



The Rafiki Foundation, Inc.

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"Show me your ways, O LORD, teach me your paths; guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long" (Psalm 25: 4,5).

Dear friends and supporters,

Greetings from Rafiki Village Uganda, in the "Pearl of Africa"! Rafiki Village is now home to nineteen children between the ages of about ten months and five years. Let me bring you into my world and my work, as I witness God's abundant grace to "our" children and His faithful guidance to guide me and teach me how to teach the children day-by-day. Here is a little taste of life at our village and, specifically, at the Rafiki preschool.

Saturday

I am the "back-up" staff member this weekend. I will stay at the village in case I am needed. Today I spend time with the children during their afternoon play. This region of Uganda, near the capital city of Kampala, is in a tropical belt. Heavy rain showers are frequent. Just as the children are waking up from their naps, the rain begins. My mind is flooded with possibilities for ninety minutes of activities. I settle on scarf dancing and coloring. Off I go to see the children and the rain looks like it may stop. The let-up is temporary. We have a fun, energetic session together. Even the babies dance with a scarf tied around the waist or head. This is a favorite activity, because of the scarves. There is never enough dress-up time. You can see how cute they look in the photo taken in a school session. Boys love to be mamas and girls wear the baseball caps. Who cares? We just have fun. I thank God for the joy of children and for bringing these particular orphans to us. I also pray that God will help our children to continue enjoying all that God has planned for them in the future.

Sunday

As the back-up staff member, it is my job to escort one family to church this morning. I pull my car up to the dining room. One mama, one auntie, and seven children climb in. How often do you have nine passengers in your car? The car is crowded but the drive is short. When we arrive at the church for Sunday school, many children are already seated on the wooden pews near the front. The church is constructed with planks of

wood, spaced to allow air to circulate; the floor is dirt—a typical village church, but very different from the finished buildings at our Rafiki homes. After singing songs, Susan teaches the children the gospel, using strips of felt. Black is our sin, and red is the blood of Christ that was shed for the forgiveness of our sins. White represents the spiritual cleansing of Christ, and yellow symbolizes the light in which believers walk. I thank God for such good teaching in a near-by Rafiki partner church. I pray that the children will know Christ personally at a young age. I also pray that they will live their lives for His glory, because of what God has done for them.



Monday

We have only been in our new school for one week. It does not take long, though, for our fifteen three- and four-year-olds to settle into the new routine. Assembly includes the Uganda National Anthem and the Lord's Prayer. Have you ever heard fifteen young children recite the Lord's Prayer? It's a treat! For the next two hours, we focus on activities relating to "the body," our unit this week. This is the first day I have used a flannel board to tell the Bible story. The children are fascinated with the pictures of Jesus, the apostles, and angels on the flannel board. It holds their attention beautifully and the flannel board is declared a hit with the teachers. I thank God for financial gifts of our donors resulting in nice

classroom materials. I pray that the children will appreciate and care for these gifts.

Tuesday

Our fifteen children are excited today. When one child is excited, the others quickly "catch" the feeling. Marsha and I decide to take the children outside to play with balls, even though it's been rainy and the ground is muddy. Practicing kicking keeps the muddy balls out of hands, if the children could remember that. The younger children have never done this, so hands, balls, and feet get muddy. Guess what takes the longest to clean? The balls do! They can wait until the end of the day, though. Getting outside was a good idea; it starts to rain just as we were about to finish. Thank you, Lord, for holding off the rain. I pray that most of the mud will not enter the classroom.

Wednesday

Today I tried something new with the children. We have African music shakers that we use for music. Some of the children know that these are actually baby rattles and refuse them. (They are the largest baby rattles I have ever seen!) Today, before handing out the shakers I tell my story of going into the market to buy them. The children listen attentively because I mention driving my car into Kampala to the market. Anytime we mention a car, we know we will have the children's attention. After my story, we hand out the shakers. No refusals! We sing "I Would Follow Jesus" and "Trust and Obey." Thank you, Lord, for giving us creative ideas for teaching. I pray that the children will learn to love music, especially music that praises God and teaches Scriptural truths.

Thursday

Today it is not raining; at large muscle time we take our parachute outside to "cook popcorn." The parachute is brightly colored and the children adore playing with it, anytime, in any way. Today we put homemade "popcorn balls" in the middle while the children hold the ends of the parachute. First we "cook" the popcorn slowly by lifting gently on the ends of the parachute—all seventeen of us. The gentleness lasts only a few seconds before the "popcorn" is popping all over the parachute and the ground. What fun! The challenge for the child is to control his or her excitement—to restrain himself or herself from running under the parachute or jumping on top of it. I thank God for children who are learning to obey rules and appreciate orderliness. I pray that they will

continue to grow in obedience and respect for their authorities.

Friday

The children have worked hard all week, learning about bodies, colors, and numbers. Today is a less intense day, and the blocks come out. As you can see below, our children love their special school blocks. I thank God for scraps of wood that became precious, valuable toys. These children were "scraps" of society, but they are precious to God, and they have become dearly precious to us. I pray that God will bring us more staff members so we can bring more orphans to Rafiki.



Special Weeks Ahead

I will be leaving Uganda on 28 June to begin my visits with you. I look forward to showing you video footage of our children, the village, and other Uganda "hotspots." Please come and say hello! If you would like the contact number of a hostess, send an email to me, and I will send you the contact information.

- 28–29 June Bern, Switzerland
- 30 June–2 July Wirral, England
- 3–25 July San Antonio, Texas
- 14 July Houston, Texas
- 25–28 July Columbia, Maryland
- 28–31 July Tallahassee, Florida
- 31 July–4 August San Antonio, Texas

In God's love,



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