

MARCH 2022

RAFIKI FOUNDATION MISSIONARY NEWSLETTER



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Missionary #254

“And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?’ Then I said, ‘Here I am! Send me!’” (Isaiah 6:8).

Dear partners in God’s work in interior Africa,

Greetings and abundant blessings from the Richards, staff, and children at Rafiki Village Malawi. And Merry Christmas! Our last update went out before the Christmas season, and we have been receiving your cards and encouraging letters and notes—recently! Postal mail is slow here. Some of your mailings from November and December are just now reaching us in Mzuzu. So it is as if Christmas was still going on! And we love hearing from all of you, with gratitude for your continuing prayers.

We are saddened to report that Professor Egbert Chibambo, former mayor of our city of Mzuzu, and the man who approached Rosemary (Rafiki Founder) with the vision of establishing orphan care leading to the Rafiki Village concept, passed into Glory on February 16. Many government dignitaries, Church leaders, and university officials, as well as the missionaries and staff of Rafiki Village Malawi attended his funeral. Our Rafiki Children’s Choir also sang, bringing comfort to the family and standing as a testament to the fulfillment of Egbert’s God-given vision of serving “the least of these.” It was emotional for many of our children as they watched the coffin containing the man who talked to them, listened, encouraged, and advised them, as it was lowered into the ground and covered with earth. Our prayer is that they will realize how precious life is and that a life worth living is one dedicated to Jesus and that serves others as Egbert served them.



Professor Egbert and his wife Nima. Well done, faithful servant

This period saw the Home Office team make a visit to Africa to several countries. We were their first stop and we were thrilled that they safely made the trip; and were blessed by their encouragement and sage counsel for taking the next steps in line with the Rafiki mission and vision. The Home Office brought with



Meeting with the Vice Chancellor of the University of Livingstonia and our Home Office team, Executive Director Karen Elliot and RICE College Program Manager Cathy Brown

them additional computers for the RICE college and school computer labs, and also laptops for use by our national leadership. They also brought hardware to be used to improve and extend the internet service on the Village campus, which has been a great need.



A delightful dinner with the Home Office team

We have also opened the door to improved relations with the Headmen of our surrounding communities. They were invited to a recent school recitation, along with our Church and university partners. Dr. Levi Nyondo, former Synod General Secretary, and newly appointed Malawi Ambassador to Brazil, made it a point in his recitation address to emphasize the partnership of the Church, the community, and the Rafiki Village Administration in performing the Lord's work here in Mzuzu. He called a local church pastor, the Senior Group Chief, and Jay to the front of the assembly, as a visible demonstration of this important alliance. It was a marvelous lesson, and our chiefs were pleased for being recognized in their important role.



Maureen, Miss Anna, and Matron Martha meeting with the area Chiefs

The workloads here have been heavy, requiring long hours to keep things running. One of the wonderful outcomes of the Home Office visit was permission to hire more Malawians to help shoulder the work. So we are actively interviewing candidates for a college librarian, assistants for all three missionaries, more teachers, expanded kitchen and cleaning staff, and bookkeeper. *Pray with us that God will direct those of His calling to join us in His service.* Due to recent storms and world events, Malawi is experiencing a shortage of cooking propane and less-reliable-than-normal electricity. This has overworked our generators and well pump, so we've had to invest in repairs and replacements. We are thankful for the generosity of Rafiki's donors who make it possible to meet these extra costs.

On a personal funding note, the Home Office has approved us to buy an additional used vehicle, anticipating that one of the Village's two cars will need replacing soon. If you feel prayerfully led to donate to our car fund in addition to your regular prayer and financial support, please consider following this link: <https://rafikifoundation.org/missionary/jay-and-maureen-richards-254> to our donation page. In the remarks, just mention that your gift is for the car fund. Or you can send a check directly to Rafiki at: Rafiki Foundation, PO Box 1988, Eustis FL 32727, and note on the check missionary # 254 car fund.

We now have two classes of high school graduates, and we are working with the last group to place them in colleges or vocational training centers around Malawi. Again, the faithfulness of Rafiki donors has made it possible to continue their education on their journeys to become godly contributors to Malawi. *Pray that they*

Prayer Requests

- *That God's mighty work will continue among the orphans and school children here that all may know His Son personally.*
- *Relief from the restrictions on electricity and propane.*
- *Rainy season has brought abundant high grass and vegetation (our mowers are struggling: mechanical and human!) which brings snakes and mosquitoes. Pray for relief from numerous incidents of malaria among the Malawian adults and children.*
- *That the Malawi government will soon accredit our teacher college as a campus of the University of Livingstonia.*
- *That funding will be provided for a replacement used vehicle.*

hold fast to Jesus as they leave the only home they have known and go out into the world. Some will pursue medicine or nursing, others might chose Bible college, agri-business, culinary arts, or technology just to name a few. Would you like to sponsor one of them?

And don't forget, you can join us or another Rafiki Village! Short-term workers are always welcome whatever your gift or skill. Rafiki is holding a short-term missionary training weekend session in April in lovely, warm Orlando, Florida. Sign up and then let us know WHEN you can come join us.

Soli Deo Gloria!

With love and gratitude,

The Richards

Maureen and Jay Richards



The graduating class of 2021 and the Rafiki Mothers that raised them from toddlers