day.

mentioned, he now answers questions and communicates freely with teachers and peers.

Consider also Sam* who had to repeat EC level one this year. His behavior, academics, and social interactions were all suffering at the end of last school year. He lacked the self-control and skills required even to move to the next level, and he did not even seem happy. Today, one year later, Sam has grown in maturity. He is a kinder friend, can consistently demonstrate his academic abilities, is a better listener to his teachers, and clearly enjoys being at school.

While these are just two examples, I really could go on and on about the way children's lives are being changed in every Rafiki school. Rafiki's commitment to maintain strong model schools and support the widespread use of their curriculum with partner schools is one way that we help people know God and raise their standard of living wherever we go.

Thank you all for your generous support to keep me here. I have just finished my second year in Rwanda, and I am blown away by God's faithfulness, answered prayer, and your continued love for me far away. Please also note that I plan to be in Massachusetts this October. If you live there (or nearby), I would love to make sure we reconnect. It has been a long time, and I miss you all!

Praise the Lord for

- Successful completion of another school year!
- The great help of the ten short-term missionaries that visited in the past three months.
- Twenty new high school graduates from our school!
- Reception of our shipping container without anything missing.
- My teammates Eric and Rachel's new baby Emily Rehema born May 31.

Soli Deo Gloria,



Sarah McMahon

*Names have been changed to protect students' privacy.



EC level one students return with juice and cookies from a field trip to a nearby shop, learning about community helpers. What a fun snack!



Three-year-olds recite John 3:16 and sing "Jesus Loves Me" at a recitation performance.

Please join me in prayer for

- *The swift and safe arrival of my new teammates Steve and Lorri Blum in August.*
- *Successful completion of several renovation projects at our school this summer—changing previous residence cottages into Early Childhood classrooms.*
- *All who are grieving the loss of Rafiki's beloved founder, Rosemary Jensen.*
- *Continued generosity to sponsor students and to the operating fund to sustain our ministry at home and overseas.*



A quick snap with one of the recent high school graduates, and just some of the short-term missionaries we welcomed this term.

Learn more about Rafiki's expanding opportunities.

Visit our newly designed website RafikiFoundation.org to learn how to:

- Purchase the Rafiki Bible Study for small groups for your church or neighborhood
- Serve as a missionary with Rafiki
- Sponsor a child with the Rafiki Foundation to bring God's Word and the best education in the world to some of the neediest children in the world in Africa.

Explore the Rafiki Foundation YouTube channel.

Visit (youtube.com/@RafikiFoundation) for videos from Rafiki children, teaching at our annual Enrichment conferences, and the teaching at our African classical Christian conferences.

Listen to our podcast for current discussions on Rafiki's work in Africa truenorth.fm/show/the-rafiki-foundation-podcast/