

May 2024

Dear Friends,

As you may know, Jay and Maureen Richards retired from the mission field and returned to the U.S. at the end of April. While we are going to miss them so much, we are also so grateful for their service with Rafiki and are praying for a smooth transition for them.

Jay and Maureen served in Malawi, arriving there at a critical time to help the Village recover from the effects of the COVID lockdowns. Jay served as Village Administrator, Country Representative, and Plant Manager, while Maureen served as Orphan Care Administrator and RICE (teacher's college) Dean. Jay and Maureen worked very hard to get the school, Orphan Care, and RICE functioning well again, as well as undertaking many overdue facilities and maintenance projects for the Village as a whole. They were instrumental in furthering progress in getting RICE accredited by our partner university, and now that is almost completed thanks to their efforts. Their time in Malawi was very, very fruitful, and we are so grateful. They did all of their work with love and grace and will be sorely missed by all.

The Richards' support will remain in place through June 2024 to help them transition back to the U.S. If you would like to continue to support the work in Malawi you may by changing your pledge to another missionary or to support an orphan or day student. Please consider new Rafiki Missionaries Bryan and Alexis McDaniel who will be moving to Malawi to take the Richards' place. You may contact the Home Office at 352-483-9131 or at Rafiki@RafikiFoundation.org. Please join us in praying for God's blessing and direction for Jay and Maureen in the days and months ahead. Also continue to pray that God will raise up twenty more missionaries this year—perhaps He is calling you!

Rafiki continues to commit itself to helping Africans know God and raise their standard of living through schools, classical Christian curriculum, Orphan Care, Bible study, and teacher training.

Serving together,



Karen J. Elliott
Executive Director
The Rafiki Foundation

God's Word at Work

*"But tell to the coming generation
the glorious deeds of the LORD" (Psalm 78:4).*



PO Box 1988
Eustis FL 32727-1988
Phone: 352-483-9963
KarenE@RafikiFoundation.org
www.rafikifoundation.org

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RAFIKI FOUNDATION MISSIONARY NEWSLETTER



Maureen and Jay Richards

3700 56th Street SW
Wyoming, MI 49418-9350

Contact information

Email:

MaureenR@RafikiFoundation.org

JayR@RafikiFoundation.org

Missionary #254

*“For everything there
is a season, and a time
for every matter under
heaven” (Ecclesiastes 3:1).*

Dear friends and family,

As the Preacher neared the end of his sojourn on earth, he recognizes in Ecclesiastes that **“For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven.”** So, as the Richards have now permanently returned to the United States and reflect on the end of their mission to Malawi, we ponder some of the other verses of Ecclesiastes 3: 9-14 as they pertain to our calling to God’s work in Malawi.

First, **“What gain has the worker from his toil? I have seen the business that God has given to the children of man to be busy with”** (Ecclesiastes 3:9-10). Although there are many different answers to this question, the portrait of the Flemmings and Velepki Nkhandwe family provides a wonderful example. Just before our departure Flemmings had the Rafiki Missionaries over for dinner when this picture was taken. (Anna is taking the picture.) Flemmings works for the University of Livingstonia (UNILIA) and has acted as our advisor as we seek government accreditation of our teacher degree program as RICE becomes a campus of UNILIA. We had a final inspection for registration only five days before our departure. His wife, Velepki (front left), is a guidance counselor at the Rafiki School and has been instrumental in placing our 60+ Rafiki resident graduates in academic, vocational, and survival skill tertiary education programs. Gabriel (back left) was once a Rafiki resident orphan until Flemmings discovered a distant family relationship and gave Gabriel a home upon graduation. Sons Moses (front 2nd from right) and Joshua (front 4th from right) are currently students at the Rafiki school. Rejoice (back 3rd from left) was a student at Rafiki school for two years. Finally, Staphel (front 3rd from right), worked as a teacher at Rafiki Secondary School between extended university semesters. This family has participated in four of the six Rafiki programs, all busy with God’s Work at Rafiki in Malawi.



At dinner with the Fleming family, along with missionary Jane Hoadley, and new missionary-in-progress Bryan McDaniel.

Second, ***“He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man’s heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end”*** (Ecclesiastes 3:11).

This is the current group of thirty-two residents and their Rafiki Mothers. Forty-five of the sixty residents who have graduated and left the Village did so during our time of service there. It is our prayer that we greet each one of our Rafiki orphans some day in heaven. Some have already answered God’s invitation to be sons of the living God and are growing daily in wisdom and stature. Some have answered God’s invitation and are still on steep paths of sanctification. Still others have not yet heard the call, and their ears need to be opened. Therefore, we pray that they follow the path to eternity and make everything they do on earth focus toward eternity.



Third, ***“I perceived that there is nothing better for them than to be joyful and to do good as long as they live; also that everyone should eat and drink and take pleasure in all his toil—this is God’s gift to man”*** (Ecclesiastes 3:12-13). This is the RICE library, a work in progress for all of Maureen’s years in Malawi. Most of the books were gathered by Maureen’s sister, Colleen, in the U.S. and shipped through Home Office’s container—thousands of books. Then, Jobbs, the RICE librarian, painstakingly cataloged, organized, and shelved them. The plant crew had the wall arches built and painted, and Maureen made the curtains this past Christmas when Jay was in the U.S. To finish it, she pulled the carpet from her missionary house dining room because it matched! In a country where libraries are rare, now there is a classical book collection of children’s, youth, and adult fiction and non-fiction books and RICE texts, all ready for check-out.



Prayer Requests

- *For government accreditation of our RICE Program. The inspection that occurred the week before our departure was positive!*
- *For a smooth transition of duties to new Rafiki Missionary May, and returning past Rafiki Missionary Jane, and for Bryan and Alexis McDaniel as they raise support to arrive this fall to serve in Malawi.*
- *For wisdom and strength for Anna, as she takes on the Village Administrator role in addition to being the Rafiki School Headmaster.*
- *For comfort and Shalom for all members of the Rafiki Malawi family as the new normal begins.*
- *Twenty new Long-term Rafiki Missionaries this year to go and serve.*
- *For the residents in the Village to embrace God’s calling in each of their lives and learn the joy and security of obedience.*

Finally, ***“I perceived that whatever God does endures forever; nothing can be added to it, nor anything taken from it”*** (Ecclesiastes 3:14a). This group of graduate boys are serving in the Village while awaiting university placement. They assist with the plant and maintenance group, or in the kitchen in Ralph’s case. As we witness them serve the Village joyfully in even the most rudimentary tasks of lawn mowing or dishwashing or refuse collection, we see their regenerated hearts and consider ourselves blessed to have witnessed most of these boys answer God’s call to salvation during our time in the Village. Indeed, God’s Work will endure forever.



Although it was hard to say our final goodbye to the people we have come to love, we are comforted to know that God’s Work lasts into eternity. This is not goodbye, but only farewell for now until we meet again.

Thank you, our dear friends, for your prayers and support over the last three years because that is what has allowed us to speak into the lives of the incredible people of Rafiki Village in Malawi and witness the gain of these workers from their toil. May the blessings and eternal rewards of answering God’s call on your lives to partner with us be bountiful, pressed down, and overflowing.

Soli Deo Gloria!

Love,

The Richards

Maureen and Jay Richards