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RAFIKI FOUNDATION MISSIONARY NEWSLETTER



Catherine Upton

159 Brumby Road
Flintstone GA 30725

Contact information

Email:

CatherineU@rafikifoundation.org

Missionary #256

Dear friends and family,

It is hard to put into words everything that has happened over the last two years. It has held some of the hardest days and some of the best times of my life. I would not trade it for anything.

I had expected, of course, to be in Liberia for at least two years, so when I needed to come back in January to spend seven months of those two years in the States, I was in for an emotional roller coaster. Over those months, I had to let go of my plans and expectations for my future, things I uncomfortably realized I had assumed were God's plan for my life, and surrender to the truth that although I do not get to know His plan, I can trust that it is so much better than mine. I had to let go of the unrealistic ideal of the person I wanted to be and humbly accept the weaknesses and limitations that my good and loving Father chose to give me. I missed my Liberian friends. I grieved over all these things and more. And it all brought me to a deeper, fuller understanding of God's boundless love for me, grounded in Christ alone.

In August, I was able to return to Liberia for four weeks to wrap up my time serving at the Rafiki Institute of Classical Education (teacher training college). I finished teaching the English courses for the end of the term and helped with grading and other tasks. I got to lead morning Bible study a few more times (one of my favorite parts of the work). I got to spend some time with the Rafiki children during their evening devotions and other activities. I got to congratulate in person the first set of Rafiki children to graduate from high school, most of whom have come back to work at the Rafiki Village until college. I got to worship with my Liberia brothers and sisters at church again. I got to be with my Liberia community one more time.



With RICE students

Over the last couple days before I left, I received many precious cards from the children and lots of goodbye hugs. The last afternoon, my

students at the college shared ways that the Lord had worked through me to impact their lives. It was incredibly humbling to hear of the fruit of that season and to receive a reminder that God had a purpose in bringing me there and an encouragement that He also has a purpose in bringing me back. I am so grateful for that opportunity for closure and proper goodbyes—for just a bit more time with those people I have grown to love.

Although my season of serving in Liberia was different from my expectations, I will never forget it. I will never forget the joy of watching my students' lives change as they came to a fuller understanding of Scripture and its gospel message. I will never forget the times spent with them discussing God's Word together and thinking through what it says. I will never forget the fun of spending holidays playing games with the Rafiki kids and how loud they can get when they are excited. I will never forget the missionary team that became family. What a truly life-changing experience.



With the Rafiki kids

Let me close by thanking you all from the bottom of my heart for your support! Although it goes without saying, it never would have been possible without your prayers and contributions. Thank you for partnering with me for that season of gospel-ministry. Although I do not know what the future holds, my heart is still for serving God's kingdom in whatever capacity He sees fit. I will let you know if another opportunity comes along for partnering with me in a support-based position!

In Christ,

Catherine

Catherine Upton

