



The Rafiki Foundation, Inc.

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"...there was no room for them in the inn" (Luke 2:7).

"Be pleased, O LORD, to save me; O LORD, come quickly to help me. You are my help and my deliverer; O my God, do not delay" (Psalm 40:13, 17b).

Dear family and friends,

Merry Christmas! As we think of that special Child's birth so long ago, it brings greater poignancy to the question we have been asked with increasing frequency: "Can you take a baby?" The question might come from a doctor serving in Liberia with an international relief agency. He has a baby he needs to place. The mother has died in childbirth. It's not the first time that Ed has been asked that question. Some of these doctors have served in other parts of Africa where Rafiki has Villages. They know that a Rafiki home would be a safe, good home in which to place a little one. And these doctors really need such a place. What are they to do with the babies?

There just isn't a local orphanage which is admitting more new infants. Some kind individuals are trying to provide temporary foster homes for Liberia's orphans. One of our young neighbors is caring for a little three pound baby who had only been fed water for five days after the mother had died. The little girl now is gaining weight on formula, but a more permanent situation needs to be found for infants.

Regretfully, right now, Ed can only respond to the doctor's request with "I'm so sorry. The Village isn't completed yet, but we are building just as fast as we can!" And we are! Despite the heavy rainy season, the buildings have continued to go up and now that the dry season has arrived, even faster progress is anticipated. Cottages for children (and one day for lots of those little abandoned babies!) are getting their roofs. The dining hall, clinic, and staff homes are also taking shape. The guest cottage will be ready for those volunteers who will someday come to help. (You?)



FOUNDATION STEEL AND ROOFING SHEETS



SITTING IN OUR LIVING ROOM WINDOW

And the good news is that the foundations for even more buildings are being poured! On their recent visit to Liberia, the Rafiki Home Office staff gave approval to build three more cottages, a primary school, and another staff residence. We are thankful to God and to all those who have given funds so that yet more children can be cared for with excellence.

As the work progresses, we are encouraged by the comments of the Liberians who hear about it or see it. In our meeting with the President of Liberia, Her Excellency Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf (a very capable, most gracious lady), she showed great enthusiasm and spoke of her desire to be of help. "You are doing the right thing at the right time in the right place in the right way," she said. Thank you, Madam President!

Another Rafiki friend, Nehsee Tubman, on her recent first visit to the construction, rejoiced to walk through the cottages. She and her husband, Winston, are the "godparents" of the Village since they were the first Liberians to encourage consideration of their country as a Rafiki site and helped to locate the land and church partnership. Nehsee and her daughter and grandson praised God for His goodness as they toured the grounds!



DONNA SHOWS LIBERIAN FRIENDS THE COTTAGES



ED SHOWS THE TUBMANS THE VILLAGE LAYOUT

Some of you have asked about sponsoring one of the children in Rafiki Village Liberia. Although the individual child has not yet been identified by name, you can contact our home office to be put on the list of sponsors for Liberian children. You will be assigned a number and when we begin taking children, you will be given the name of the child and information that we will send about him or her. To learn more, check the website or call the Home Office.

The Lord willing, we will soon travel to the States to spend Christmas and remain for the month of January. We are eager to share our news with many of you in Texas and northern California. Please let us know if we could schedule a time while we are there to tell you and any of your friends or neighbors about what is happening here.

Your interest, partnership, and prayers are great blessings to us. As we begin another term of service, we are humbled to remember all your gifts and pledges that have made possible our being here and the work that has been accomplished in Liberia. Thank you.

Prayer requests:

- Good health and safety
- Continued good progress and safety in construction at the Rafiki Village
- Wisdom and discernment in all our interactions here
- Good travel and visits in the States

He is able (Ephesians 3:20),

Donna and Ed Bland

E-mail (both in Africa and in the States):
edbland@earthlink.net

Contact information after December 20th and for the month of January:

20807 Meadow Belle Court
Kingwood TX 7734

Cell phone while in the States: 832-818-1187

P.S. From the Home Office: The Blands are at 46% for their next term beginning January 2007.

NOTE: Please visit www.rafiki-foundation.org to find information on your ROS, what *Rafiki* is doing, the centers, and the Exchange.