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RAFIKI FOUNDATION MISSIONARY NEWSLETTER



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Missionary #258

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

Dear friends and family,

JA-mbo, Mara-FI-ki (Hello, Friends)! *U hali gani?* (oo HA-lee GA-nee; how are you)?

Although for some, Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 may only stir up memories of the No. 1 song of 1965, "Turn, Turn, Turn" by the Byrds, every time we read it, we grow more humbled by God's sovereignty and wisdom. [Trivia fact: since all but seven of the song's words were drawn directly from the writings of King Solomon, "Turn, Turn, Turn" holds the distinction of being the Number 1 U.S. hit with the oldest lyrics!]

As we write this letter, we are currently Stateside to represent the Rafiki Foundation at two ministry conferences, having already shared with some prayer partners, new small groups in Ohio, and a supporting church of Rafiki in Indiana that has congregants deeply rooted in Bible Study Fellowship. At every turn, God's schedule is always the best for His children.

Our "safari" (journey) back to the U.S.

Occasionally missionaries in the field are called back Stateside for deputation duties. This time, we were tagged with the task of representing Rafiki in Indiana, South Dakota, and Texas. Faithful supporters and senders in Ohio provided us with opportunities to share the Gospel there as well. It was the beginning of another unique, barnstorming blitz!

After our last full day at the Village school, we made the forty-five minute trip to Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, prepared for our late night departure. As creatures of habit, we naturally made our way toward Terminal 1A—the normal entry point for our departure to the States. However, after standing in line, having our passports reviewed, and putting our luggage through the security scanner, we were informed that our departure was NOT from this terminal but via Terminal 1C, since this time we were booked on Qatar Airways. Once we got to the correct terminal, we managed to re-do all of the steps above and board the aircraft with a bit of time to spare!

Our take off from Nairobi took an unfamiliar flight path; the first leg of the journey carrying us northeast, across East Africa. We reached an altitude of approximately 33,000 feet and a speed of 530 mph. The temperature outside of our comfortable, pressurized environment was a deadly -54.6° F. Yet we were acutely aware that the Lord was sustaining every soul aboard this 787 Dreamliner aircraft.

We flew over the unconquered land of Ethiopia and entered the airspace of Somalia. To the right was Mogadishu, and to the left Juba. Straight ahead was Addis Ababa, and after a brief catnap, we found that we had entered Saudi Arabian airspace. We seemed to hover over the desert dunes for a long time before landing at Hamad International Airport in Qatar. When we disembarked, the sky was a bright blue. There were no rain clouds or war clouds in the sky, despite the fact that we were only separated from the country of Iran by the Persian Gulf. Our connecting flight from Doha to the United States was fifteen hours in length. Although it was long, we always feel like time travelers whenever we fly toward the west because of the many time zones!

Our first visit was to a wonderful church in Indiana, which was celebrating 150 years as a pillar of faith in the Hoosier Heartland. The driving distance from Cleveland Hopkins Airport (OH) to Ligonier, IN was about 225 miles, with an estimated driving time of three hours and thirty-seven minutes. Thereafter, a meeting was arranged for us with a domestic online missions group, who prayed for us as we introduced them to our work with Rafiki. The briefing was well received, and their intercessory prayers were very affirming! The next day, we met with members of another Christian organization, some of whom are prayerfully considering establishing a connection with Rafiki Foundation in the future. All three of these encounters were fruitful, and upon their completion we set off on our two-day drive to our next objective in the Mountain time zone: South Dakota!

The STEER Conference in South Dakota was our first time at a gathering organized by ranchers and farmers who love the Lord and who have been focused on supporting missionaries through a system of in-kind giving since the late 1950s!

We continue to check in regularly with our head teachers (Kenyan nationals who lead and mentor a team of teachers in each of the schools) and are encouraged by their oversight of the daily operations. Of course, they are well supported by the Pedersons—career missionaries with Rafiki—who remained in the Village during our time away.

Students regroup for Bible study

A lot has transpired since our last newsletter! In the time since the Rafiki Bible Study lessons transitioned from normal, grade-level classes to single-gender, “house” small groups, we have started to see a positive impact among the grades nine through twelve students. These small groups have each taken on the name of an early church father: the “House of Origen” (Alexandria), the “House of Cyprian” (Carthage), the “House of Athanasius” (Alexandria), and the “House of Augustine” (Hippo). They meet together every morning for in-depth Bible study and have spent some time learning about these historical men of faith during this inaugural year of the Rafiki House System.

During this single-gender lesson time, the teachers have found the high school students to be more comfortable asking questions and sharing their ideas. They have also seen more confidence and leadership skills developing among individual students. A deeper bond has developed overall, and there is an increased enthusiasm for engaging with and encouraging students in the younger grades. This transformative spark was also visible in the creativity of the high school boys’ Artfest paintings, the melodic songs of praise and thanksgiving directed by the high school girls at the Songfest, and the collective compassion they have provided their fellow classmates who are grieving the loss of their mothers.



