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RAFIKI FOUNDATION MISSIONARY NEWSLETTER



Maureen and Jay Richards

PO Box 1018
Mzuzu, Malawi
EAST AFRICA

Contact information
Email:
MaureenR@RafikiFoundation.org
JayR@RafikiFoundation.org
Missionary #254

*“For with the LORD there
is steadfast love, and
with him is plentiful
redemption” (Psalm 130:7).*

Monile monire mose a wakulu na a mdumbu!
(Greetings all you brothers and sisters!—chiTumbuka),

Welcome to the next edition of God’s Word at Work in northern Malawi, Central Africa!

When I look back on the things that have transpired since our last update, I stand amazed. Not because of personal accomplishments, because those seem very inadequate to the Richards’ calling here. But because of the Lord’s goodness in working among His precious people of the (mostly) Tumbuka heart language. I say “mostly” because there are other heart languages in the northern region. Communication is always challenging, but we see Malawians of all tribes extending grace to us as we struggle to interact and share the vision of Rafiki Foundation.

The Richards have now been in Africa for more than a year! Our school is in the final term of the academic year, which ends in September. At that time our third high school graduating class will spread their wings and leave us and their Village-on-the-plateau near Mzuzu. They have been raised by Rafiki mothers since toddlers. They have studied the entire Bible, from Genesis to Malachi and from Matthew to Maps. They have been taught that Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life. They have had the privilege of a sound, classical Christian education (CCE). *Pray with us that they will cling to Jesus and stand firm against the temptations of the world as they enter this next season of their lives; and that the Lord will direct them into the colleges, technical institutes, or apprenticeships that He has planned for them.* We are delighted that one of last year’s graduates, David, has been accepted into African Bible College in the capital city of Lilongwe! Rafiki prays that some of its young men will be called into the Ministry, and David is an answer to that prayer.

Since early May, we have been blessed with a string of volunteer short-term missionaries who have come to us and sacrificed their time and talents to furthering the work. College students have helped enhance our internet backbone, tutored in the study halls, and organized the teacher college lesson plans. A trio of ladies with



Karen, one of our short-term missionaries, being loved on!

library skills worked for two weeks to enhance the organization of our three campus libraries. An experienced CCE teacher is teaching in the high school for most of the fourth term and providing professional development training to the national teachers. A long-time sponsor of one of our residents from Dallas is tutoring and assisting in the primary school. We are very grateful for each of them and stand in awe of how they have responded to the call on their lives to come to such a remote part of the world and partner with us.

Most of the long-term missionaries were called to the Home Office in Florida in June for refreshment at Enrichment and a valuable security training. It was great to connect with fellow missionaries scattered across the length and breadth of the continent, all at once. It was not so great to be in transit for the best part of two full days both coming and going! But things went smoothly. Except for this incident: Jay was carrying Widows Program crafts in one of his suitcases to take back to Florida to offer for sale in the Rafiki Exchange. Customs agents called him into a backroom and “asked” him to open the bag. As they were sorting through the material with confused looks, Jay explained that they were helping Malawian Widows earn a living with dignity by buying and selling handicrafts through our non-governmental organization. Finally, the head agent smiled and said that everything was O.K. They had suspected that Jay was trying to smuggle ivory! While in the U.S., we were able to attach a few extra days to our stay to visit family, present at all three of our supporting churches, and meet with many of our supporters and prayer partners all while attending to eight different medical and dental appointments. We are grateful to our daughter-in-law nurse Linda who arranged all the medical stuff. And, by the way, we remain healthy and fit to serve on the mission field.

As predicted last update, we have more work to do in fine-tuning our teacher college curriculum after the visit by the National Commission for Higher Education. Part of this will be traveling to the capital to meet with representatives of the Ministry of Education. But we now have a way forward and feel confident that our college will be accredited in God’s good timing as a campus of the University of Livingstonia. The inspectors loved our facility and library. And... more than one inquired how they can get their children into our school! Ha! Praise God.

Poverty continues to crush our Malawian friends here, in one of the most impoverished countries in the world. Even bicycle taxi fare is beyond some of our team, who walk daily up to an hour one-way to reach the Village. The Rafiki Foundation has been incredibly responsive to increasing wages for our Malawi family as best they can, and our team is very grateful. But inflation is soaring, the government has devalued the local currency, and crops this year were not very good. In addition, Malawi relies on grain from the Ukraine and we all know the impact of that. There have been demonstrations across the country and some scattered violence, to which the police have responded firmly. We do not feel threatened at all, but we commiserate with our friends who now face food staples that have tripled in price since we arrived. As I move around our 73-acre Village, I am keenly aware of the school age children sitting in the dirt all day in rags beside their huts just outside our fence because their families cannot afford school fees or

Please pray

- *God’s mighty work will continue among the orphans and school children here that all may know His Son personally.*
- *our soon-to-be-graduates will follow the Lord in finding their place for this next season.*
- *for continued progress toward government accreditation of our teachers’ college as a campus of the University of Livingstonia.*
- *for funding to be provided for a replacement used vehicle.*



Teacher college student Gift, receiving his diploma from the Dean.

uniforms. There is no free education here. We have a sponsorship program for day-students to come to our school and we plan to expand classroom space to bring in more as rapidly as we can. Would you like to help sponsor a child as a day-student? Go to the Rafiki Foundation website to learn more: rafikifoundation.org.

And as also mentioned on our last update, the Home Office has authorized us to replace one of the two Village cars with another used—but hopefully less fatigued—vehicle. If you would like to help fund a replacement car, please prayerfully consider a gift by one of two ways:

- Online at <https://www.rafikifoundation.org/missionary/jay-and-maureen-richards-254>
- By check to: Rafiki Foundation, PO Box 1988, Eustis, FL 32727

In either case, please note that your gift is for the Richards-254 Car Replacement Fund.

Lastly, we said good-bye to a dear Rafiki friend, Professor Egbert Chibambo, during the Home Office visit. Jay was the Master of Ceremonies. Professor Chibambo connected Rafiki with the Central Africa Presbyterian Church. Egbert's connecting Rafiki with the CCAP gave them a place to start an orphanage. They let Rafiki use their old church until they could build a campus on the 75-acre plot given to them by the chiefs in the area. Because of so much land, the Lord made it clear that we could build an entire Village with an orphanage, schools, and a teacher training college. That was the beginning of building a Rafiki Village in every country that gave Rafiki at least 50 acres. Rafiki will miss him but rejoice that he is now with our Lord.



Church and university Partners, Home Office Staff, and Rafiki Team Malawi at Professor Egbert Chibambo's memorial service.

Soli Deo Gloria!

The Richards

Maureen and Jay Richards

