



The Rafiki Foundation, Inc.

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April 2008

“My soul finds rest in God alone; my salvation comes from him. He alone is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will never be shaken” (Psalm 62:1, 2).

Greetings from Rafiki Village Liberia!

So much has happened in the last few months, yet most of the changes are unseen. Our faithful God is working invisibly as He intercedes in our behalf during a most challenging season in our history. Rafiki Liberia celebrated its seven-month anniversary on April 1. Yet, in God’s eyes, we are much older, having been in His thoughts from long ago.

“O LORD, you are my God; I will exalt you and praise your name, for in perfect faithfulness you have done marvelous things, things planned long ago” (Isaiah 25:1). A new stalk emerges from the dirt from a strong, “invisible” root already grown. How we delight in the result of that root absorbing water and nourishment from the land. So it is with our work at Rafiki. God Himself is the root that supports and nourishes us; He is the foundation, the rock upon which the Rafiki Village rests.

A Foundation of Biblical Teaching

One of the blessings of working with the Rafiki Foundation is the well-written Bible study lessons that are provided for all of us at the Village. Each week everyone at the Village studies the same passage. The children have devotions in their homes in the morning before breakfast. Then, the employees gather in the dining hall for their devotions. At school, students have Bible lessons on the passage while mothers study in their own quiet time at home. We ROS also study on our own, coming together weekly to discuss the lesson, as do the mothers. When the school employs teachers, they also study the lesson and come together to discuss the passage. What a delight it is to be “on the same page” and see how God uses Scripture to change us, to encourage us, and to challenge us.

A Foundation of Church Support

Rafiki partners with Christian denominations in each of the ten countries where Rafiki operates Villages. In Liberia we are delighted to be partners with the Episcopal Church of Liberia (ECL). Priests and lay leaders help us in many practical ways and offer us doctrinally sound worship on Sundays. On Easter Sunday our families attended St. Barnabas on the Field, our local ECL church. The church had a special Easter dinner and wanted to be sure that our Rafiki families would be able to attend. The mothers

thoroughly enjoyed fellowshiping after the Easter service, keeping an eye on the children who delighted in playing together. The children were especially excited because they had received new “dressy” clothes that week, just for Easter, thanks to a marathon shopping trip by Charmaine.



EASTER GIRLS

A Foundation of Service

ROS (Rafiki Overseas Staff) are the long-term missionaries who serve in-country to direct the work of our Villages. Two of our ROS, Donna and Ed Bland, served God and Rafiki here in Liberia from January 2006, getting our Village built and opened. They served alone for most of that time, forging the way forward for the contractor to begin construction all the way to completion of the first two phases of construction, including sixteen buildings. Ed made many valuable contacts in Liberia while also being a great help to those who became close friends. Donna supported him while she made her own contribution in the form of beautiful tie-dyed

curtains and bedspreads for the cottages, as well as tablecloths and napkins for the dining hall. Ed and Donna are now in the U.S., after a serious fall which resulted in Donna needing surgery on her leg with a somewhat long recovery time. Ed and Donna will be going to another African country for Rafiki when Donna is recovered. We miss them and wish them the best, which is what they gave to God and to Liberia during their time here. If you would like to keep up with ROS, visit the Rafiki website www.rafiki-foundation.org and click on "Where we are," then "ROS."



DONNA AND ED BLAND

A Foundation Built on Strong Relationships

Needless to say, it's difficult to say goodbye to teammates. It would be a bit frightening to even consider what could have happened if God had not provided so abundantly for us when Donna had her fall. Charmaine and Tarry Nelson had arrived, just three weeks earlier, to join our team. God wisely brought us just the right couple to keep things moving! Charmaine has been in both Ghana and Malawi with Rafiki and acclimated easily to Liberia. Her (new) husband, Tarry, has been a real trooper; his experience in running a Christian camp in California was perfect preparation for his job as Food Services manager. I am particularly delighted because I met Charmaine in 1999, in Texas, and we have kept in touch ever since. Not only did God bring the right couple, he brought me an old friend.

At the end of February, God brought some more "old friends" to see us—that is the Rafiki Home Office staff. We were very grateful for God's timing on the visit, given the fact that Ed and Donna had evacuated just three days earlier. The staff encouraged us and helped us by doing some fast problem solving and re-assignments of jobs and responsibilities. Susan and Bob Hegel stayed for a week, helping us to work out some kinks in our electrical and mechanical systems. God met our

need in these dear friends and enthusiastic co-workers. (Oh, and we also had a great time!)



ENJOYING A VISIT FROM THE HOME OFFICE STAFF

A Foundation of Trust in Our Rock

How could we possibly accept the challenges of Africa and its children without God's power? It is on our Rock that we depend, daily, for the tasks that are given us. It was God who gave us the strength to take on new roles, and new challenges. It is God who gives our children the ability to overcome their past traumas. God is the fortress that envelops us with love and protection from disease and danger. As the new Village director for Rafiki here, I am getting familiar with the work of our security staff.



CHARLES AND ADAM

Most of these strong Liberian men served in the army during the civil war in Liberia and saw horrific sights. They know what it means to be in danger and truly appreciate the safety they help provide at the Rafiki Village. It is a delight to get to know them and to work with them in a biblical framework. God's Spirit unites us, from the smallest child to the toughest man, to glorify Him in all we do. He is the Rock and we will not be shaken!

Relying on a strong and firm foundation,

Joanne

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