A meet-and-greet moment with a Christian school administrator prayerfully considering a short-term trip with Rafiki



Headmaster and Dean present and distribute Rafiki materials at international conference of ranchers, farmers, and missionaries

Rafiki Games culminates with the Songfest/Artfest event

The Songfest and Artfest have become anticipated events at the close of each school year in Kenya. Since sports competitions only take place in terms one and two here, these two school-wide activities serve as closure to the year's co-curricular activities and focus on glorifying God through their display of the Transcendentals: truth, goodness, and beauty.

Parents enjoy the Songfest because they get a glimpse of the students' performances at the Kenya Music Festival—a national competition where choirs and soloists are only observed by members of a judging panel. So, the Songfest is like an encore performance for the parents and extended family. The Village staff and teachers enjoy the Artfest exhibition because they get to take part in voting on the students' artwork.

The Virtue Team points for these activities were tallied on the spot and then added to the points that all the students had earned for their teams throughout the first two school terms. This year, the final results for the Virtue Teams were as follows:

Wisdom – (1st place): 20,872 pts.

Temperance – (2nd place): 20,538 pts.

Fortitude – (3rd place): 19,778 pts.

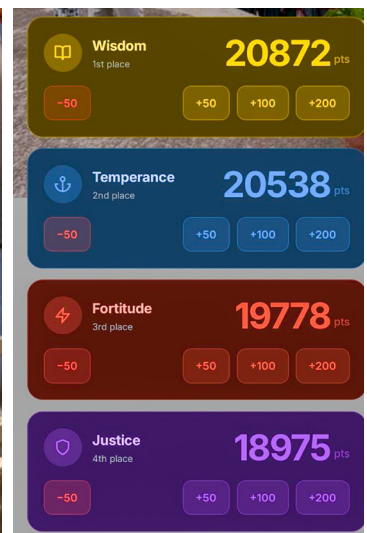
Justice – (4th place): 18,975 pts.



Wisdom was the Artfest and plaque 2026 winner



Grammar School drummer focuses on his accompaniment



Virtue Team final tallies

A time to weep

While there were songs of praise and celebration at the Songfest, there were also songs of lamentation at the recent funerals of two Rafiki Parents. Two of our female high school students—both lost their mothers (one in a tragic accident and the other after battling a long, terminal illness) in the past few months. Of course, whether the death of a family member is anticipated or not, the pain and grief these young ladies are experiencing is the same.

Both of these mothers had worked hard to find a school for their daughters where they would be seen and known, safe and challenged. We are so thankful that the Lord, who knows the end from the beginning, connected them with Rafiki Classical Christian School during this last chapter of their lives. As one of the girls (pictured in a white shirt) was comforted by classmates at the burial, a teacher commented, “I think [she] will always remember that, at Rafiki, friendship is real.”

We were told that Paul (our grade eleven resident) read the tributes for Risper's mom with such sincerity and eloquence that those in attendance thought he was a member of the school staff! After losing a close grandfather figure himself last year, perhaps Paul can better understand



Pupils support a peer in mourning

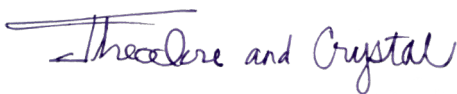
King Solomon's sentiment in Ecclesiastes 7:2, "***It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting, for this is the end of all mankind, and the living will lay it to heart.***"

We praise God for

- the healthy birth of Teacher Ruth's baby boy, Promise, in September.
- Teacher Alex, a recent graduate of the Rafiki's Teachers College, who was able to fill in for Ruth during her maternity leave.
- the collective sensitivity of our students when facing the reality of death and the way that God is working in Paul's heart, specifically.
- the timely help of Short-term Missionaries Dr. Bryant and Rhonda Owens and Ben Polk. Their willingness to share their time and talents with the school was a true blessing and enabled us to fulfill our deputation duties.

Lala salama (LA-la sa-LA-ma; sleep well/peacefully). *Kwaheri* (kwa-HE-ree; Goodbye).

Love,



Theodore and Crystal Wilson

Prayer Requests

- *Our high school girls to continue to receive the support of the school community and the comfort of the Lord as they grieve their losses.*
- *a strong closing to the academic year for all our students, but especially those in grades six, nine, and twelve who will be sitting for their high-stakes national exams.*
- *our financial support may increase as a result of our presentations at the STEER conference.*

Learn more about Rafiki's expanding opportunities.

Visit our newly designed website RafikiFoundation.org to learn how to:

- Purchase the Rafiki Bible Study for small groups for your church or neighborhood
- Serve as a missionary with Rafiki
- Sponsor a child with the Rafiki Foundation to bring God's Word and the best education in the world to some of the neediest children in the world in Africa.

Explore the Rafiki Foundation YouTube channel.

Visit ([@RafikiFoundation](https://youtube.com/@RafikiFoundation)) for videos from Rafiki children, teaching at our annual Enrichment conferences, and the teaching at our African classical Christian conferences.

Listen to our podcast for current discussions on Rafiki's work in Africa truenorth.fm/show/the-rafiki-foundation-podcast/