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RAFIKI FOUNDATION MISSIONARY NEWSLETTER



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Missionary #247

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“The reading of all good books is like a conversation with the finest minds of past centuries.”

–Rene Descartes

“Visit many good books, but live in the Bible.”

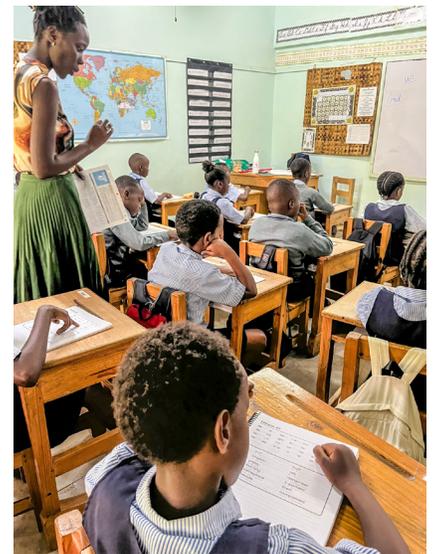
–Charles Spurgeon

Dear friends and family,

Have you ever considered your easy accessibility to books? I bet you can quickly count five books (at least!) that you have enjoyed reading in your lifetime, from Dr. Seuss, to Austen, or C.S. Lewis. You likely live less than five miles from a public library, and probably every school you attended, regardless of age level, included a library as well.

For the average African, this is not reality. Broadly speaking, libraries and bookstores in sub-Saharan Africa are sparse and are mainly just in the capital cities. Even when one is privileged enough to live near a library, books in local languages are usually scarce. The typical citizen is left unexposed to books and a reading culture in general. All the Rafiki teachers I have worked with have said a version of, “I did not grow up reading books.”

Now consider the difference one school can make. We not only teach students to be proficient readers, but also provide a rich selection of books for them to choose from! It truly is the foundation of equipping students to be lifelong, independent learners. Students in Rafiki learn to read by second grade through phonics and are surrounded with literature they love. Parents of new students are shocked by how quickly their children become true readers and wish they had the same opportunities when they were young. All students visit one of our three libraries weekly to check out new



Teacher Daniella leads her second grade students in a reading lesson.



Sixth graders choose a new book to read during library time.

books. One teacher even told me recently her third graders consider missing library a worse punishment than missing recess!

Most importantly, our students are taught to read the Bible for themselves and can do so (with help) even in first grade. Every classroom has enough Bibles for every student. These are used every morning during Bible study as well as other subjects throughout the day, since Rafiki's curriculum is written from a Biblical worldview. There is no doubt about it, Rafiki Schools build a reading culture. See for yourself!

In personal news, I will be traveling to the U.S. at the end of March for Enrichment at the Home Office in Florida, and then I will be in Arizona from April 1-14. I am already packing it full with family, church visits, and other business, but I would love to catch up with you! Email or WhatsApp me and let's make a plan!

Your prayers and financial support make a tangible difference in my life overseas. Thank you to all of you who continue to partner with me this way. Consider also sponsoring a student from my school. It is another great way to see what life is like here, build a relationship with him or her, and help keep our school running well. All you need to do is go to www.RafikiFoundation.org/sponsor, and type "Rwanda" in the search bar. Those smiles are hard to resist!

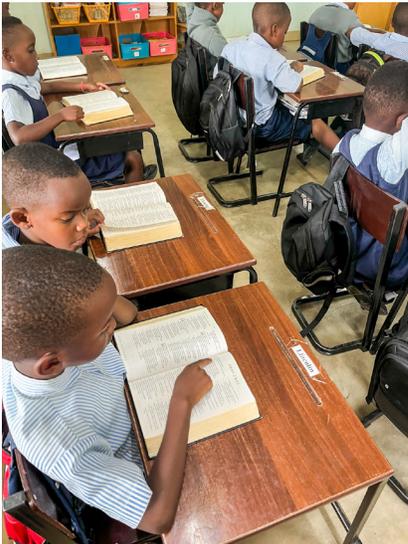
Join me in thanking God for:

- Stephen and Lorri Blum who are slated to come to Rwanda this summer as new long-term missionaries! (Pray they can sell their house soon!).
- The stamina to keep up with the relentless responsibilities here.
- Success for our students in both math and basketball competitions!

Thank you so much! May God bless you and your families wherever you are this Easter!



Even preschoolers get time to read books every day.



Two first grade students find the passage for morning Bible study.



Kindergartners come to sing me a surprise "Happy Birthday."

Pray with me for

- *The busyness of the last weeks of the term before I leave!*
- *My trip to the U.S. to be both profitable and rejuvenating.*
- *Our supply container to arrive soon without any more shipping delays.*
- *Our twelfth grade students as they continue to prepare for national exams.*
- *Twenty more missionaries to go and serve with Rafiki.*

Sarah McMahon