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RAFIKI FOUNDATION MISSIONARY NEWSLETTER



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Missionary #258

“His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence” (2 Peter 1:3).

Jambo, Rafiki (Hello, Friend)!

Nature Reflects God's Creativity

While we can only imagine the glorious creativity displayed in the Garden of Eden, the Bible is specific about two of the trees growing there. In Genesis 2:17, man is told not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. In Genesis 3:24, man loses access to the tree of life when he is banished from the garden after the Fall. Although Adam and Eve suffered under the curse, God continued to provide all things that pertain to life and godliness throughout the generations.

As we spend a few days benchmarking at another Rafiki School in neighboring Tanzania, we have learned about a unique type of tree that is growing in this Village's garden—the African Blackwood (or, Mpingo in Swahili). The tree stands out for several reasons.

- Though found in many parts of East Africa, it is the national tree of Tanzania.
- It takes more than sixty years to mature but when it does, the leaves are edible (and delicious, we have heard) during the dry season.
- The wood is often cited as one of the most expensive in the world.
- Beyond providing food, the Mpingo tree is also valued for carving, and it is specifically used in crafting woodwind instruments, such as the clarinet. For this reason, its nickname is the “Tree of Music.”



The Mpingo Tree

Flashback

The last two weeks of the school term went by in a flash! The students completed final exams. The teachers finished calculating final grades. And Crystal and I completed in-class observations of our teaching staff. Meanwhile, family and friends of the Rafiki community prepared to attend the Term 2 Recitations.

Recitations

Enthusiasm for the end-of-term recitations continues to grow among school staff and students alike. Whether it is internalizing a Scripture passage, memorizing a poem, or dramatizing the details of a curriculum

topic, students from all grade levels practiced during the term and “auditioned” to earn a spot in the program. Performances began with a resounding recitation of Mark 3:33b-35 by four-year-old pre-K students.

Then, students from the lower grammar school (grade 1A) gave a dramatic rendition of photosynthesis, a process they had covered thoroughly in their Science lessons. Grade 4B educated and entertained the audience with their flawless presentation of “The Lamb.” Like many works by poet William Blake, this poem has a Christian theme. Written from the perspective of a child, the author explains to a little lamb about Jesus Christ—Creator, Savior, and The One often referred to in Scripture as “The Lamb of God.” Later, grade eight students recited Blake’s poem “Jerusalem” which explores biblical themes but also expresses the author’s frustration with English industrialization at the turn of nineteenth century. The class of 2025 encouraged the audience to be imitators of Christ, as they humbly presented Philippians 2:1-11, in Kiswahili. Lastly, our logic and rhetoric choirs gave an encore performance from this year’s Music Festival competition, where they placed fourth and third in the region, respectively.



Choirs inspire the Recitations attendees.

Virtues on Display

Unveiled for the first time during the Recitations were the 2025 Virtue Plaques. Each year, talented Rafiki artists create new plaques which connect to the virtues of Wisdom, Justice, Fortitude, and Temperance. This year, their artwork depicted those ideals through familiar biblical images, and efforts earned art points for their respective teams. In the affirming words of our fellow missionaries, “God is giving us a great cloud of witnesses to see and understand what classical Christian education is doing in our students, to form their loves toward the True, the Good, and the Beautiful.”



Biblical themes featured on this year’s Virtue Plaques

Commendations

The theme of the second Recitation of the year is “Commendation” because we take this opportunity at the end of our longest school term (fourteen weeks) to formally acknowledge students and teachers for excellence in various areas. We were happy to see an increase in students who met the academic requirements of the Headmaster’s List (90-100% average) and Principal’s List (80-89% average) for this term. But with so many spanning from grades three through twelve, we had to ask them to stand in place, rather than come up on stage when their names were called. But what a sight to behold: more than eighty-five individuals rising from their seats—one by one, row by row—and joining a group whose academic efforts had brought glory to God. The culminating applause from the audience added sweet affirmation to that special moment.

Next, the students who received the Rafiki “R” award for academic, artistic, athletic, and musical excellence were

Prayer Requests

- *For the Rafiki students: the biblical teaching received daily will be used by God to produce true faith and fruit in their lives.*
- *For Rafiki Classical Christian School graduates (RCCS): continued growth in godliness and wisdom as they navigate adulthood.*
- *For Village workers, RCCS parents, and our family in the U.S.: physical and spiritual protection and favor.*
- *For us: additional ministry partners to help cover expenses that our monthly support total is not meeting (i.e.: health insurance, car maintenance, housing, utilities, etc.).*
- *20 new long-term missionaries to join and serve with Rafiki.*

presented to the audience. Logic students were: Kai, Jabali, Gabriel, Moses, and Cannan. Rhetoric students were: Peter, Candylicia, Millicent, Virginia, Ruth, Hilda, and Kirk. Finally, teachers were acknowledged for going “above and beyond” in their service to the school for the last year. These included: Lucy and Mercy (Pre-Grammer School), Isaac and Ephantus (Grammar School), and Curtis and Meddy (Upper School). Lastly, we acknowledged our resident music maestro, Teacher Felix, and our administrative assistant, Mirriam, for their exceptional work on behalf of the school, both inside and outside the gates.



Supra et Ultra awardees—school staff who have gone “above and beyond” in their service.



Term one and two Rafiki Letter winners, awarded to Rhetoric and Logic students for academic, artistic, athletic, and musical excellence!

Rafiki Games Fun Day

On the final day of Term 2, students, teachers, and coaches enjoyed friendly competition in a variety of activities. Although students gave their best effort to earn points for their teams, it was also a time to practice winning with humility, losing with grace, and valuing others above themselves. Some former Rafiki residents even stopped by for a visit, sharing smiles and gratitude for the lessons they learned inside the protective perimeter of the Rafiki Village. Amidst the laughter, cheers, and joy, godly life lessons were still being learned.



Graduates return for Rafiki Games Fun Day

Praises

- Former Rafiki residents from the classes of 2023 and 2024 are seeing God’s faithfulness even more clearly, now that they are operating out in “the real world.” They are thankful for the blessings He provided them, through Rafiki’s orphanage and education program, and they are hopeful for the path that God has paved for their futures.
- We thank the Lord for: first-time donors, churches who contribute through annual giving, and the faithful individuals who partner with us monthly. We are honored to do our part as “the hands and feet of Jesus” here in Kenya. But we cannot carry out this commission alone.

“Mungu akubariki” (God bless you)!

Love,

Theodore and Crystal

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