



The Rafiki Foundation, Inc.

19001 Huebner Road #2 • San Antonio TX 78258-4040 • 210-244-2600 • Fax 210-244-2605

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"God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work"

(2 Corinthians 9:8).

Greetings from Uganda!

Happy New Year to my family, friends, faithful supporters, and prayer partners.

The Rafiki School, 2003

As I write this letter, I am looking out my window at our Rafiki Primary School building, which is almost complete. I am thinking of our children who will learn and grow in the building. They're young now - just one, two, three, and 4 four years old. However, in just a few years, these children will be serious students. By then, their traumatic past will be a more distant memory—a younger brother who died from abandonment or a mother who disappeared. What a joy it will be to witness their healing as the love of Jesus Christ overcomes their deep emotional hurts. Actually, I have already seen quite a bit of healing in one term of our preschool for six of these precious children. I remember our first week of school when our main objective was to help the children learn the routines and to trust the teachers who would consistently love them. As the children relaxed and became more secure at school, we watched their personalities develop and typical three- and four-year-old behaviors emerge. After their first term of preschool, the children also have a basic English vocabulary and a growing confidence in their ability to communicate in their second language. At home they speak Luganda, but in school the children speak English. They are already ahead of our Western kids, who usually only speak one language. Just imagine what else God has planned for these precious ones!

The Rafiki School, 2004

The Rafiki School will grow considerably in this new year, since our Rafiki "extended" family will also grow. Our three families now have five or six children each. I like to think of our extended family just like yours or mine—made up of many

families, but related. The children all play together in the afternoons and on the weekends, and, of course, they attend school together. They know each other very well.



The Extended Rafiki Uganda Family

In January, we will open our preschool with a three-year-old class and a four-year-old class. Most of the four-year-olds have never been in school before, having just arrived at Rafiki in the last two months. The children have had very little exposure to learning activities such as counting, singing, and learning the names of common objects. Most of what they know is in their native language, Luganda. I look forward to helping these four-year-olds not only learn English, but also learn counting, number recognition, phonics, and other preparatory skills. They will do it, because these children have a zealous desire to learn! Our three-year-old teacher, Marsha Coiner, is looking forward to teaching the continuing students as she also includes new children this term. As you see, one of our challenges is to continuously integrate new children into our preschool. **Please pray that God will guide us to have the right balance of new material and review for both groups of children (continuing students and newcomers). Also pray that as the headmaster, I will have**

God's direction for decisions affecting all the students as I also teach one particular class.

Another challenge is funding the outfitting of the school as we add new classes. In August we will begin our 2004-5 school year. By then we expect to have both preschool classes, plus the kindergarten class. However, if by God's will, we have six-year-olds, we will also open the Primary School with P-1 (Grade 1). Many of you are teachers and know the types of materials used for teaching young children. Some of the materials are available here in Uganda. However, some are not, and imported supplies are much more expensive than in Europe, the UK or the US. We are so grateful to those of you who support a child, as part of the monthly donation covers school materials. **Please pray that God will continue to provide the funds to outfit the school with quality furniture, bulletin boards, and chalkboards for the children.**

Furniture for the school is made to order. I've had some interesting learning experiences in furniture-making in Uganda. Dried wood is a rarity here since there are so few drying kilns. Wood is just left out to dry. Some will call cut wood dry after six months; others say it is dry only after two years (which is actually the case). As I work with carpenters and furniture makers I hear myself repeating "DRY" wood! Then there is the choice of which wood. If you were having furniture built, would you use Mahogany, Cypress, *Muvuli*, or *Mugovi*? Mahogany is beautiful, but expensive. Cypress is one of the most inexpensive woods, but soft compared to the others. I chose *Muvuli*, which looks like red oak, only a bit darker. We may try to build the furniture for the kindergarten right here at the village with our own carpenter. **Please pray that we will be able to find DRY *Muvuli* for our furniture.**

Village News

It is so fun to live in my very own African village! Like other, more traditional villages, ours is busy most of the time. The children define our life, along with the teenage girls who attend the Rafiki Girls' center during the week. Construction on our school building provides activity when the children are sleeping and in school. We hope the school will be finished by our next school term in March. We expect to receive more children in January,

NOTE: The *Rafiki* web site has been revised. Please visit at www.rafiki-foundation.org and find information on your ROS, what *Rafiki* is doing, the centers, and the Exchange.

perhaps even as you are reading this letter. Every time a new child arrives there are medical procedures and court proceedings that must take place. This keeps our director and grandmother active. Each time we welcome a new child we are all full of wonder at God's grace for each child in providing a loving, permanent home with a Christian Rafiki Mama. We are also expecting new ROS (Rafiki Overseas Staff) to join our team starting this month. It is an answer to our prayer, as we are a bit stretched. **Please pray that God will call more long-term missionaries to Uganda for the sake of the children.** We are also expecting to receive short-term missionaries (MiniMissionaries) to help at the school and the girls' center. We are always encouraged that men and women give their time and finances to contribute to the lives of the young Ugandans under our care.

Furlough, 2004

I am once again trusting God's wisdom to plan my deputation from June 27 until August 7. I am looking forward to renewing friendships in Switzerland and England, as well as in Michigan, Maryland, Florida, and Texas in the U.S. I will come to see you, if you want to hear about and become involved in Rafiki's mission to Uganda. Since it worked to visit in Europe and the U.K at the beginning of my journey in 2002, I would be happy to map my route this way again. However, I need to hear from you before I can plan specifically. Please e-mail or write to me at my Uganda address below to indicate your interest in having me speak to supporters in your area. I am especially eager to meet with our prayer groups. May God's grace abound in your life as you support Rafiki's children in Uganda.

Love,



P.O. Box 33820
Kampala, Uganda
E-mail: ejcolvin@africaonline.co.ug

U.S. Address:
c/o Mrs. Sharon Krivacka
Krivacka and Associates
7300 Blanco Road
San Antonio, Texas 78216