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# RAFIKI FOUNDATION MISSIONARY NEWSLETTER



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Missionary #261

Dear friends and family,

“Akwaaba! (Welcome)” I read the message on my phone as I waited at the bag claim area of the Accra airport upon my arrival in Ghana. Scott and Andrea, the couple who are my missionary neighbors and teammates at the Rafiki Village, had sent the message as they waited outside, holding a welcome sign made by some of Rafiki’s high school students. In the past month that I have called Ghana home, I have been able to witness many beautiful parts of my new life here. I would like to introduce you to some of this beautiful life.

Welcome to Ghana. Allow me to introduce you to the Rafiki Village, where I live and work. As the first of Rafiki’s ten Villages throughout Africa, our site here in Ghana was established over twenty years ago, but is still beautifully maintained. When I step out of my house each morning, I often see colorful varieties of birds enjoying the coolness of the morning. As I walk up to one of the classroom blocks for our teachers’ Bible study, I pass by an outdoor basketball court. In about half an hour, the kindergarten through ninth-grade students and teachers will all be gathered on this space for our morning assembly. Later in the day, you might see this area occupied by a PE class, elementary students playing at recess, or junior high residents enjoying an evening study break. Across the basketball court, you will see our preschool classrooms. If you wander along the winding sidewalks of this beautiful campus, you will find our preschool playground (quite a treat here in Ghana!), a spacious soccer field, multiple classroom blocks for our elementary and junior high classes, a dining hall and kitchen, a dormitory for the eighth- and ninth-grade boys who have grown up in the Rafiki family, and small homes, called “cottages,” for the eighth- and ninth-grade girls who have grown up in the Rafiki family. The Rafiki Village campus is spacious enough for me to take a pre-dinner walk after the school day. In the evening, I might walk down the small, dirt road from my house to Scott and Andrea’s home, where we sometimes eat dinner



I pass this massive tree on my evening walks around the Rafiki Village. I can’t help but wonder how much history this tree has seen.

or play games together. During this Advent season, we have made a habit of getting together each evening for devotions derived from Handel's *Messiah*. This is home.

Welcome to Ghana. Come with me as I introduce you to our school. Walk by any set of classrooms, and you are almost guaranteed to hear singing. We all begin and end each day by singing the hymn of the week: in our teachers' morning Bible study and Friday afternoon training, in our morning school assembly, and in each classroom as the day begins with Bible class and ends with prayer and singing. Throughout the school day, you can hear kindergarten voices singing the days of the week alongside the days of creation as part of their morning calendar routine, you can find a preschool teacher calling her young students to circle time by inserting their names into "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands," and you can hear second graders beginning their grammar lesson by singing, "A person, a place, or thing is a noun..." Walk up to the junior high classroom block, and you might hear seventh graders singing this same noun song as they review for upcoming exams, recalling some of the foundations they mastered when they were young students at this school. This is the school I get to lead.

Welcome to Ghana. Jump in the car with me as I go to church on a Sunday morning. Because of the road construction, we will leave forty-five minutes before Sunday school begins. Ongoing road construction means that all of the cars, vans, buses, and semi-trucks that would otherwise travel on the multi-lane highway are instead driving on the dirt road serving as a detour. With no lanes marked, potholes to avoid, frequently changed routes, and everyone trying to get where they are going, driving here takes an extra level of skill! I am thankful for Scott's driving and that I can catch a ride with Andrea and him. When we get to church, we will find a spot among the rows of plastic chairs set up in the semi-outdoor meeting space. This church is just a few years old, and on any given Sunday there is likely to be about twenty of us worshipping together. Families attend service together each week. Sometimes, I will see a couple of the elementary-aged girls find their way next to a young woman at our church who also happens to be a teacher at Rafiki's School. She will help them follow along in the hymnal. After the church service, everyone will visit for a bit. Some weeks, Andrea and I might walk down the road to buy some bakery items or vegetables from some of the ladies who have stands on the side of the road. This is my Sunday morning.

Although it is not possible to capture all of life in Ghana in the space I have here, I hope this gives you a bit of a picture of my new, beautiful life here. I appreciate all of your faithful prayers for me. Here are some updates on how you all have been and can continue praying:

- I am so thankful for Scott and Andrea's gracious hospitality as I adjust to life here. They have welcomed me, oriented me, and invited me to join in life with them. *Please pray for our continued growth and unity as a team.*
- I have also been welcomed by Scott and Andrea's church community. Although I will likely try some other churches in the new year to see whether this should continue to be my church home here, Scott and Andrea's church has been a wonderful community to plug into.
- There are many good, beautiful things already in place at the school I am leading. Among these are the three gentlemen who lead the different school divisions (early childhood, elementary, and junior high). *Please pray for*



Preschoolers join their teacher in a song-game to find and identify numbers hidden around the classroom.



First graders carefully practice writing cursive letters.



Each month, the ladies from our church are invited to Andrea's house for Bible study — and, of course, snacks!

*my continued partnership with Mr. Sam, Mr. Pendoxa, and Mr. Casmier as we lead our teachers and the school toward God-glorifying excellence.*

- I am thankful for some sweet moments and good discussions with teachers during our morning Bible study times. I am thankful for the opportunities God has begun giving me for teacher training and mentorship. *Please continue praying for God to give me His wisdom in leading and supporting these teachers well.* When we return from Christmas break in January, we will have three teacher in-service days, when I will have more opportunities for formal teacher training.
- I am thankful for the gift God has given me to spend this Christmas at the Rafiki Village Malawi. I will get to meet the headmistress of Rafiki's Malawi School, and I will get to reunite with the three Rafiki Missionaries who went through missionary training at the same time as me. Two of them, Bryan and Alexis McDaniel, had been waiting and praying for their work permits to come through so that they and their three kids can move to Malawi. Please join me in praising God that the McDaniels' work permit was approved and they made it safely to the Village. *Pray for a beautiful Christmas for all of us together at the Rafiki Village Malawi and for a sweet reunion with the McDaniels and Joshua (the other missionary from our training) as well as with old Malawi friends that I will get to see during my last few days in Malawi. I also appreciate your prayers for my travel to and from Malawi: for safe travels and physical stamina during the long journey.*

Know that I feel your prayers daily, and I am grateful. May you know the blessing of God's presence in new ways this Christmas season.

Love,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mollie". The script is cursive and fluid, with a large initial 'M' and a trailing flourish.

Mollie Mitchell