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RAFIKI FOUNDATION MISSIONARY NEWSLETTER



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Missionary #254

"...what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul" (Deuteronomy 10:12).

Dear friends and family,

Village Vignettes

Greetings once again, friends and supporters, from Mzuzu! For the last year and a half, we have talked about our mission work here with the Rafiki Foundation. For this update, we want to introduce you to some special events and the people with whom we share life. We will do this by peeking through little windows into God's Work here, and how you, as the LORD your God leads you, might partner with us in service to His people.

Window 1: Before Christmas, Maureen's former school, Trinitas Classical School in Grand Rapids, Michigan, reached out to us, wanting their children to bring our children a little Christmas happiness. What did we need for the children? Answer: Fat Ticonderoga pencils (because they do not break) and stickers and board games (because they are not available here). Since short-term missionaries were coming in January (more about them later), the pencils and stickers were shipped to them for transport. The games were shipped to the Rafiki Home Office in Florida for later transport, either in our 2023 container shipment or with us when we come to Florida for training in March. The teachers were ecstatic to receive the gifts. The children will be too. Thank you, Trinitas Classical School, for showing your love for the LORD your God through your generosity. Something so simple brings such joy!



Window 2: In early January, a terrible, crippling thing happened. Maureen's bike broke. This was her freedom of movement around our 1.2-kilometer-long Village. But God provided. Being in the States for Christmas, our fellow missionary, Anna, brought back in her luggage a new derailleur that Jay ordered through Amazon. However,

Jay had neither time nor patience to do the repair, so Maureen's assistant, Gift, recommended a bike mechanic in town. When we arrived at his booth, Mukaso stood ready to work. Americans often judge on appearances, and we almost loaded the bike up and went back to the



Village, but Gift reassured us that Mukaso could do the job. The next day Gift rode the bike to the Village. It was perfect! Convinced of Mukaso's bike repair skills, Jay interviewed him and hired him to repair 10 broken Village bikes that had been in storage for years. After three days repairing the bikes with a butter knife and a few rustic hand tools, we had 10 usable bikes and lots of happy children riding joyfully around the Village. From his work on our bikes, Mukaso earned enough to rent shop space for his business, having lost his previous location to a road construction project.

Window 3: Mama Angela is a 64 year-old mother of eight, a grandma, and a Mother at Rafiki who has served the LORD her God for 14 years by caring for our resident children. A retired nurse, she currently oversees our residence hall of 9 high-school boys, and also administers and coordinates all our Village medical needs. The last couple years have been rough on this godly prayer warrior. Two years ago, her oldest son was murdered. Then eight months ago her youngest son, who was to take care of her in her old age, was killed



in a motorcycle accident on his way to deliver his first military paycheck to her. In January of this year, she went to her home village during her off time. While there, severe rains hit the area and the entire outside wall of her house collapsed outward like the walls of Jericho. The roof and window frames are salvageable, but the rest of this modest house will need to be demolished because the foundation is no longer secure. While she serves at Rafiki, her daughter-in-law and her three grandchildren from her deceased son were staying here. Mama Angela owns the land on which her house stood, but although it will cost only \$2,500 U.S.D. to rebuild her house, it is a king's ransom to her. When asked what she will do, she simply replied, "The Lord knows what I do not." Together we weep.

Window 4: One of the unique things that Rafiki does for its resident orphans is to provide tertiary education as the students are capable. We have 45 graduates pursuing degrees in fields such as accountancy, public health, education, nursing, computer technology, and audiology. In the vocational fields, they are pursuing commercial driving, mechanics, hospitality and tourism, food production, welding, and tailoring to name a few. Costs continue to rise, and the Rafiki donor base continues to be faithful in loving the LORD their God by supporting this growing category of need. Rafiki's desire is for every graduate to be equipped to earn a living and to serve the LORD his God by being a godly contributor to Malawi society. The Scholarship Review Committee also meets to consider scholarship awards for members of the most recent graduating class.



Scholarship Review Committee

Prayer Requests

- *That every one of our children will embrace the love of Christ and be placed permanently in the palm of His hand.*
- *A thousand Malawians have lost their lives to cholera in the last few months. Pray for an end to this affliction, and for continued protection of our Village water supply.*
- *For increased Rafiki donations and financial means to fully fund our graduates in tertiary education and allow more day students to receive a Christ-centered education.*
- *For Mama Angela. The LORD knows what she does not.*

Here is a group of Rafiki vocational and university students settling their expense receipts before receiving funding for the next college semester.

Window 5: One of our greatest blessings is the short-term missionaries who, compelled by their love for the LORD their God, come to this remote corner of the world. How remote? Well, to give you an idea, the nearest McDonald's is 1,500 African road miles away. Now THAT IS remote! When we first arrived in August 2021 while COVID was still a concern, Maureen was convinced that no one would ever endure the travel challenges to come help in the Village.

However, by February 2022, the Rafiki Home Office team came for its first visit after a 2-year COVID-absence from Africa. Then two Gordon College students arrived, serving the LORD their God for five weeks, fixing our internet, tutoring in math, teaching philosophy, and working on art projects. Soon on their heels, three ladies came to organize our elementary and high school libraries. Simultaneously, Anna's friend, Connie, came for nine weeks to teach in the senior high program and train our teachers in classical Christian methodology. Then a retired elementary teacher, Karen, came to model-teach some of the elementary classes and to read to the students. She returned home brimming with love for our children, and she now speaks at Texas churches, raising support for our resident and tertiary students. And as of this writing, we are blessed to have a couple from Chicago, Bruce and Cathy. Bruce fixes things, and he started right off by bringing a repair part for Maureen's lawn mower and fixing the dryer in the guest house. Cathy, a special education teacher, is teaching reading fluency, running records for the college students at RICE, and conducting reading assessments of our elementary students. She is also conducting teacher and Rafiki Mother training on how to help the students who are frustrated readers. Each volunteer brought the gift with which God had equipped him or her, and each volunteer contributed in a way that will change lives. No one is lonely now!



Settling receipts



Bruce and Cathy

So, through this series of Village Vignettes, you have now had a peek through the window at the people and events that keep our missionary lives active. Nothing is a surprise to God. However, He surprises us each day. Consider how you too might demonstrate your love for the LORD your God, and support an orphan child, a neighborhood day student, a Rafiki graduate, get a school involved like Trinitas Classical School, or sacrifice your spiritual gifts on the mission field as a short-term, or even a long-term, missionary. The joy lasts into eternity as lives are changed for the LORD our God. Blessings, all!

Soli Deo gloria!

The Richards

Maureen and Jay Richards